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JULY 2005 NEWSLETTER

SWINE

Even with the focus on difficult disease problems we can not lose sight of regular management concerns. Every summer we see production losses from Heat stress and in the late summer early fall from seasonal infertility.

Heat stress:

Pigs do not sweat so cooling in severe temperature is difficult.

- Ensure barns are ventilated well. Make sure adequate air inlets are in place so air flow is not restricted.
- The farrowing room is the area that needs individual sow attention. Turn off heat lights on very hot days. Consider induced farrowings so sows farrow in early morning. Feed earlier in A.M. and later in P.M. Be prepared to cool sows off with cool, not cold water and portable fans.

Seasonal infertility:

Some herds have breeding concerns every year in August and September. Now is the time to consider interventions for seasonal infertility.

1. Ensure that adequate gilts are available and breed over target. It is important to consider this now because we need proper acclimation time for PRRS etc. You need to think 3 months ahead.
2. Consider culling after the breeding week is formed. There have been many farms using this intervention and it works well, particularly when feed is inexpensive. You must, however cull those old girls once you know you have met your conception rate targets i.e. Ultrasound pregnancy test between 23-42 days of gestation and cull excess animals.
3. This may be a good time to consider target breeding. Bioniche has developed a timed mating program that involves 2 hormone shots given at very specific times and then a single timed mating. We have had some herds try this program and it does work well. Cost is a concern but is easily justified in herds with low farrowing rates. Herds that have a repeatable history of seasonal infertility could consider using this program. Call the clinic for more details.

RABIES UPDATE

Attention clients in the Dundalk area. There have been 2 confirmed rabid skunks since April 28th. At this time no human or domestic animal contact has been reported. The Health Unit wishes to remind everyone to avoid contact with potentially rabid animals, to supervise pets and to remind owners of the importance of vaccinating pets for rabies.

COW/CALF

Do not forget that now you have switched your cow/calf herd to modified-live vaccine you can vaccinate the calves on the cow. If summer pneumonia is an issue you vaccinate at turn-out. Otherwise vaccinate 4 to 6 weeks before weaning. For those people with January to March calvings then ensure that you are organized for early September. In addition to a 4 way modified live vaccine you can also vaccinate for Pasteurella (now called Mannheimia). Call the clinic for details.

DAIRY

It is already shaping up to be another hot summer in southern Ontario. Already this year there have been more 30°C (86°F) days than all of 2004. Besides its effects on all of us heat can take a tremendous toll on dairy cows.

The ideal temperature for a cow is between 5°C (41°F) and 25°C (77°F). At greater temperatures cows expend energy to cool themselves. Dry matter intakes drop by 10% and milk production will drop by up to 25lbs per day. When temperatures exceed 32°C. Reproduction also suffers from heat stress due to lower follicular activity, reduced conception and signs of estrus as well as early embryonic death.

The following steps will help combat the effects of heat on cows:

- provide water at all times. Water requirements will rise by 50% in severe heat stress
- increase ventilation and air movement through additional air flow.
- alter feeding schedules to provide fresh feed more often, and in cooler times of the day when cows are more likely to eat.
- discuss the use of bicarbonate or yeast with your nutritionist, or the addition of supplemental fat to increase energy density.
- Consider the use of environmental mastitis vaccines to counter the risk of E. coli mastitis in hot, humid weather

Also make fly control a part of your summer management. Flies can cause cows to gather in one closely packed group and contribute to heat stress. Fly control is also important for sanitation reasons. Eliminate fly breeding areas regularly. One fly can multiply into 1 million flies in only 2 weeks!

Update on OrbeSeal

Since the fall of 2003 many of our clients have been using the product OrbeSeal in their herds and reporting pleasing results. Cases of clinical mastitis in fresh cows seen less frequently which is the primary reason for using the product.

As another observation, some clients report finding what appears to be small pieces of OrbeSeal for several days after freshening....some for up to 30 days! Upon speaking with the Pfizer folks, the manufacturers of OrbeSeal, they offered the following comments:

- a) The amount of residual product found following calving is directly related to the techniques used to infuse and remove the product.
- b) Proper insertion of the product involves thorough cleaning and disinfecting of the teat end. After inserting the tube cannula into the teat end, pinch off the teat about half to three quarters of the way up towards the udder. Infuse the entire tube contents slowly. Do not massage the teat or udder afterwards. This technique will ensure that the entire 4 grams of product are deposited in the lower portion of the teat cistern.
- c) At the first milking after freshening, fore strip each quarter by pinching off the teat as high as possible at the base of the udder and strip down. This will ensure that the bulk of the remaining OrbeSeal is stripped out of the teat. Proceed to fore strip 10-12 squirts from each quarter. Continue to aggressively fore strip in the same manner for the next 8-10 milkings.
- d) It is recommended that all fresh cows be bucket milked for the first few milkings (colostral phase) which will help keep any residual OrbeSeal particles away from sensitive meters.

Even with the above steps being followed, it is still possible to see some particles in the milk of some cows. Pfizer reports information from other countries using the product for many years that up to 10 % of cows may have particles for the first 4-5 days; 5% of cows may have particles in the milk for up to 10 days; and 1-2% of cows may have particles for up to 30 days. It is believed that these findings are directly related to the individual cow's habits and internal teat anatomy. Normal rising and laying habits may fragment and displace the OrbeSeal "plug" during the dry period. In addition, the internal lining of the teat and udder involves folds and crevices of tissue where OrbeSeal particles may become trapped and are released during the milking process over the next several milkings. It is all an individual cow phenomenon.

All things considered, OrbeSeal is an inert, safe product that will not effect the quality of the milk. In fact, when it reduces the incidence of fresh cow mastitis, it enhances the quality of the milk while reducing the losses incurred when mastitis exists. Like any other tool we use on the dairy, it has to be used properly.