



AUGUST 2023 DAIRY NEWSLETTER

Fall Pneumonia Treatment and Prevention

As the fall weather approaches, we often start to see an increase in pneumonia in cattle. Prevention is considered the best medicine, and this is accomplished through good management and a good vaccination program. Management involves having a well ventilated and clean environment. How this is done will vary depending on the type of barn and class of cattle. For example, in calves it is important to use deep straw bedding which has been shown to have a big impact on pneumonia reduction through the creation of a microenvironment for the calf. While in adult cattle it is important to remember that a colder barn is often healthier than a barn that is too warm and humid. There are many vaccines on the market which help to prevent the number of pneumonia cases we see as well as the severity of those cases. There are both intranasal and injectable vaccines available and vaccines that cover viruses only or vaccines that cover both viral and bacterial causes of pneumonia. Intranasal vaccines (up the nose) tend to be better for baby calves (under 2 months of age) and in the face of an outbreak. Injectable vaccines tend to last longer with a single dose. The vaccine used varies based on the cattle you have on your farm and the risk level of pneumonia. Please feel free to talk one of the large animal veterinarians about which vaccination program is best for your farm.

Inevitably some level of pneumonia will occur, and it is important to have protocols on farm so that everyone working with the animals is able to understand how to proceed with treatment. Individual treatment with injectable antibiotics and a pain killer for sick animals is quite effective in most cases. We often recommend having a first line medication such as Resflor or Zeleris (both are antibiotic and pain killer combination drugs) and a second line treatment such as Draxxin if the animal does not respond. However, treatments will vary on different farms based on level of pneumonia and antibiotic resistance. Please talk to your herd veterinarian about setting up protocols specific to your farm. Please call the Kirkton Veterinary Clinic at 519-229-8911 with any questions or to set up a farm visit to discuss pneumonia prevention and treatment on your farm.

Have a good month,

Rachel Poppe, DVM