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October 2008 Newsletter

Waterloo Cattlemen's Association – Bus trip to Wellington County on Tuesday, November 4, 2008

Elora Beef Research Station, 3 feedlots, plus other stops to be confirmed. Space is limited, so please reserve your spot early. For more information, call Steve Foster 519-746-0258 or Stewart Cressman 519-696-3119. Cost is \$15.00 per person, lunch included.

SWINE

We always identify fall, winter and early spring as the highest risk time periods for PRRS outbreaks. Prevention is usually cheaper than treatment and in the case of PRRS it most definitely is.

Key areas to focus on:

1. Incoming pigs
 - Know the status of your supplier if you are introducing gilts and boars, an isolation barn is strongly recommended
2. Pig trucks
 - Nothing against the trucking industry but trucks that haul pigs are a very big risk. The trucking industry has put significant time and money into reducing disease transmission but in some cases the risk is still very high
 - Sow herds need to spend the extra to get a clean truck
 - On farm transport can reduce risk
 - Clean up loading chutes and disinfect and use lime after load outs
3. Barn Entrance
 - a Danish style entrance will get the job done very effectively

If you focus on the big three you will reduce your risk of new PRRS virus introduction dramatically.

We see continued benefit to vaccinating weaners against circovirus. The reduction in mortality has been nothing short of amazing and more and more trials are showing significant improvements in ADG and FC as well as improved carcass traits. A greater number of farms are moving to full dose programs. The part dosing can work but we have seen some clinical breaks.

With tested combination that you can mix vaccinating for circovirus and mycoplasma is easy and a huge cost-benefit.

We are taking yet another look at Enterisol. Enterisol is the oral vaccine for ileitis. The science behind this product is rock solid but proper administration has been challenging. We are looking at some medicator options as well as oral dosing. Some of the antibiotic free programs have relied on Enterisol and we have been orally dosing piglets over 14 days of age. Results have been 100%.

EQUINE

Plant Toxicity

Winter is fast approaching and it is an important time of year to check your hay quality and quantity. Often a variety of plants and/or weeds can be included in your hay and these may be toxic to your horse. It is important to know your source, where the hay was grown and at what time of year it was baled.

Some plants will cause a liver toxicity in your horses and these are very dangerous as they can be fatal. Generally, horses on pasture will not consume these plants unless there is a period of drought since the plants are not very palatable. However, if the plants are included in your horses' feed, then they are usually found in first cut hay, alfalfa or hay cubes. If the horses eat a large amount at one time, the clinical signs will show very suddenly and be very severe. However, in the majority of cases, the clinical signs appear gradually over-time and are believed to be chronic in nature.

Signs of liver toxicity include weight loss, abnormal behavior and gait, yellowing of the mucous membranes and whites of the eyes, abortions and occasionally diarrhea. If the patient can be diagnosed early, supportive care can be administered but the prognosis remains poor. If the patient is diagnosed in advanced stages, then euthanasia is recommended.

Plants that have been known to cause liver toxicity in horses include; Tansy ragwort (*S. jacobea*), Groundsel (*S. redellii*, *S. longilobus*), Fiddleneck (*Amsinckia intermedia*), Rattlebox (*Crotalaria*), Viper's bugloss (*E. plantagineum*), and common heliotrope (*H. europeum*).

Plants can also affect the liver without causing liver failure. Often the horses will show a photosensitivity after chronic exposure to the plants. The light colored areas on the body will become sunburned, blistered and often will swell. Locations to examine included the ears, nose, coronary bands, udder and vulva. Treatment in these cases involves removal from the plant/weed source and avoiding sunlight (i.e. Turnout at night, stable during the day). Plants that have been known to cause photosensitivity include; St. John's wort, Klamathweed, Alsike clover, Brassica, Hypericum perforatum, Castor bean, Oat grass and Buckwheat.

Evidently, there are various plants/weeds that can be harmful to your horse. It is a good idea in the fall to walk through your pastures and examine the weeds/plants that are present to identify if any may pose a risk to your horses. In addition, purchasing your hay from a knowledgeable and reliable source is very important.