



# Dairy News

## March 2019

### 8 Things Which Profitable Farms Do Well

- 1. Optimize Reproduction** - Get all cows inseminated as soon after as possible after the voluntary waiting period is over. Find open cows quickly and get them bred back as soon as possible. This requires good heat detection for cows cycling well and synchronized breeding for non-cycling cows.
- 2. Low Heifer Mortality** - Detect calving difficulties early and assist these calving's. Maintain a dead-on arrival ratio of approximately 4%. Feed calves less than 60 days old the right amount of milk or milk replacer and provide them with fresh starter and water. Calf death loss for calves less than 60 days of age should be below 4%.
- 3. Optimize Milk Fat in the Milk Harvested** - Milk fat is currently carrying a much higher dollar value than milk protein.
- 4. Evaluate Ration Cost** - Produce and feed the highest quality forage possible. This will cut the purchased feed costs down. Analyze which feed additives you can and not hurt production or animal health.
- 5. Cull the Right Cows** - Minimize the number of animals which leave the herd at less than 60 days in milk. Approximately 6% of the animals should leave the herd at this time. Be sure not to over stock your pre and post fresh pens. These pens should be stocked at 80% for the number of head locks available. Cull low profit cows. This would include cows with low milk, chronic mastitis, chronic lameness, and reproduction issues (eg. Abortions or repeat breeders).
- 6. Maximize Cow Comfort** - Be sure the cows are using their stalls well; (are the stalls designed right? Is the bedding dry and comfortable?) Be sure high-quality feed is available at all times; (are feed pushups needed more frequently? Is enough feed being fed or is the bunk empty before the next feeding? Is feed available the entire length of the bunk?) Have good heat abatement for summer. Be sure cows are not away from feed, water, and beds for too long while managing the herd. Cows like to lay for 12-14 hours per day.
- 7. Raise Just Enough Heifers to Meet the Farms Replacement Needs** - Raising heifers from birth to first calf is expensive. You cannot currently sell springers for the cost that it takes to raise them. Figure out the number of heifers you actually need as replacements. Raise the heifers which will make the best future cows.
- 8. Optimize Milk Quality** - Farms with high milk quality have better reproduction and milk production. For every 100,000 cells/ml increase in bulk tank SCC, milk yield drops 5.5 lbs per cow.

Your veterinarian, nutritionist, and AI representative can all help your farm become more profitable. Ask questions the next time to see one of us and see if we can find some profit opportunities for your dairy.

- Dr. Scott Wiley

# Thoracic Ultrasound in Calves

Thoracic ultrasound is a fairly new way to evaluate both subclinical and clinical pneumonia in calves pre and post weaning. Thoracic ultrasound uses the same ultrasound that we would use for our herd checks, but we use the probe to evaluate lung lesions that calves may have. Thoracic ultrasound is used in combination with the Wisconsin calf scoring system that evaluates discharge, temperature, coughing, etc. Thoracic ultrasound scoring is based on a 0-5 scale. Ultrasound scores 0-1 are normal. A score of 2 indicates lobular pneumonia (portion of a lung lobe is affected). Any score 3 or greater indicates bacterial pneumonia and has consolidation of at least one lung lobe. After evaluating both the thoracic ultrasound score with calf health score we can distinguish between upper respiratory tract disease, clinical pneumonia, and subclinical pneumonia.

What can thoracic ultrasound be used for?

- Evaluate calves as early as a few days of age to look for potential aspiration pneumonia. Research shows that 80% of calves under a week old should show no signs of pneumonia.
- Treatment timeliness and response. Calves can be checked to evaluate if treatment was both appropriate (calf has pneumonia) and timely (calf was treated early enough, no chronic changes). Calves can be re-assessed in two weeks following ultrasound to see if lung lesions have resolved.
- Incidence of subclinical pneumonia
- Culling decisions- Research has shown that calves treated for pneumonia are more likely to be removed from the herd before her first calving, produce less milk, and have lower pregnancy rates.
- Evaluating the success of recent changes you have made to a calf management (ventilation, vaccine, nutrition, nipple, etc.)

After thoracic ultrasound evaluation of calves, we can evaluate records to look for incidence of pneumonia (subclinical vs. clinical) and timeliness/appropriateness of treatment.

- Mike Burchard - DVM



Figure 1: Shows a consolidated lung lobe

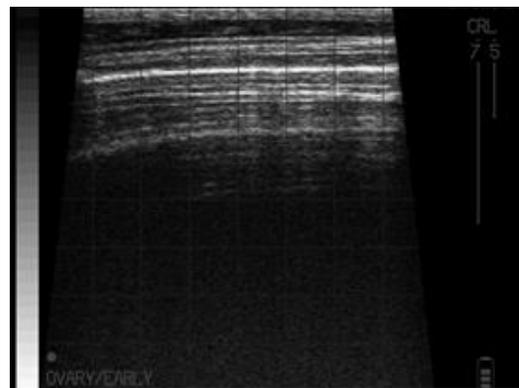


Figure 2: Shows healthy lung tissue

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