



From the desk of Dr. Leon Roggenbuck, DVM
January 1st, 2017

As I sit to write this article it is Christmas Eve. As I get older the Christmas season prompts me to genuinely appreciate the blessings in my life. Hopefully you are all feeling blessed too. After all, you survived 2016 and next year is looking better! Milk futures are up and beef prices are expected to improve also.

At Thumb Veterinary Services we are also seeing light at the end of the tunnel on another challenge; the requirement for a Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD). Dr. Gordon wrote a very informative article last month on this issue, so I feel no need to repeat a lot of new rules and regulations. I just want to assure you that we are overcoming the obstacles one by one and expect the process to be quite streamlined with our Global Link Software program.

The most important thing for everyone to realize is that it will not be "business as usual" with the use of antibiotics in feed. We can no longer use antibiotics in an extra label manner in feed. The practice of feeding Chlortetracycline to calves for months at a time has become relatively common and it will no longer be allowed. It is only labeled for 5 days of feeding to prevent or treat respiratory infections in cattle. We can continue to use Chlortetracycline in feed but we will need to target it for high risk times. How and when we use it will be determined by many factors unique to your individual operation.

Truthfully, the feeding of chlortetracycline for months at a time probably was not beneficial anyway. Constant exposure to low dose antibiotics always leads to the selection of pathogens that are resistant to that antibiotic. Let's say, for example, that you have a seasonal incidence of respiratory disease in weaned calves 8-12 weeks of age in the spring and fall. If you fed Chlortetracycline to calves from 3 weeks of age to 4 months of age year around, then you cannot expect it to do much good for you when you really need it. We have already been selecting for resistant organisms for 5 weeks before the calf reaches its higher risk time. Also, the organisms being shed by the older calves, in the next pen over, are certainly resistant! A better practice would be to feed Chlortetracycline at the first sign of trouble during these higher risk times.

One thing is certain, political pressure, consumer pressure and the very real adaptability of microbes will continue to force us to use every tool in our tool box to keep our livestock healthy.

One new tool we have is called Imrestor™. It is an injection of a natural Cytokine that will quadruple the white blood cell count of cows. Its effects are rapid, within 36 hours, and lasts for 7 days. Its cost is \$14.00 per dose on drop ship. It is labeled to be given to cows 4 – 10 days prior to calving and at calving. It is currently only labeled for prevention of clinical mastitis during this immunosuppressed time of a cows' life. The implication for reducing the incidence and severity of metritis and pneumonia during this time is compelling. I hope that more information will be forthcoming on the economics of using this product. It is the usual dilemma we have in the dairy field. It is very easy to calculate the expense but difficult to calculate the benefit. I am confident in recommending that everyone have it on hand to use for cows and heifers that we expect will need it. For example, any animal that has twins, milk fever, or a difficult calving should get a dose of Imrestor™. We know these animals are profoundly immunosuppressed and it only makes sense that they would benefit from it. One dose after calving will certainly not work as well as the label recommendation of 2 doses but I have to believe it will help.

So, to wrap up, I want you to be aware of the changes that are coming and take note that we are doing our part to make this transition an easy one for all of us. I hope you have a wonderful and prosperous 2017! Happy New Year!



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