

Attica Veterinary Associates

September 2020



Thoracic Ultrasound in Calves

Recently, we have been dealing with many cases of bovine respiratory disease (BRD), including some pretty horrific cases of pneumonia, in our practice area. When we examine a possible case of pneumonia in a calf or heifer, we will auscultate the lung fields with a stethoscope, take a rectal temperature, and look for outward signs of respiratory disease, such as nasal or ocular discharge. Even though we try to be very careful with our physical/clinical exam, a clinical exam is only approximately 60% sensitive for diagnosing BRD. If we JUST used auscultation alone, we would be <10% sensitive for diagnosing BRD! So, what does this mean? Well, sensitivity is a test's ability to correctly detect ill patients who actually HAVE the condition. In the example of a medical test used to identify a disease (in this case clinical exam or auscultation), the sensitivity of the test is the proportion of animals who test positive for the disease among those who have the disease. Does this mean the best we can do as veterinarians for diagnosing BRD is 60%? No way! We are able to use thoracic ultrasound.

Thoracic ultrasound is superior for detection of BRD because its sensitivity exceeds 88%, and, believe it or not, ultrasound is more sensitive than necropsy in many instances. How can this be? Ultrasound is able to see INSIDE the lung in a live animal, while you would have to make numerous slices through the lung to see smaller lesions on necropsy. So, why else would we use thoracic ultrasound? In calves, 1/3 of new BRD cases are subclinical (the calf or heifer does not show outward signs of disease) and often times the severity of lung disease is not correlated to clinical signs.

Thoracic ultrasound is fast, is able to pick up both subclinical and clinical animals, and can help your herd both in the short term and in the long term. For the short term, by determining which calves have pathology, which calves respond to treatment, and which calves don't respond to treatment, you can selectively cull the calves that will not grow and become "poor-doers". In the long term, it is known that calves with lung lesions will not produce as much milk when they go into the lactating herd (1,200 lbs. of milk less in lactation 1), they have a decreased pregnancy risk (they have a hard time getting pregnant), and they have an increased risk of death or removal from the herd. By using thoracic ultrasound, you will also be able to cut back on antibiotic usage by only treating the animals that REALLY need it AND you will not have to treat animals for a second or third time, if they do not respond to treatment. Antibiotics are not likely to help calves or heifers that have subclinical disease, so instead these animals need to be removed from the herd.

If you are buying animals in, it may be wise to implement a pre-purchase exam where the calves or heifers receive a full physical exam and thoracic ultrasound evaluation. If there are lung lesions present, it would be wise to know this before you get stuck with these "duds" in your herd.

So, what's the takeaway? Do not let BRD silently ravage your herds! Thoracic ultrasound can help you make smart treatment and culling decisions. Give us a call if you are interested in having us out for a thoracic ultrasound evaluation.

Kunafin Fly Control Update

Final 2020 shipments will be mailed the last week of September. Please consider starting Kunafin applications in April-May 2020 for optimal results. If you have questions concerning Kunafin – contact our route truck driver Roy – 585-297-6488.

Fall Vaccinations

Worried about getting your fall vaccines done? We generally recommend at least a 9- or 10-way killed respiratory vaccine with the potential for additional vaccines based on your disease concerns. 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.

Streamline Your Orders

To improve the ordering process, we can now accept orders via text message at 585-356-3420 or email avacattltek@icloud.com. Please allow 12-24 hours for fulfillment.

FOR SALE

100 CalfTel hutches with hardware & Wire Panels.

Very good condition - \$225 (\$235 if need disassembled for travel)

Jim Woods 585-590-9115

Wanted: Heifers to board – Age 2-6mos, room for 100-120 – contact Jim Woods 585-590-9115
