

## Bovine vaccine introduced

LINCOLN, Neb. — Introduction of the first vaccine for the control of bovine respiratory syncytial virus disease has been announced by Norden Laboratories. Tradenamed "BRSV," the vaccine is now available from licensed veterinarians. Bovine respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) has recently been identified as an important disease agent affecting cattle throughout the United States.

Dr. Merwin Frey, Professor of Virology at the University of Nebraska, believes there is no question that bovine RSV is a bonafide factor in the respiratory disease complex in cattle. "Often times, presence of bovine RSV will be obscured by other agents, especially in cases of Pasteurella pneumonia. This is one of the reasons why it's taken ten years to identify bovine RSV is a major cause of disease. We know that

cattle vaccinated for bovine RSV will achieve substantial production gains. It is possible that the disease is just as serious as IBR in terms of economic impact."

Researchers believe that bovine RSV contributes to respiratory disease in two ways. First, bovine RSV alone may cause respiratory disease as other more familiar viruses do. Sickness and death loss from bovine RSV infection is widespread among cattle of all ages, including nursing calves. Second, bovine RSV acts as a predisposing agent for secondary bacterial infections. During the infection microscopic, hair-like cilia of the respiratory tract are destroyed and the underlying cells exposed, as Figure 1 illustrates. Normally the cilia help move mucus, disease agents and microscopic particles of dust away from the lungs. By destroying the

cilia, bovine RSV creates opportunities for secondary bacterial growth which can result in pneumonia, a leading cause of economic loss to the cattle industry.

Development of 'BRSV' was aided by cooperation of various independent researchers, clinicians and universities. Dr. Frey was instrumental in isolating the virus in local field outbreaks. Prior to licensing, a number of private veterinarians conducted extensive field studies of more than 40,000 doses of vaccine.

Dr. Robert Bohlender of North Platte, Neb. was one of the field trial participants. He used the vaccine experimentally in several thousand feeder calves in his area and was particularly impressed with the treatment cost savings that resulted. "The use of 'BRSV' reduced our respiratory disease treatment costs to such low levels that I'm convinced the disease is a major factor in cattle herds in our area," Dr. Bohlender comments.

"We were also pleased at the absence of reactions, even in calves, following use of the vaccine."

Table 1 compares treatment costs in vaccinated and non-vaccinated cattle in the same

herds. After vaccination with 'BRSV', drug and labor expense and death loss were reduced to negligible levels, indicating that 'BRSV' can be an important tool in controlling bovine respiratory disease.

Table 1. Economic Impact of 'BRSV' Vaccination on Respiratory Disease Treatment Costs in Individual Herds

Year	No. Animals	'BRSV' Vaccination	Treatment (Avg./Year)*	
			Total Cost	Cost/Head
IS Ranch	1979-1981	No	\$18,623	\$20.22
	1982-1983	Yes	48	0.16
KL Ranch	1979-1980	No	10,328	12.83
	1981-1983	Yes	32	0.04
RH Ranch	1979-1980	No	29,275	46.99
	1982-1983	Yes	37	0.07

\*Costs include death losses and expenses for drugs, antibiotic feed additives, and labor at \$4.00/hour/person, weight loss of convalescent or chronically ill animals was not calculated in costs.

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