



NEW ERA FOR PNEUMONIA TREATMENT

Now that beef producers no longer have the safety net of age related payments to cushion less effective production, veterinary experts are urging Simmental producers to talk to their vet about the latest advances in lung protection therapy (LPT) before the peak pneumonia season. LPT delivers fast, visible recovery from pneumonia, whilst also preserving optimum lifetime growth rates.

According to Royal Veterinary College specialist in Cattle Health and Production John Fishwick from the Royal Veterinary College, 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 disease. But once pneumonia strikes, performance-compromising lung damage can develop very quickly unless Simmental producers act fast with a proven treatment protocol.

"Pneumonia infections can quickly damage lungs and once this happens the animal will not be able to express its full genetic potential," he stresses.

"This means that even if the affected animal survives it is likely to have damaged lungs for the rest of its life, and this will reduce productivity and growth."

To try and prevent pneumonia-induced permanent lung damage, John Fishwick maintains that a combination of anti-inflammatory drug treatment with fast, effective and proven antibiotic therapy is the way forward in the modern cattle production era.

"If your treatment is given early and combines an anti-inflammatory and an antibiotic, it will reduce the amount of lung inflammation and fluid in the lung air sacs (alveoli). Combination treatment will also reduce fever and pain – which means the animal will be more likely to return to feeding quickly and become productive again.

"But not only does a combination of anti-inflammatory treatment with antibiotic therapy help prevent permanent lung damage, by improving blood flow it may also assist delivery of more of the antibiotic to the infected areas of the lung – allowing the antibiotic to reach the sites of infection more quickly and effectively, and increase recovery rates," he points out.

When it comes to tackling pneumonia successfully on farm this winter, Schering-Plough's Andrew Montgomery MRCVS says it is now much easier for Simmental producers to treat the disease quickly and effectively, whilst at the same time minimising the permanent lung damage that pneumonia can cause. Batch treatment strategies for apparently healthy animals when more than 20% of animals in a group are affected should also be considered.

"Thanks to the launch last year of the innovative, new combination anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory pneumonia treatment Resflor, effective disease treatment and lung protection can now be achieved extremely simply – all via a single injection," he says.

"Extensive licensing trials confirm that Resflor starts killing pneumonia bacteria within 30 minutes and high concentrations reach all areas of the lung within six hours to minimise permanent lung damage. Trial findings that have been confirmed in practical efficacy studies carried out on UK farms last winter."

Positive Feedback

Under trial conditions, seventeen different pneumonia outbreaks were treated last winter involving 121 animals on commercial UK units. On the first veterinary visit, calf temperatures were taken as an indication of the severity of the pneumonia with depression and respiratory scores also recorded. The animals were then treated with Resflor and as little as six hours later vets re-visited the units to assess the success of the treatment.

"All calves that were particularly sick – identified as those with a start temperature of 104°F or over (mean 104.8°F) – recorded as much as a 2.2°F fall within six hours of the Resflor injection, with the average temperature falling to well below the accepted 103°F fever threshold," Andrew Montgomery reports.

"The calves' respiratory and depression scores also improved within six hours. Farmers also reported significant visible improvements and marked animal recovery immediately post-treatment,"

Vets Evan David and Julia James from the Larkmead Vet Group in Oxfordshire attended six of the trial outbreaks between them. "On the whole the results were pretty conclusive on the farms we attended," reports Evan David.

"In all the cases, Resflor demonstrated good speed of action with significant improvements in temperature, respiratory rate and depression. All the farmers were impressed with the rate of animal recovery and its lasting effect with no need for re-treatment."

Julia James even reports one client now referring to Resflor as 'my magic drug'. "After using it on some particularly dull and listless sick calves in the morning he claimed that by evening feeding time he could no longer tell which animals had been ill."

