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EQUINE

Equine Recurrent Uveitis (ERU)

This disease is often referred to as “moon blindness”. It is an autoimmune disorder, which often results in multiple bouts of inflammation within the eyeball. In the final stages of the disease, degeneration of the iris (colored structure responsible for the pupil’s dilation and contraction), ciliary body (attaches the iris to the eyeball) and the choroid (responsible for the blood supply to the eyeball) will occur. Equine recurrent uveitis has been recognized as the principal cause of blindness in horses.

The ability to minimize the extent of the damage is achieved via early detection of an episode. Signs to look for include excessive squinting, tearing, light sensitivity, swelling of the surrounding ocular tissues, changes in the color of the iris, cloudiness or redness in the eyeball. There are several factors that are suspected of being responsible for the initial inflammation and these include injury to the cornea as well as viral, bacterial or parasitic infections. However, identifying the cause of an attack is often impossible due to the multi-factorial nature of the disease. Once the initial attack has healed, the horse becomes susceptible to frequent flare-ups.

It is vital to realize that ERU is not a disease that can be cured. Preventative management after the initial attack is the ideal method of control. Susceptible horses should wear a fly-mask when outside. In severe cases, the horse should be turned out during the night. Close observations will enable the early detection of an episode, thereby allowing the timely administration of anti-inflammatory drugs as well as corticosteroids, if indicated. Unfortunately, if the inflammation cannot be controlled, the surgical removal of the eyeball may be indicated. Ocular issues should be considered an emergency and veterinary assistance or advice should be sought as soon as possible.

CALF MANAGEMENT

Drop calf prices are up, and warmer weather should be on our side to help start calves. There are still no magical bullets but remember the following:

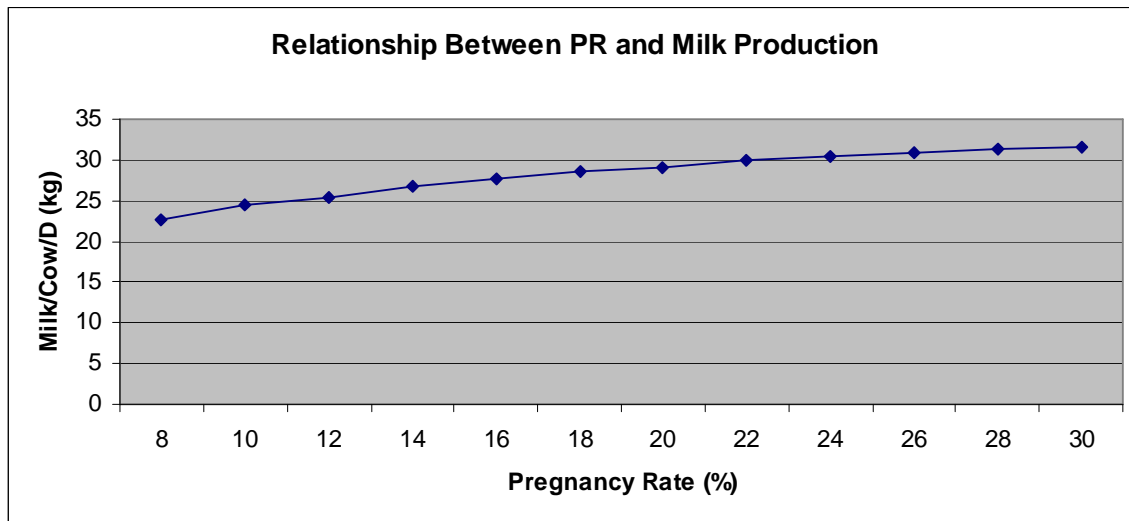
1. Colstral quality will vary tremendously but try to get 2.0L into a calf before it stands up versus 3.0L to 4.0L in the first six hours.
2. Keep the calf exposed to clean, yellow straw or freshly bedded shavings. “The solution to pollution is dilution”
3. High quality milk or milk replacer are necessary to help the immune system to fight disease.
4. Up and down temperatures will increase pneumonia challenges. I will be trying a different vaccine in the coming months to see if I can reduce post-weaning pneumonia.
5. Nutra-pro products are available to help reduce “stress” periods. Please call to inquire.
6. Continuous flow calf barns continue to have significantly more health issues in comparison to an all in/all out flow. This is very apparent in the veal world. Batch purchasing, batch weaning and batch grower/finisher in different barns or air spaces definitely reduces sickness and mortalities.

Bottomline: Calf quality, nutrition and environment dictate majority of sickness and death. Antibiotics and vaccine help to reduce and work best when our quality, nutrition and environment support a healthy immune system.

DAIRY

Milk! Milk! Milk! There seems to be a real need for milk these days with lots of incentive days available and cow prices up to levels we have not seen in several years. Cull prices are strong as well. This is a great change and very positive for our industry.

With cow prices so high (and expected to stay up for some time to come) this is an excellent time to put additional focus on getting your cows in calf. Consider bi-weekly herd health checks to find open cows sooner and get cows bred more quickly. As well, with hot weather just around the corner getting cows bred now is a good idea since reproductive performance and heat detection often drops off with warmer days. The results are worth the extra effort and will pay dividends later on. Increasing frequency of herd health has proven very effective in increasing pregnancy rate. A higher pregnancy rate means more fresh cows and more milk to meet incentive days or quota increases when they are made available.



In addition Rumensin CRC boluses have become more regularly available again. While supply remains inconsistent we are expecting to have a more steady supply than has been the story of late. Rumensin CRC boluses have proven themselves most effective in helping decrease the incidence of ketosis, displaced abomasums (twisted stomach) and retained placentas. These diseases cost milk production and treated cows can keep milk out of the tank- milk that could be used to meet increased milk demand!