

## **NAVAN VETERINARY SERVICES – SEPTEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER**

The first day of autumn falls on Sept 22. The long hot, humid days of summer are largely behind us. Like every year, there seems to have been “that week” where cows were especially stressed by the constant heat, particularly when there was little relief in the evening.

Fall weather brings on its own challenges and stresses in our dairy herds. A relatively high daily temperature followed by cool nights makes it difficult for calves and cows to find that comfort zone. When ventilation is less than ideal (dead air spots in barns and calf housing) cows and especially calves will often feel damp. At night, these damp animals can get chilled as ambient temperatures drop into the single digits. Deep chilled cows are stressed animals and their immune systems will take the brunt of the insult. Stressed immune systems in these cases often present as pneumonia.

Many producers are using Modified Live Vaccine (MLV) year round in their adult and young stock. We believe this is a very effective strategy in the prevention of pneumonia in most herds. What we can and should do however is to tweak our vaccine programs when calves and cows are at highest risk of pneumonia in the fall and winter months. Perhaps adding intranasal vaccine (if not already using one) to very young calves or adding an additional MLV vaccine at a critical age could benefit them by keeping their immune systems primed in preparation for the pneumonia season.

Making sure adult cows do not go much longer than 13-14 months in between vaccines and boosting them if their days in milk stretches longer than ideal, will also help keep the herd protected.

For the producers using solely killed vaccine (Triangle 10) or a combination of MLV and Killed, it is even more important to not go beyond 12 months in adult cows before boosting with Triangle 10. If this happens, all cows need to be boosted twice again to achieve protective immunity.

The goal is to vaccinate the herd prior to the onset of foul weather and pneumonia season, not during it, that means Sept/Oct as the best time. Farms using Triangle 10 on young stock should be vaccinating at 6 months or older and boosting 3-4 weeks later. Calves that are too young in the fall should be vaccinated in the spring to avoid having bred heifers that have never seen vaccine.

Remember vaccines are only one leg of a pneumonia prevention strategy. Proper ventilation (not drafts), dry housing for calves and balanced nutrition are all critical. We have equipment here at the vet clinic to measure air speed and air turnover rates in facilities, so please ask if you would like some measurements made.