

Winter is fast approaching, at least the cold part of the season! The change in weather reminds us of safeguards that should be taken as we enter the high confinement season for cattle, and to make observations as to what we've seen this fall already!

**CALF PNEUMONIA:** The weather this fall has been awful for calf pneumonia. Wide swings of outside temperatures, and the rain and humidity, have presented huge challenges for calves. Additionally some farms often really don't have housing made specifically for heifers and calves. Air quality issues combined with poor weather and high humidity only add to the problem.

Two steps can be taken toward **minimizing calf pneumonia** issues. First, speak with one of us regarding potential vaccination steps that can be taken to improve the immunity of calves. **Proper vaccines used at strategic times** can improve the ability of calves to fight off pneumonia. Secondly, if you've already done the vaccine route and still struggle with calf respiratory problems, maybe we need to look at **where calves are housed**. We're all well aware that heifers don't truly generate income until they become lactating animals. Because of this sometimes dairymen are hesitant to invest in housing for calves and heifers, but we have to remember that heifers are an investment in the future. We truly see wide variation in heifer growth and quality between farms-often due to differences in housing available. It is definitely true that you will get out of heifers what you put into them. If your calves persist in problems related to pneumonia or diarrhea in spite of aggressive vaccination programs, maybe it's time to look at where they are born or where they live. Some problems cannot be 'vaccinated away'.

**CALF SCOURS:** We're entering 'scours season'. Remember that diarrhea control consists of two fronts. **Minimize exposure** to diarrhea causing bugs. Calve animals in clean dry areas. Remove calves from cows as SOON as possible-even before the calf is dry! **Maximize protection** against these bugs. Feed colostrum or an appropriate replacement product as SOON as possible after birth. Very effective vaccines are available for cows to improve colostrum quality. Excellent vaccines also exist to dose baby calves to improve immunity. Again, if problems persist in the face of aggressive vaccine use, look at calving areas used or calf housing available for alternatives.

**HERD VACCINATIONS:** Many herds have ongoing vaccination programs to aid in the control of pneumonia, abortion, etc. If you do not already do so, then fall is time to 'booster the herd' to minimize problems during the winter and its confinement housing. Pneumonia and abortion are our primary adult cow problems in winter. Take steps now to 'prevent' disease outbreaks rather than having to 'react' to a problem.

**EPRINEX®:** Pretty much all dairy herds have lice. Lice rob cows of production by distracting cows from eating and by stealing nutrients from the cow. Lice encourage cows to step on each other's teats due to excessive movement to 'rub that itch'. The best prices on Eprinex® are still available this month. Don't miss the opportunity to get the best price. Pastured animals (often dry cows) or pastured herds also pick up internal parasites (worms), I guarantee it. We have often had herds comment on seeing an increase in milk production after pouring their herd with Eprinex®. It takes very little response to pay you back for the investment. One key to Eprinex® use-you should pour EVERY animal. Calves get exposed to lice from mom and cost little to treat. Don't leave a source to reinfest your herd!