



DAIRY VETERINARY NEWSLETTER

December 2009

USDA Revises Veterinary Accreditation Program - More Information to Come

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has changed the rules for veterinary accreditation. On their website at: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/vet_accreditation/

the following is stated:

"The final rule for the National Veterinary Accreditation program (NVAP) was published December 9, 2009. Please return to this site for updated information as it becomes available." (The quotation marks are on the APHIS website.)

Please note that the regulations are not effective until February 1, 2010. Accredited Veterinarians wishing to participate cannot do so until February 1, 2010 or until the new VS Form 1-36A has been approved.

National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP)

This voluntary program certifies private veterinary practitioners to work cooperatively with Federal veterinarians and State animal health officials.

Producers that export animals rely on the expertise of accredited veterinarians to help ensure that exported animals will not introduce diseases into another State or country. The accreditation program has served the animal industry well for many years and remains integral to their future growth.

The website also includes information regarding applying for veterinary accreditation, FAQ's, and completing the VS Form 1-36A, Application for Veterinary Accreditation (*according to the second statement above, this form is currently being revised*).

Cold Weather Feeding of Pre-weaned Calves

Recommendations regarding feeding pre-weaned calves housed in hutches or other housing such that they are exposed to outdoor temperatures in cold weather vary considerably. However, it is clear that at this time of year with cold weather, calves need more milk or milk replacer to survive and grow well than they do at temperatures between 15° C and 25° C (59° F and 77° F). At the recent Dairy Farmers of America Young Cooperator Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah veterinarian Dr. Rob Harding presented some interesting

information regarding cold weather calf feeding. He reported that when the outside temperature is 0° C (32° F), calves need 50% more milk replacer than in warm temperatures, and when outside temperature is -20° C (-4° F), they need 100% more.

Dr. Harding also reported that a recent survey showed that many dairy farms feed a maximum of 4 quarts of colostrum to all newborn calves. That is enough for an 80 pound calf, despite the fact that many calves may be born heavier than that. The survey also showed that 75% of producers did not feed additional milk replacer to calves no matter how cold the ambient temperature is.

A very time-tested rule for feeding calves milk or milk replacer remains that at pleasant outside temperatures they should be fed 10% of body weight per day; divided over two or three feedings per day is preferable to one feeding per day. Therefore the total daily volume fed = 1 pint (one pound liquid) per 10 pounds of body weight which also = 1 quart (2 pounds liquid) per 20 pounds of body weight. Thus a 125 pound calf (at ambient temperatures between 59° F and 77° F) would be fed 12.5 pints (also equal to 6.25 quarts) of milk or milk replacer per day. If fed twice daily, each feeding would be 6.25 pints (also equal to 3 1/8 quarts). When the outside temperature is 0° C (32° F), those numbers would be multiplied by 1.5. From both my experience and the survey reported by Dr. Harding, there are still many dairy producers whose calves are not fed that much milk or milk replacer. This is a direct cause of the slow growth rates and high mortality rates among dairy calves on many farms, and explains why many dairy calves that die during cold weather have almost no body fat and have essentially starved to death whether they also had clinical signs of pneumonia or diarrhea or not.

In response to a question, Dr. Harding gave an answer that I would agree with from my own experience feeding calves. In order to get enough milk or milk replacer volume into some calves, especially during cold weather, they need to be tube fed at every, or nearly every feeding. That is indeed inconvenient to put it mildly; anyone who has fed calves knows that from experience. Also, the esophageal tube feeders should be washed with soap and water between calves and must be kept in good repair so they do not have sharp edges or get chewed through by the calf. In the past there was some concern about failure of the esophageal groove to close so that tube fed calves would become rumenal drinkers. It seems apparent today that major rumen drinking problems do not result in most calves that are tube fed. However, it is always worthwhile to continue to encourage calves to drink from buckets or bottles without being tube fed. Some calves always need to suck on a finger or be encouraged to begin drinking from the bucket and then they take off, but at every feeding they have to be fooled with again. That is preferable to always needing to tube feed a calf in my experience. However, even frequent tube feeding is better than underfeeding calves in cold weather.

An Attack on Conventionally Produced Dairy Products on a Popular Browser (but another part of the article commends a dairy product)

There is an article on the Dairy Herd Management Magazine website from December 10, 2009 called “Yikes! This was up on Yahoo!” That article can be viewed at:
http://www.dairyherd.com/news_editorial.asp?pgid=675&ed_id=10096&ts=nl1

It begins, “The lead article on the Yahoo home page for much of the evening on Dec. 9 suggested that consumers should not buy milk unless it is organic or certified free of bovine somatotropin. Yahoo picked up the article from *Prevention* magazine.”

The article also includes a link to the original article itself that had been on the Yahoo home page, entitled “The 7 foods experts won’t eat”, by Liz Vaccariello, Editor-in-Chief, PREVENTION.

The article by Ms. Vaccariello advises readers to avoid foods such as canned tomatoes or microwave popcorn (*more on what to put on your skillet-popped popcorn follows below*), and also includes this regarding milk:

“6. Milk Produced with Artificial Hormones

The expert: Rick North, project director of the Campaign for Safe Food at the Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility and former CEO of the Oregon division of the American Cancer Society

The problem: Milk producers treat their dairy cattle with recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH or rBST, as it is also known) to boost milk production. But rBGH also increases udder infections and even pus in the milk. It also leads to higher levels of a hormone called insulin-like growth factor in milk. In people, high levels of IGF-1 may contribute to breast, prostate, and colon cancers. ‘When the government approved rBGH, it was thought that IGF-1 from milk would be broken down in the human digestive tract,’ says North. As it turns out, the casein in milk protects most of it, according to several independent studies. ‘There's not 100% proof that this is increasing cancer in humans,’ admits North. ‘However, it's banned in most industrialized countries.’

The solution: Check labels for *rBGH-free, rBST-free, produced without artificial hormones, or organic* milk. These phrases indicate rBGH-free products.” (This ends the quoted article in PREVENTION.)

No scientific evidence for the claims

It has already been chronicled many times, including previously in this newsletter that more than 2000 studies regarding rBST have shown no increase in dairy cow mastitis or problems of milk quality associated with its use, and have shown no negative impact on human health from the use of rBST. I did another literature search to check for new papers as well. While there is considerable (including recent) evidence that milk is an important component of a healthy diet, I found nothing published in scientific literature regarding milk causing cancer or rBST treated cows' milk doing so.

The choice of experts

Responses have been made by others suggesting that Mr. North, the author of the above criticisms of rBST-treated cows' milk, is an animal rights activist and/or that he does not have expertise in safety of dairy food. I tried to determine Mr. North's qualifications, but could not find anything including publications of the Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility to show whatever his expertise or professional activities have been. I could find no scientific publications by Mr. North on food safety, rBST, or public health.

I discovered that indeed PREVENTION is a magazine. All of the other articles I found written by Liz Vaccariello were about foods and dieting. She is recently quoted as saying, “ - - my role is to serve women and their health using the best tools that science can offer. I'm particularly excited about ‘The Flat Belly Diet,’ a breakthrough weight loss program - -”. (I do not think the above criticisms of milk were directly related to “The Flat Belly Diet”; if there was any connection that was not clear at any rate.)

Because of the major obesity problems in the US, I am willing to consider the possibility that “The Flat Belly Diet” is among “the best tools that science can offer”. Many of us could probably benefit from something to improve on this. Nevertheless all things considered I would not argue with this quote in the Dairy Herd Management article describing the magazine/Yahoo article written by Ms. Vaccariello: “No animal scientists or representatives from the mainstream dairy industry are quoted in the section on milk.”

Another part of the original article appears to support all dairy food

Another section of the original magazine article was regarding microwave popcorn, which Olga Niadenko, PhD did not recommend because of the lining of the bag. However, her solution included:

“The solution: Pop natural kernels the old-fashioned way: in a skillet. For flavorings, you can add real butter or - - “. There was no distinction made regarding whether the butter came from organic, rBST or conventionally produced milk. Apparently this expert considers conventionally produced dairy products, including real butter, acceptable food.

Yet another part of the original article, which did not recommend canned tomatoes because of the linings of tin cans, included the solution, “You can also get several types (of tomatoes) in Tetra Pak boxes, - -“. Therefore apparently Tetra Pak packaging of dairy products is acceptable according to this article.

Some posted reader responses to the original article

Perhaps you will find some of the posted reader responses, which you can find below the electronic version of the article, of interest as I did. Some are quite thoughtful, some are just plain amusing. However, some responding readers believe that only organic food is safe, but they obviously cannot afford to buy only organic food. The idea that people believe that even if it is unaffordable, organic food is the only safe food is all the more of concern with recent estimates that 12-15% of US households now face hunger on an everyday basis, the highest proportion since the Great Depression.

As always, I like to hear from our readers, including suggestions for future topics. I can be reached at (435) 797-1899 M-W, (435) 797-7120 Th-F or David.Wilson@usu.edu.

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