



April 2016 NEWSLETTER

Commodity Pricing Reality:

Milk is a commodity as far as pricing is concerned. It's like corn or oil or gold. The only way it differs is that it doesn't store very well. One of the lessons about commodities is that shortages drive prices excessively high, as speculators step in and bid up the futures. This always drives up production. Look at oil or corn. Production of the commodity is increased with capital investment. With milk, the investment is new dairy farms or additions. With corn, over a million acres of additional land are growing row crops in the last 10 years. Fracking in new oil fields and oil wells miles deep in the ocean have increased production.

At the same time, high commodity prices drive consumers to find alternative commodities or to use less. High beef prices have been great for pork and chicken prices.

Another lesson is that when commodity prices drop, they tend to stay down for extended periods. Look at the charts. Oil was over 100 dollars a barrel, dropped below 30, and now the economic magazines are saying that 60 would be really good. Once the investment is made to increase production in a commodity, the investment needs to be paid for.

The concern is that milk will probably stay down longer than any of us want or can afford. The reality is that everyone should be thinking about 'what if' milk stays at or below \$15 for two years. Now is the time to make some management decisions to address tough times ahead.

Last week, I read that 50% of the oil firms that are fracking will probably go bankrupt in the next two years. The sad thing is that the wells will probably keep flowing, just be owned by someone else.

Bovine Leukosis:

This is the most common cause of cancer in cattle. Tumors form in lymphatic tissue and are seen in front of the stifles, the shoulder joints, at the top rear of the udder and internally. Occasionally they will form behind the eye and one eye will start to bulge out of the cow's head. Tumors also occur in the stomach of the cow and will cause bleeding ulcers.

The cancer is caused by a virus that is transmitted through blood, and spread by needles, tattoo equipment, biting insects, feeding unpasteurized colostrum and milk, and perhaps veterinary sleeves. Control programs need to address all forms of transmission or none.

The tumors are most prevalent in animals from three to five years old. Although the virus is commonly found in the cattle population, less than five percent of cattle that have the virus in their system will get tumors.

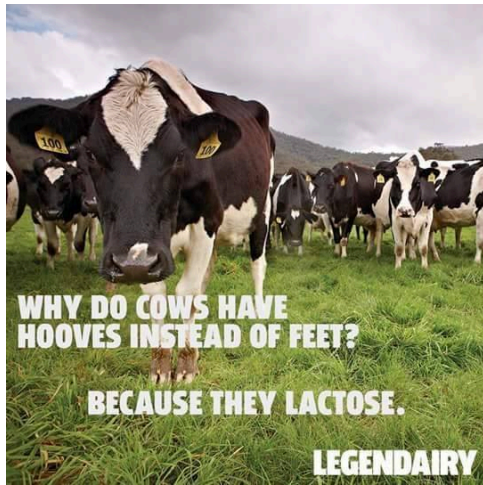
It is my feeling that there is probably some triggering that occurs within a herd. I've tended to see clusters of cows get the disease within a month or two, even though half the cows in the herd were infected.

J-5 Vaccination.

J-5 is the generic term used for the vaccines designed to lessen the severity of coliform mastitis. There are three different products on the market, the newest product from Merck is Bovilis J-5. This is the time of year to be reviewing your J-5 vaccine program with your Veterinarian of Record. If you have coliform problems primarily in the summer, and you should whole-herd vaccinate in the spring, with three shots at least three weeks apart. Therefore the first part of April is the time to start to get a high level of immunity by the first of June. If you have questions, ask us!

New Product

Lutalyse HighCon is a new formulation of Lutalyse. It is the drug as the 5ml Lutalyse, but it comes in a 2ml dose that is approved for sub-Q and IM dosing.



Sole ulcers and abscesses on the bottom of toes:

Recent research on a large number of animals showed that several antibacterial products applied to the open sore on the bottom of a cow's toe and then bandaged in place actually delayed healing significantly. The products included tetracycline and copper sulfate. These caused increased granulation tissue or 'proud flesh'. The research recommendation is to just leave the bottom of the foot open and block the good toe. Years ago we would squirt a product called Koppertox, which was a copper product dissolved in diesel fuel, on the bottom of the foot and let the cow go. The Koppertox was probably gone in minutes. We also didn't use hoof blocks, which are the single best invention for sore toes in cows. Without question, bandages left on for more than 48 hours are the worst for healing, especially when a foot is dipped in manure.

The Future:

Although we may not agree with it, the future of legislation often rests in California. With that in mind, California has banned all over the counter sales of antibiotics for food producing animals. Even penicillin is available only by prescription. Europe has been this way for years.



Highway 49 construction:

This summer highway 49 through Waupun is being torn up and repaved. It will be done in two parts. The first part is currently ripped up and 49 is closed from downtown, west to the BP-Holiday store. This means the intersection of Savage Road, (old MM) and Main St is closed. There are side streets parallel to 49 that are open, but if you need to just visit our clinic on the the west end, you probably want to come into town from the west.

Later this summer the stretch from the Holiday store west to Farm and Home will be torn up. This is the stretch in front of our clinic. You will have to go two blocks South of the clinic and come in from the South. The side road is Harris. We'll try to put a map in the newsletter when 49 is about to be torn up in front of the office.