

Dairy Success Strategy: Watch Overall Herd Health

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at the Farm and Home Center. The theme was "Strategies For Success."

What makes BVD so complicated and difficult to treat is that a perfectly healthy cow can carry an infected fetus. A newborn calf, infected with BVD, can wreak havoc on the rest of the herd in a variety of ways.

BVD can show up in one of two ways on a dairy farm. It can exhibit itself as a transient infection (TI), which infects animals for 2-3 days with diarrhea, of which cows recover and then become immune. It can also show

up in the more dangerous form, as persistently or permanently infected (PI), contracted by the fetus beyond the first third term of pregnancy, and spread after birth readily throughout the herd.

BVD is found in 1 percent of about 5,000 calves, according to the vet.

With the immune system in the developing fetus, the virus is perceived as "normal." When born, the calf may be small, a "poor doer," said Gardner, or die at an early age. If the calf survives to breeding age, it can shed millions of the viruses.

Producers have to test calves brought to the farm. That's why it is important to test prior to purchase (at the cost of a \$5 viral isolation lab fee).

If a herd becomes infected, symptoms may not show until 1.5-2 years. That's why producers must test calves with a skin biopsy from the first day of life.

Gardner provides a simple caution: if you ever plan to bring animals to the farm, test them for BVD.

Gardner provided information about control of Johne's Disease (simple tests for the problem in addition to keeping young stock

away from old), and cautioned that if producers "buy a lot of cows, you will bring in Johne's," he said.

The calving pen can be the battlefield for preventing spread of Johne's on the farm.

Another disease that producers should be aware of is contagious mastitis. That includes mycoplasma and staph aureus.

Helpful strategies for producers include:

- Culture the bulk tank for mastitis and BVD
- Look closely at somatic cell count numbers
- Test regularly for Johne's

- Test animals for BVD
- Provide sound ventilation and excellent nutrient programs, in addition to good cow comfort.

Biosecurity, noted Gardner, is the buzzword, but the risks are real. A closed herd can be beneficial, but it is most at risk if you bring in disease, he said.

If you are going to bring in purchased animals, Gardner has these tips:

- Test before you buy
- Observe biosecurity with trucking
- Segregate new animals if

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"Strategies For Success" was the topic of the Lancaster County Dairy Day Monday at the Farm and Home Center. Speakers included, from left, Lou Moore, Glenn Shirk, Vinton Smith, Nevin Dourte, and Bruce Kreider. Photo by Andy Andrews, editor

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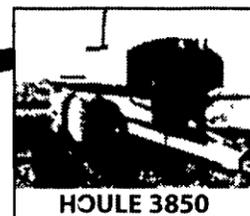
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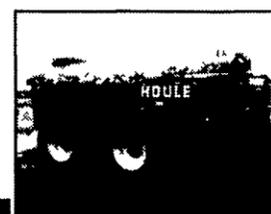
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