Dairyland Initiative
SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Calf Health Module – #WeanClean

This module is an educational resource and will serve as a spring board for troubleshooting disease as well as learning the ultrasound and respiratory scoring techniques, and provide general management information (e.g. nutrition, sanitation, etc).

#WeanClean™ Philosophy

Mission: Use lung ultrasound to promote calf health management that maximizes every calf's potential to begin and transition through the weaning process with clean, healthy lungs.

Guiding Principles:

The guiding principle of **#WeanClean™** is that calves with healthy, ultrasonographically clean lungs will maintain growth during weaning and will be less likely to require antibiotics for clinical respiratory disease following weaning.

To promote **#WeanClean™**, use this **4-point ultrasound strategy** to measure lung disease at weaning, determine detection and treatment efficiencies, and identify high risk age-groups for follow-up management.

1. **Start of weaning** – how many have pneumonia at the start of weaning? **Goal: < 15%**
2. **Start of treatment** – how many score > 3 or < 2 at their first treatment? **Goal: < 15%**
3. **7-10 d after treatment** – how many score > 2 after their first treatment? **Goal: < 15%**
4. **12×7 scans** – starting at 7d of age, scan 12 at 7d intervals to find high-risk age group

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There are only a few general reasons for missing these goals. Understanding these reasons provides a **framework for troubleshooting** respiratory disease as well as many of the other significant causes of poor health and welfare in young dairy cattle.

- **Too many calves weaning with dirty lungs?** 3 reasons – they weren't treated, weren't treated right, or poor innate immunity delays response to treatment
- **Too many calves with normal or excessively high lung scores at first treatment?** 3 reasons – non-respiratory conditions are manifesting as respiratory disease (e.g. sepsis, toxemia, acidosis), we don't spend enough time physically looking at the right calves, or we fail to recognize early signs of clinical respiratory disease
- **Too many calves with high lung scores after first treatment?** 3 reasons – we used right drug in wrong way (late, wrong dose, duration, frequency), used wrong drug (wrong class, resistant bug), or poor innate immunity delays response
- **Who are the high-risk calves and does age at first treatment reflect this reality?** Use 12×7 scans to confirm onset of disease, train treaters to focus on the right calves, and develop an early detection and treatment program

Weaning is stressful. Calves need to cope not only with changes to their diet, but to changes in housing, social interactions, and processing interventions such as vaccinations. Failing to prevent and adequately cure respiratory disease results in a large population of calves that must now undergo this already stressful time with chronic, typically subclinical, pneumonia which affects performance and is a welfare issue. As caretakers, veterinarians, and consultants, we need to make sure that calves wean with clean lungs. **#WeanClean**

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