



Milk Watch

The latest information concerning Johne's and leukosis

Leukosis affects producers' bottom line

Shari and Frank Konkol didn't want to believe the news: the bull they had raised and sold to an A.I. company would be returning home just a few months after delivery. After his arrival, preliminary testing revealed their young bull would not be eligible as an A.I. breeding bull because he tested positive for bovine leukosis.

"He tested negative twice before he left and we didn't anticipate any problems," recalls Frank. "After all the work we put into him, we couldn't believe he was coming home because of this."

A viral disease, leukosis is spread by the fluid containing infected white blood cells. Infection can occur at any age and common modes of transmission happen through shared needles and other animal care equipment, colostrum, biting insects and close contact. All of which are situations that can occur daily on dairy farms.

Unlike other diseases with visible signs of deteriorating health, leukosis because the symptoms are invisible for most of the disease stages. Fortunately clinical cases are rare, surfacing in less than 5 percent of all leukosis positive cows.

In addition to eliminating animals considered for A.I. contracts, leuko-

sis affects a dairy's bottom line when slaughter carcasses are condemned due to lymphosarcoma, or malignant lymphatic tissue.

"It's a tragedy," reported Shari. "These cows are a small percentage of the 280-cow herd, but the numbers add up. Besides that, we have a few more downer cows that die on the farm and never make it to slaughter, who we assume have leukosis because we rule out other causes," states Shari.

In partnership with Lance and Nancy Johnson, the Konkols began testing for the disease in July of 2004 when the leukosis milk ELISA. Although not uncommon, the prevalence near 80 percent, the Konkols were relieved. Leukosis prevalence was just over 55 percent.

For now the Silver Sky herd has maintained its original prevalence, but if Silver Sky Dairy raises another bull for A.I., or if the herd's prevalence continues to increase, Shari and Frank both agree they will consider adopting management practices to help control leukosis.

View the complete story on-line at www.northstarcooperative.com/NSC/The_Point/July_August_2006/Point_JulyAug_pg3.pdf.



Hesperia, Michigan
280 cows
Frank and Shari Konkol
Lance and Nancy Johnson

How Bovine Leukosis can affect your bottom line

Cull Cows

- Tumors are a basis for carcass condemnation. Lost salvage value of \$400 - \$600 depending on market.

Milk Production

- Infected herds produce 3 percent less milk. Lost revenue of approximately \$600 for a 100-cow herd.

Bull Contracts

- Infection and disease onset can occur at any age. Lost revenue of at least \$4,000.

Embryo Transfer

- In-utero transmission from recipients is possible.

Disease Resistance

- Impact on immune system leads to higher incidence of other health problems.

Vaccination Program

- Immune impact reduces effectiveness of vaccination efforts.

Productive Life

- Infection increases probability of culling.

For more information on Leukosis testing call 1.800.631.3510. For ideas regarding leukosis management go on-line to: www.antelbio.com/Publications/new_johnes_watch.htm and click on Triple Threat to the immune system.