

Attica Veterinary Associates

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Newsletter – September 2022

October is Not Summer

As September is winding down we look to October, always a month of contrasts. Cold in the morning and warm in the afternoon. We see calves bouncing around in the noonday warmth. We do not see them shivering at 4:00 AM trying to maintain their 102° core body temperature. With an average of about 49° for October during 2000-2008, calves averaged a deficit of about 16° from their comfort zone.

Nutritional Challenge

At the beginning of October, about ten percent more energy is needed to maintain the same growth as in the summer. By the end of the month, feeding twenty percent more energy will just keep us even with our June-August growth rates. What if we are feeding milk replacer? We have two options. One is to feed extra volume just as a person would do with feeding whole milk. Start adding an extra pint per feeding at the beginning of October. And, work up to an extra quart per feeding by the end of the month.

Alternatively, the same volume may be fed as in the summer but increase the powder concentration per quart. If summer feeding means mixing milk replacer using eight ounces of powder to make two quarts of mix, then at the end of October a twenty percent increase in energy means using ten ounces to make two quarts of mix.

Feeding Whole Milk

For every quart of whole milk we fed for the summer, at the beginning of October ten percent more means adding an extra pint per feeding. An extra twenty percent means adding close to an extra quart each feeding by the end of October.

Fall Care for Pastured Heifers

Dewormer: Every dairy magazine and newsletter in the fall reminds us to worm pastured heifers. That advice is valuable. Intestinal parasites reduce total nutrient absorption. Reductions in nutrient absorption lead to lower growth rates. Fortunately, there are various forms of de-wormer to make application convenient. Dewormers can be added to the heifer feed, injected, or used as a “pour-on” application. Currently, we have no reports of resistant parasites locally, suggesting the products are effective. Deworming is also cost-effective because the same amount of feed produces more growth when you’re feeding just the heifer instead of the heifer + worms.

We stock at least two “pour on” wormers – Cydectin and Eprinex. Both are applied at the dose of 1mL/22lbs. Check with us to get current pricing. We stock larger containers which, when deworming heifers and cows at the same time, may be more cost-effective.

Housing Recommendations: First, count the heifers to go into your housing. Then, evaluate the square footage available for the pastured heifers. The space that was adequate when the heifers went out in May could very well be insufficient now due to growth while the heifers were pastured.

The guidelines for space on a bedded pack depend on the size of the heifer. For heifers 6mo-1yr old, a minimum of 30 sq ft per heifer is suggested. For heifers older than 1 year, the recommended area is at least 40 sq ft per heifer. Housing that was big enough for nine month olds in May is likely going to be packed tightly for these breeding size heifers now.

Feedbunk space is another critical item to check. Six to nine month old heifers may have sufficient space with one foot per animal (ideally 15 in). The recommendation for heifers 9-12mo old is 18in and for heifers over 1yo is 20in. Feedbunk space that was barely adequate in May will be packed too tightly in October. Too little space at the feedbunk will not hold back all of the heifers – the aggressive eaters will continue to mature at normal rates but the less pushy ones will lose out. These less pushy heifers often take an extra month or two to get bred or may calve at a lighter weight than desired.

Fall Vaccinations

For those of you that vaccinate in the spring and fall, it is that time of year again. It is important to booster the immune system from your spring shots. Vaccines should be boosted every 6 months for the most effective protection. We highly recommend including Haemophilus (Somubac) in your vaccination schedule. This bacteria causes a wide variety of problems ranging from pneumonia, “brainers” and joint infections in calves to infertility and abortions in cows. For open, young stock, we recommend modified live vaccines and Somubac. Modified live vaccines will give longer protection, as much as 3 times longer than killed products. This will provide the best foundation for first time vaccinates. Remember, if it is the first time the animal has ever been vaccinated they must receive a booster 2-4 weeks after the initial vaccination. Also, some animals may have an acute anaphylactic reaction to the vaccine components, so be sure to keep Epinephrine on hand just in case. ALSO, be sure to read you vaccine bottle for the proper dosage and route of administration, and other important factors!

The following is a listing of the viruses and bacteria that we aim to protect your cows against with our vaccines:

- IBR Virus (Infectious bovine rhinotrachitis)
- PI3 (Parainfluenza type 3) - BVD Virus (Bovine virus diarrhea)
- BRSV Virus (Bovine respiratory syncytial virus)
- Haemophilus bacteria
- Leptospirosis bacteria

Please discuss vaccine protocols with your veterinarian to address challenges your animals may face and opportunities to prevent or reduce disease. Our technicians also offer vaccination service to help ensure animals are vaccinated in a timely fashion. Call the clinic for more information or to set something up.