

“The real test whether the colostrum replacer is a better choice will be seen in two years,” notes Glen. “We should have a lot cleaner (disease free) cows in the herd.”

Other management practices implemented include: removing calves from the cow immediately after birth; never moving left-over feed from the cow bunk to the heifers; and never using manure handling equipment to feed. To measure the effectiveness of the management practices, the herd is tested regularly for leukosis and Johne’s.

“We monitor disease status by observing the number of sick cows we have,” comments Dale. “If we have a cow start to get sick the first thing we do is check her test results. If she’s positive for leukosis or Johne’s very seldom will we treat her.”

The management steps put in place for disease management are quite simple. “Sure it’s a pain to get use to changing needles, but it’s not hard,” remarks Dale. “Remember when seat belts weren’t mandatory? Now you buckle-up without

thinking about it. It’s just a change in your habits.”

The Phillips began testing for leukosis in 2004 when the AntelBio leukosis milk ELISA was first available. Initial testing revealed disease prevalence of 60 percent. “We used the milk test as soon as it came out,” says Glen. “The milk test is convenient. You can’t beat it.”

The testing protocol includes testing all heifers at freshening and all cows at dry-off with the AntelBio Milk ELISA. “It’s very rare that we get a positive test result back now,” notes Dale.

Indeed, the Phillips herd is making progress. Most recent test results reveal near elimination of Johne’s, as well as a significant reduction in leukosis.

“Testing and managing these diseases means we have better animal health and higher quality milk,” notes Glen. “When they’re healthy, cows hit the ground running and are ready to produce milk.” ★

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“The health problems and expenses with leukosis and Johne’s are huge.”
– Dale Phillips

Pre-Payment Savings

NorthStar Cooperative is once again offering a year-end pre-payment opportunity. For every dollar you pre-pay on your NorthStar A.I. Services, DHI Services or AntelBio account prior to December 31, 2006, NorthStar Cooperative will credit your account \$1.03.

By participating in this plan, you will receive an additional 3 percent in buying power with the Cooperative, and there may also be tax advantages. Please consult your tax advisor to determine if there are any additional savings you can earn.

For more information or to make a pre-payment call 1.800.631.3510.

Milk ELISA closer to official status

AntelBio continues to work on obtaining official status for the Johne’s Milk ELISA. Most recently the data package was submitted to USDA’s Center for Veterinary Biologics to obtain licensure of the kit for interstate distribution. Additionally, USDA’s National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) has begun work on a national proficiency test for the milk ELISA, which would allow any DHI laboratory to become certified for official Johne’s testing. These most recent developments mean the AntelBio Johne’s Milk ELISA is on the brink of being accepted as an official screening tool in State and National Johne’s Control Programs.



AntelBio to offer BVD testing

Experimental work at AntelBio to develop BVD testing is nearing completion. Early 2007 plans include the launch of BVD testing including assays for blood, milk and ear notches using both ELISA and PCR technology. While ELISAs will be used to determine an individual animal’s status for persistent infection (PI), the PCR assay, due to its extra sensitivity, will be used for PI confirmation and to determine the presence of infection in larger groups of animals. BVD is a major threat to cattle reproduction, causing abortions and numerous other breeding problems. Furthermore, PI is extremely problematic as cows which shed the virus

their entire lives lead to more cattle being infected. Watch for more information on BVD testing options in early 2007.

