



August 2017 NEWSLETTER

Merial and BI are combining into one company so that Cystorelin, Synchsure, Today, Tomorrow, Bovikal, Long Range, and many other products will be handled by one company. The direct impact on your dairy may be on pricing programs where multiple products sold by one company will be discounted with an annual volume target. Zoetis currently does this and labels it "Leaders Edge".

Interesting comment by an ag-banker recently: When the DNR requires facilities updates to meet environmental rules, the farmers historically would add cows to pay for the updates (or get grants). These are updates that don't return any money on the investment you make. Now, with cash flow and profitability at a low, lenders are reluctant to lend for herd expansion, and the represented bank is concerned with how DNR requirements are going to get paid for.

Freemartin Testing:

With the industry overflowing with heifers and most facilities packed full, some producers are embracing genomic testing at a very young age to cull their poorer animals before they invest in them. This is a great idea. An even better return is testing heifers twin to a bull for the freemartin condition, because the 90% of these animals are non-fertile. They will never breed or milk which makes them worse than the worst genomic animal on your farm.

Synchsure Program 25% off Special:

Synchsure is the generic molecule of Estrumate manufactured by Merial. It is a 2 ml dose IM prostaglandin, handled and dosed like Estrumate. The current program requires a purchase of 400 doses, which is 8 bottles, 100ml each or 50 doses per bottle. At this level there is a 25% discount off their regular price, plus after our discount, the drop ship and web purchases will net out at 73.90 a bottle, or \$1.47/dose. On top of that there is a 4.50 per bottle rebate from Merial that effectively nets the cost to \$1.40 a dose. Compared to \$2.30/dose for Estrumate and \$2.52/dose for lutalyse, this is one heck of a deal. This special is available through drop ship or our MWI web site through the end of August, or we can special order it for you at the office. Again, you need multiples of 400 doses.

Thoughts on LGM-Dairy and MPP dairy and how dairy farmers get the dry teat :

LGM-Dairy and MPP programs are promoted as insurance programs, which they are, but not in the same mathematical context as most insurance that

you're familiar with. With car insurance, you get paid for damage., with hail insurance, you get paid for damage. However with LGM and MPP, the insurance company (or government) gets to average your expenses and income over multiple months, so that really bad months effectively get erased. This is an important concept when you buy these programs, especially when you calculate how the deductible works. It looks like MPP may be changed and improved, and the averaging may be removed or minimized so that bad months are actually bad months.

I still really like options, but they have a downside in that you have to pay a premium for time. However, there is no insurance company taking a cut, you know the only cost is the commission.

Additionally, in support of LGM and MPP, as long as the USDA is subsidizing a program, the farmer will probably come out ahead in the end.

Vaccine Pointers the Vaccine Product:

Vaccine handling is critical for the vaccine to work. You are delivering either a live virus to the animal, and that virus has to be able to start multiplying to stimulate the animal's immunity, or in the case of killed vaccines, you are delivering a very large dose of a protein molecule that will also stimulate immunity. With the killed the shape of the protein is critical for the vaccine to work. In the case of a killed vaccine, you are delivering a stimulant (adjuvant) to make the immune system think there is an immune crisis.

In the case of the live virus, the virus is pretty frail, and if you kill it, it won't work even though all the components are still present. Therefore handling the vaccine is really critical. The live vaccines are usually vaccines that are mixed just prior to use. These need to be kept cool prior to use. There are built in safeguards to give you some leeway like taking it home in an 80 degree truck, or the vaccine getting warm during shipping for a few hours. Once we get the vaccine, we should assume that the safeguards have been used up and we are going to handle the vaccine correctly from that point forward.

Keep it cool, and out of direct sunlight. Don't leave it in the truck in the summer while talking at the feed mill, or put it on the dash in the winter with the defroster on.

Mix it and use it. Mix each bottle as you need it. Assume you have 60 minutes to use the vaccine up after mixing, and remember, the number of virus particles is shrinking from the second you mix.

Keep the vaccine cool once you mix it, and out of the sunlight. Don't let it freeze prior to using in a cold winter barn, and don't leave it sitting on a bale in the sun in the summer. Think minimal sun and temperature stability.

Beware of disinfectants. Disinfecting equipment is always a good idea except when vaccines are involved. The delicate live vaccines die right away when they are exposed to really low doses of disinfectants. With the tougher killed vaccines, the protein molecules change shape and break apart and fail to stimulate the immune response you want when exposed to disinfectants. Clean multi-dose syringes with water, and if you do use a disinfectant at some point, then rinse, rinse, and rinse some more. In the case of vaccines, consider soap as a disinfectant. It has the same effect on vaccines. Disinfectants are inactivated by dirt so they are designed to work when there is some dirt, but there is no dirt in a vaccine bottle so traces of disinfectant kill live virus.

With killed vaccines, there is more stability, but sun and especially heat will start to break the protein molecules down and change their shape, and they will not be as effective. Think of them as being digested, and the desired immune response won't occur.

With killed vaccines especially, the large amount of protein molecules combined with adjuvant means that giving several different killed vaccines at once can cause some big time problems, so make sure your veterinarian is OK with which vaccines you are giving at the same time or within a few days.

Never mix vaccines together, and don't interchange syringes.

Mad Cow disease in Alabama:

Mad Cow disease in Alabama: A cow has been diagnosed with atypical BSE, (Mad Cow Disease) which is a variant of the BSE outbreak that occurred in Europe. There have been a total of 5 cases diagnosed in the United States since the original European outbreak in the late 80's, with only one, (the first case), being the classical form that is known to infect people. That first case was in an animal imported from Canada. This new atypical case should have no impact on the US export market. The classical form is linked to feeding meat and bone meal from diseased sheep. The United States has an awesome interlocking system of preventative and monitoring systems to prevent an outbreak like what occurred in Europe. They include no production of meat and bone meal from sheep, extensive monitoring and eradication of Scrapie, (the disease that Mad Cow originated from), no feeding of any meat and bone meal to cattle, and extensive surveillance programs to find infected cows. Of note: Chronic Wasting Disease or CWD of deer is a similar organism and there is no preventative or monitoring systems to control it.

Employees need to know how to handle vaccines, not just the rules, but the why.

Interesting Skin Disease:

Recently at a monthly vet meeting we got discussing an interesting skin infection that is occasionally seen in cattle, but more commonly seen in horses. It's caused by a bacteria called *Dermatophilus*, but the disease is usually called "Rain Scald". The condition causes small raised nodules, from a quarter inch to an inch around, usually on the skin of the neck or back, and it can cover a large area of the animal. When you scrape at the nodules a scab with the hair flakes off and there is a wet area that contains pus. Although the disease usually clears up on its own, antibiotics help in severe cases, and scraping the scabs off and applying iodine is effective, although time consuming. Wet weather and high humidity bring on the condition.