

Topic of the Month

Mystery Down Calf

Recently I was called to examine a three month old heifer calf that was unable to stand. On examination, I found no signs of injury, the vital signs were all normal, and the calf showed no signs of diarrhea or pneumonia (two of the most common diseases that make calves unable to get up). To confound the situation the calf was eating well and was very alert. In addition, although it was not fat, it was not emaciated either. On questioning, the owner said that the calf was small for the group of pen-mates, and the owner had observed the calf being pushed back from the grain trough, although it had adequate opportunity to eat hay and corn silage.

After thorough examination, I was not able to find an obvious cause for sickness. Based on the history I suggested that this calf may be suffering from White Muscle Disease, a disease caused by a shortage of selenium. I recommended that the calf be treated with a mix of vitamin E and selenium, once a week for three weeks, and that the animal be given an antibiotic for a week to 10 days to prevent secondary infection. Calves with selenium disease have lessened immunity in addition to not being able to stand. To my delight, the client reported the calf was able to stand on its own at almost three weeks to the day. When presented with calves that are down with no other sign of disease, White Muscle Disease should always be considered.

Commodity Futures

Corn(May) as of March 31	\$3.46
Soybeans(May) as of March 31	\$9.46
Soybean meal(May) as March 31	\$308.40
Cheese (Mar) as of March 31	\$1.57
Class III (Mar) as of March 31	\$15.83
Class III (Apr) as of March 31	\$15.31
Class III (May) as of March 31	\$15.75

Practice News

Record Setting Ova Pickup

This last week the Ova Pickup team, headed by Dr. Croushore, collected a record, 113 ova from a yearling Holstein heifer. This number is a record for Dr. Croushore and for the commercial lab that processes and fertilizes the ova.

On average there should be one transferable embryo, fertilized with sexed semen for every three oocytes submitted to the lab. Transfer of the fertilized embryos should result in a 50% conception rate. On average there should be one pregnancy for each six oocytes collected. CONGRATULATIONS to Bill and the rest of the team!!

Cheap Corn Makes Cheap Milk

from Farm Journal's Milk

Prospects for better milk prices through 2017 have softened somewhat as winter ends. Markets point to rising milk production both here and in Europe, but one of the underlying factors is cheap feed, says Phil Plourd, president of Blimling and Associates, a dairy market analysis firm.

Plourd spoke at the Associated Milk Producers Association annual meeting here in Minnesota this week. "One of the things we're struggling with is what it means to live in a world where corn is \$3.50/bu and not \$7. We're not going to see a lot of \$20 milk with corn at less than \$4/bu," he says. In fact, \$3.50/bu corn is more supportive of Class III prices in the \$15.25 to \$15.50 range, he says. Markets will get a better handle on where corn prices are headed with today's [USDA's Prospective Plantings](#). USDA is projecting a 4% decrease in corn plantings, and a 7% boost to soybean acres.

Upcoming Events

Technology Tuesday Webinar: Video Cameras, Smartphone Gadgets and Apps

When: April 11, 2017, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Where: Online

Join our Technology Tuesday Webinar Series to learn about some of the most recent technologies available to dairy producers as well as to revisit some new information on older technologies. All webinars run from 8:30am - 10:30am. For information contact Mat Haan, 610-378-1327, mmh29@psu.edu