

If you have a question you would like answered by the team from Valley Animal Hospital, send it to Ask the VMD, Box 366, Lititz, Pa. 17543. Questions will be kept anonymous on request.

Shots for Shipping Fever A reader asks:

Every year I buy feeder cattle and I always lose some to shipping fever. Is there a shot I can give to save my animals?

Dr. Trayer comments: Shipping fever had been traditionally thought of as a disease process that ocfurred when calves were weaned from the cows, shipped to feedlots, and upon arriving were running fevers.

Today, shipping fever is better understood as bovine respiratory complex which causes a pneumonia-like condition in cattle.

Stress, along with a bacterial component and a viral component act together in the development of the bovine pneumonia complex in the feedlot.

A stressful situation was previously thought of as moving the calf - weaning it, putting it in a truck, and dumping it in the feedlot. In that situation, the young calf that only the day before was

sucking on its mother's milk is not confronted with silage and a trough just above nose level that contains medicated water.

Nowadays the defination of stress is not as strict. It is anything that changes from the normal for the animal simply the separation of the calf from the cow by a fence can be stressful enough to set up the complex.

The practice of running calves through a chute to do multiple procedures on them, like castration, delousing, deworming, dehorning, and vaccination, can also stress the animals and lower their resistance to the bacterial and viral components of shipping fever.

The bacterial components are usually of two common types: Pasturella hemolytica and Pasturella multocida. Under normal conditions, these bacteria can be found as common residents in the bovine lung or traches.

These bacteria are not considered to precipitate pneumonia but are considered to be secondary invaders. When the animal is stressed and has a viral component where its body temperature is elevated and

its resistance is reduce. these bacteria kick in and produce a whitish discharge from the nose.

This mucous indicates that in the lungs there is a body reaction to the bacterial infection. The white blood cells are in there fighting a battle and hopefully winning.

One of the key pneumoniacausing component is the viral agent that the animal is exposed to and has not developed a full immunity to. The most common one is Infectious bovine rhinotracheitis.

So, it is the stress, bacteria, and virus working together that creates the environment for a full-blown pneumonia.

There is no single shot available that works all the time to combat pneumonia. And there is no antibiotic that is economical for common use in fighting viral pneumonias.

Even if you used all the antibiotics you wanted, they would have no effect on the elevated body temperature, 105-107 degrees Farenheit, caused by the virus. This is where the aspirin therapy comes into play.

The antibiotic therapy is indicated where the bacterial component is strongly interacting with the lung. Then, an effective antibiotic is needed at the proper dosage and at the proper time.

The most common mistakes in treating bovine respiratory complex are: using the wrong antibiotic, using the wrong dosage level and using it for two short a time.

My recommendation is that the animal be treated at least three days (better if five) with an effective antibiotic at the right dosage level. Talk to your veterinarian for recommendations and don't skimp on the medication. Bacterias and viruses can develop resistance to antibiotics if used improperly.

Treatment of shipping fever should be multiple course.

If the animal is running a high temperature, indicative of a viral infection, aspirin should be administered orally.

Needed antibiotics can be either administered through the water and/or in the muscle. This will have to be determined by how stale the animal is - how many sales barns has it been through? ---how farm down has the pneumonia taken it?

Too often the veterinarian is only called in three weeks after the pneumonia has started. Animals that came on the feed lot and seemed to be doing alright suddenly appear to be hanging back and not doing well.

What has probably hap-

pened was the animals were given a single shot of antibiotic along with medicated water for two days, and were supposedly cured. In the meanwhile, the bacterial component was smoldering and abcessing in the lungs.

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, October 18, 1980-A13

After three weeks, the animals' lung capacities are greatly reduced and signs of shipping fever are visible in the puffing livestock, just barely able to move around. At this stage there is very little that can be done because the damage in the lung is too severe.

What can be done to prevent shipping fever?

On arrival of feeder animals, I recommend they be given only fresh water, no medication, for twenty-four hours. They should be fed a bulky ration rather than high concentrates - oats and timothy hay, or some type of hay mix. Gradually work into the steamed up rations with additives, and all.

The ideal way to purchase feeder stock is to find a cow/calf operator and work out a financial contract for the calves to be started out properly.

Two to three weeks prior to shipping, the calves should be weaned, castrated, deloused, dewormed, dehorned and vaccinated for shipping fever. They should also be put on a ration and introduced to the bunk feeder and waterer backgrounding.

In states other than Pennsylvania, backgrounding the calves is a certified program with veterinary supervision guaranteeing that the extra cost of the feeder calves is justified because all of the health plans were followed.

This does not mean, however, that these certified cattle never get bovine respiratory complex. But data from other states indicates the problems are less less death loss and shrinkage.

It is important to plan ahead and keep your veterinarian involved and informed when purchasing and moving cattle so that the needed antibiotics can be on hand.

Dairy cattle can also experience pneumonia. However, exposure to the virus can be reduced by keeping young animals, less than six months, away from adult dairy cows.

Calves should not be exposed to moisture and droplets coming from respiratory tracts of mature animals. These droplets may contain bacteria and viruses that the adult cow is immune to but that the calves have no defense against.

Protecting against this exposure is why calf hutches have become such a big bonus in the operation of the big dairy producer, providing a healthier environment for calves.



Six clear days speed work

HARRISBURG - Pennsylvania farmers took advantage of six days of clear weather to continue fieldwork and harvest activities during the week ending October 12, according to the Pennsylvania Crop **Reporting Service.**

Harvest continued in vegetables, fruit, potatoes, corn, soybeans and silage corn. Other farm activities included baling hay, seeding wheat and barley, filling silos and general farm chores.

Apple and grape harvest progressed, with the apple crop rated as good to fair. Potato harvest is now 89 percent complete, ahead of the 84 percent complete last year. Northern potato farmers reported harvested at 86 percent complete, central growers at 88 percent, and southern growers reported harvest at 95 percent complete. Silage corn harvest stood at 88 percent complete statewide, compared to 68 percent a year ago. Throughout the Commonwealth, corn for grain is now 64 percent mature and 27 percent harvested, compared to 61 percent mature and six percent harvested last year. A five-year average shows corn for grain to be 61 percent mature and 12 percent harvested at this time. Soybean harvest stands at 18 percent, compared to less than five percent last year. Northern farmers report 27 percent of soybeans harvested, central farmers report 12 percent harvested and southern farmers report ten percent harvested at this time.

Fall plowing is now 87 percent completed, on a par with last year. Plowing is 88 percent complete in northern and central areas and 83 percent complete in the south.

Wheat planting increased to 75 percent, two percent behind last year's progress. Northern areas are now 95 percent planted, central region farms are at 79 percent and southern farms stand at 47 percent planted.

Barley planting is now at 93 percent complete, compared to 92 percent last year. Northern and central regions reported 97 percent planted, while southern farms reported 86 percent of



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the barley crop planted.

Third cutting of alfalfa is virtually complete, ahead of last year's 94 percent at this time. Fourth cutting advanced slightly to 57 percent complete, behind the 72 percent of fourth cutting completed a year ago.

The quality of hay made during the week was rated as fair to good throughout the state. Feed from pastures was rated as below average to average. A few farmers reported above average feed from pastures.

Pasture in the north was rated as 50 percent below average, 38 percent average and 12 percent above average. Central pastures were rated 78 percent below average and 22 percent average, while southern pasture feed was rated 60 percent below average, 20 percent average and 20 percent above average.

Soil moisture levels were rated as mostly short to adequate statewide.

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