Respiratory Disease

Bovine respiratory disease (BRD) is the leading cause of death in weaned calves and the second leading cause of death in preweaned calves. BRD can be caused by viral or bacterial pathogens, but it can be greatly minimized with proper handling and management of calves.

Respiratory disease can be a vicious cycle revolving around nutrition, stress, pathogen (bacterial and viral) exposure, and environmental conditions. The key to minimizing disease outbreaks is successful management in all of these areas. Each untreated sick day for a calf will create economic losses in future productivity. It is extremely important to identify sick calves as soon as possible and follow approved treatment protocols. Sick calves should be isolated to control disease spread and for easy treatment and monitoring.

**Symptoms**
- Increased or labored breathing
- Coughing
- Ear droop
- Nasal or eye discharge
- Lethargy
- Poor appetite
- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Isolation
Future Complications

- Economic losses
- Chronic lung damage
- Poor growth rates
- Poor performance upon entering milking herd

Prevention

- Provide adequate, high-quality colostrum intake
- Maintain consistent milk feeding
- Follow vaccination programs
- Provide ample, dry bedding
- Ensure proper ventilation
- Maintain draft-free environments
- Ensure sanitation of housing
- Obtain early, consistent disease diagnosis
- Keep low stocking densities
- Minimize stressors

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