



*From the desk of Dr. Michelle Borek-Stine
... March 1, 2015*

Winter is almost over...at least we hope so. Aside from the extreme cold, this winter has had exceptional meetings and conferences. We here at Thumb Vets have been attending as many as possible to continue to give you up to date information. MSU Extension put on an employee management conference that many of you attended. They also had a calf meeting in Bad Axe. We have had great turnout at our in clinic meetings. We, the vets, are learning a lot from you as well as from our speakers. I want to share some of the highlights of these meetings.

MICHIGAN VET CONFERENCE: There is a new tool that we will be getting soon that measures vacuum levels at the claw. In working with dairies, Dr. Erskine has seen huge variations in vacuum levels which can lead to teat end damage, over milking and thus higher somatic cell counts. Somatic cell counts are increasing at some dairies. Aside from training our employees about somatic cells you **must** also perform regular maintenance on your parlor. One or two bad pulsators or inflations can ruin your somatic cell counts.

Dr. Sandra Godden discussed calves and reinforced colostrum management. It sounds repetitive but it is THE MOST IMPORTANT thing we can do for the future of your operations. It has to be harvested and fed cleanly and on time. 1 gallon in first 4 hours of life. Remember colostrum is more than antibodies. It has high fat content and lots of vitamins that are essential for building the immune system. Calves are born with 2-3% fat, it will get burned up in that first day if they are cold and wet. We need to supplement them as soon as possible. Do not keep colostrum in the fridge for more than 36 hours.

MSU EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT: On boarding: It is a term used by commercial industries for bringing team members into the group. Matt Wood from Vita Plus had great tips for seeking employees and what to do on their first day. Pick 3-4 things from the following list and focus on them this month.

Do not forget the night shift. Make an effort to stop in on that shift and work with them.

- Advertise what your current employees like most about working for you
- Have your ads and job descriptions be real, creative and specific about personal qualities you want. Don't settle for leftovers, proactively seek good applicants
- Clearly define the rules and consequences from the start
- **Make their first day special** and allow new employees to grow into their full responsibilities
- Give a tour of entire operation, not just the area they are working in. It takes everyone to run a dairy.
- No feedback is negative feedback.

- Where there are several managers, have an organizational chart for organization, then follow it!
- Share the value of the **total compensation** package for employees (including value of insurance, housing, product, etc.)

IN CLINIC CALF MEETING: Dr. Kate Anderson from Milk Specialties Global gave our February calf meeting on proper mixing of milk replacer. Osmolarity is the term used to describe the concentration of solids in a liquid. The goal is 12-14% solids, anything over 18% can cause serious scour issues. When the concentration is high, water from the cells goes into the gut to equal out the solids. This causes diarrhea. Fat, however, does not contribute to this number. So in cold times like February, adding a fat supplement, not more powder is more advantageous because it will not cause diarrhea and give them more energy. You can check your osmolarity with a Brix refractometer (also check colostrum quality). Get one, they are great tools!

UPCOMING IN CLINIC MEETINGS

March 4th, 5pm Herdsman Training: Going for the Gold, the dry cow is key! Signs to look for to prevent fresh cow problems, it all starts in the dry pen.

March 18th, 5pm Calf Personnel: Keeping a clean house, tips for easy effective cleanliness.

WINTER MEETING AT PALMS PARISH CENTER

April 2, 10am-1:30pm. High Performance Repro Herds

Dr. Richard Pursley, MSU and a local producer panel with tips on how to get her bred. A formal invite will follow, mark your calendar.

Bovine Ecolizer and Bar Guard 99 are on indefinite backorder. You may want to consider 1st Defense **TUBE** as an alternative. We do still have 16 tubes of Bovine Ecolizer +C20 at the clinic for anyone interested.

We have implemented a \$10 charge for pick up or drop offs at the farm. We will remind you of this charge when you call in and an alternative to the charge may be available.

Time change March 8th, clocks spring forward!

2007 Chevy Colorado Extended Cab 4 X 4 for sale. 232,000 miles, very good condition. Make an offer. Contact Jeff 810-376-2425 ext 129 to check it out.