

Haskell County Animal Hospital

ANIMAL HEALTH UPDATE

Bill Hessman DVM
P. O. Box 876
Sublette, Ks. 67877
620-675-8180

BOVINE VIRAL DIARRHEA (BVD) **Part III "Control"**

Notice the title says control and not prevention or cure. Due to the nature of this virus as described in BVD parts I and II, the best we can do at this point is control. Persistently infected calves cause our problems in the feedyard. We cannot correct a PI problem at the yard. The only method to reduce the number of PI's is proper management and vaccination of the cowherd. Until this happens we will deal with persistently infected animals in the feedyard.

It's possible that in the future we will have a cost-effective, quick, chute-side test that would allow us to identify these animals on arrival at the yard. With positive identification, these animals could be quarantined and fed separately to decrease the spread of BVD to susceptible animals. Granted most of these PI animals would die during the feeding period but it would decrease the morbidity and mortality in susceptible pen mates.

This is the most likely method of control, as I do not see management and vaccination of the herds occurring. Why? The greatest percentage of feeder animals comes from herds of less than 40 cows or the hobby farmer. The majority of these small herds follows only a minimal herd health program and do not feel they will see any return by improving their program. It is because of this scenario that I feel we will always deal with PI animals. However, we need to manage the PI animal in a manner to decrease its effects on the balance of the pen.

Until we have an effective, chute-side test we need to manage the non-PI animal. How do we do that? Make certain, through management that we provide the best, broad-spectrum immunity possible to make the non-PI animal less susceptible to BVD. This is not accomplished just with vaccination. The whole management picture needs to be evaluated, preferably prior to arrival at the yard. Stocker operators and backgrounders need to follow sound nutritional, husbandry and health programs that are integrated with the yard that will be finishing the cattle.

Choosing the correct BVD vaccine is important. Not all vaccines provide equal protection. Modified live BVD vaccines provide good cross-protecting immunity and stimulate both antibody production and cell-mediated protection. Killed BVD vaccines stimulate antibody production but only a weak cell-mediated immune response. In addition, killed BVD vaccines do not provide adequate cross protection against other strains of BVD. You also have a choice of using a Type I, or combination Type I and II vaccine. Is it advantageous to add a Type II strain to your program? Type I protects against Type II but during times of high stress or massive challenge the addition of a Type II strain may be beneficial. Currently there are over 160 licensed BVD vaccines available on the market to choose from. Depending on your program, different vaccines may be required to provide the best immunity for BVD.