

# HEALTHY LUNGS DELIVER HEALTHY CATTLE GROWTH



Protecting cattle lungs from disease is now an essential health-planning objective for all cattle producers. Healthy lungs deliver optimum growth, argues Schering-Plough Animal Health livestock veterinary adviser Andrew Montgomery MRCVS.

"Lungs are vital organs for life and for growth. Lungs allow oxygen in the air to reach the bloodstream and this oxygen 'fuels' the animal's growth and production, but physiologically cattle are particularly prone to lung damage," he points out.

"For cattle and horses of similar size, horse lungs are around 43% bigger than bovine ones. As a result, cattle lungs have little spare capacity. Cattle lungs are also flatter and much more compartmentalised than their equine counterparts, which means the animal is less efficient at oxygen exchange. And as calf lungs are particularly small, any damage at all will compromise future growth performance significantly," he cautions.

"Essentially, cattle airways are narrower and particularly so with extreme conformation and double muscled cattle. When pneumonia strikes, viruses and bacteria can quickly and easily damage lung tissue. As it becomes infected, the inflammation and bacterial toxins cause further progressive damage to the lungs," he emphasises.

## Lung Protection Therapy

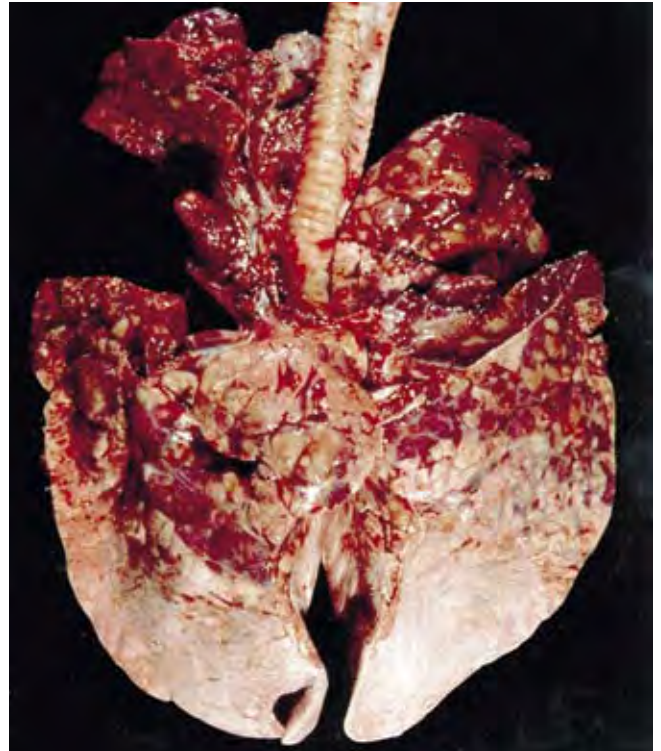
Andrew Montgomery is urging pedigree Simmental breeders and commercial producers to protect their cattle growth rates by talking to their vet about the latest advances in lung protection therapy.

"Many factors contribute to the development of pneumonia: the characteristics of cattle lungs, bacterial and viral infections, and the farm environment all interact to cause various levels of disease. But once the lungs become infected, the lifetime performance of the animal can be compromised," he warns.

"Cattle producers simply can't afford the growth setbacks and lost productivity associated with pneumonia-induced permanent



Lungs with early pneumonia damage



Irreversibly damaged lungs

lung damage. Nor can they tolerate the additional feed costs associated with finishing animals at an older age.

"Producers no longer have the safety net of age related payments to cushion less effective production. In early life a calf can cost-effectively turn 4kg of feed into 1kg of gain – at 24 months of age it takes 10kg of feed to deliver the same production level and costs a lot more."

When it comes to tackling pneumonia successfully on farm, Andrew Montgomery stresses that speed is of the essence.

"You have to act quickly, so using a fast and effective antibiotic that starts killing all the major causes of bacterial pneumonia within 30 minutes offers a better chance of achieving speedy calf recovery. Achieving a rapid and effective cure, which limits permanent lung damage, is the absolute priority when it comes to cutting the total costs of the disease," he stresses.

As a result antibiotic treatment alone is generally not enough. Like most vets he advocates the use of an anti-inflammatory drug in combination with the antibiotic.

"Unless you act extremely quickly, the reality is most cattle visibly affected by pneumonia suffer from some degree of lung damage – but this can be minimised by the simultaneous control of bacterial infection and local inflammation," he says.

He points out that market research has indicated that whilst 78% of vets in the UK routinely use an anti-inflammatory when treating cattle pneumonia, only 14% of cattle producers use one on farm.

"The use of effective anti-inflammatory treatment in combination with fast, effective and proven antibiotic therapy – such as provided by the new, single injection Resflor treatment – is now the gold standard pneumonia treatment protocol. Not only does it help minimise permanent lung damage, it also enables better penetration of the antibiotic into the lung tissues to speed up recovery."

