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## **PNEUMONIA IN COWS TREATMENT PROTOCOLS**

Pneumonia in adult dairy cattle most often is associated with one or more of the 4 common respiratory viruses, **BVD, IBR, BRSV, and PI3**. These are diseases that are commonly vaccinated against. A number of effective vaccines, both killed and modified live, are available. The selection of vaccine depends on the capability to keep track of which and when animals need to be vaccinated, the particular viruses present in the herd, and, often, the overall health of the herd. For example, modified live vaccines generally provide quicker and longer lasting protection but their use may be limited by pregnancy while killed vaccines can be used for whole herd vaccination. Because of the stress dairy cows are under, many farms need to vaccinate 2 or more times a year. **Pasteurellosis** is a common secondary bacterial infection. The bacteria are normal inhabitants of the throat and upper airway where they do no harm. Any insult to the lungs (like the viruses and poor ventilation) or decreased immunity (like from shipping or moldy feed) will allow the bacteria to move into the lungs where they cause most of the damage. Although the viruses cannot be treated with antibiotics, treating the bacterial infection is very important. Equally important is resolving any ventilation problems that might exist. Other less common causes of pneumonia in cows in the Upper Midwest are **hemophilus and mycoplasma**. **Lungworm** infestations in pastured cattle do occur but can be controlled with treatments like Eprinex or various ivermectin products.

Some very mildly affected cows (normal temperature, fair to good appetite, mild cough, slightly snotty nose) may not need treatment or, perhaps, just aspirin.

Sicker cows (with higher fevers, poor appetite, depression, labored breathing, severe coughs, etc.) will require antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs, and supportive care. Obviously, the sicker the cow, the more support she will need. **Cows that are struggling to breathe may get short of oxygen if they are tied up to get intravenous treatments and can die. Try using a halter with the loop passed through the mouth instead of around the jaw. The cow can mouth-breathe that way.**

Effective antibiotics with no milk withholding approved for use in treating pneumonia in dairy cows include Naxcel, Excenel, Certiflex, and Excede and are a good first choice for treatment. Other choices include Polyflex, Sulfadimethoxine 40%, LA200, and Albon boluses. Because bacterial culture and antibiotic sensitivity testing are rarely done initially (because a post-mortem examination is required to obtain the specimens), drug choice is based on herd experience and cost (including dumped milk). Dosages are based on body weight. **PLEASE CHECK WITHHOLDING TIMES.**

Anti-inflammatory, fever-reducing drugs like aspirin and Banamine (Flunixin) (**WITHHOLDING**) are very helpful in helping the cow feel better and eat more. Dosages and routes of administration should follow label instructions.

Many veterinarians like to administer an intranasal IBR/PI3 vaccine (Nasalgen or TSV2) early in a pneumonia outbreak, even in vaccinated herds, because this is thought to stimulate immunity.