

River View Veterinary Service Newsletter

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News and Upcoming Events:

- Drs. Sarah and Terry will be attending continuing education conferences soon. Let them know if there's any topic you'd like to know more about!

*Welcome to the River View Veterinary Service Newsletter!
This newsletter is designed to provide cattle producers with timely information and education on a variety of topics. Got a topic? Let us know!
Sarah Foust, DVM and Terry Foust, DVM*

Ancillary treatments for BRD don't work

(Adapted from Newport, Alan; BEEF Vet Winter 2018)

In the battle with bovine respiratory disease (BRD), beef producers and veterinarians have begun to add ancillary treatments on top of antimicrobial therapy, but it may be a wasted effort.

A recent study by animal scientist Blake Wilson and others at Oklahoma State University showed no significant health improvements from adding ancillary, or secondary, treatments to basic BRD antimicrobial therapy in feedlots. This was a rare study with large numbers of cattle.

Generally, these ancillary treatments have been divided into three broad classes based on their intended purpose.

Category 1. Relieves the harmful effects of inflammation with corticosteroids and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

Category 2. Blocks histamine activity, therefore inflammation, with antihistamines.

Category 3. Boosts immune system function to aid in the defense of infectious pathogens by use of vitamins, minerals, and direct-fed microbials (DFM) and vaccines.

[The study] suggests the calves receiving only the antimicrobial were performing better, and that may have important additional implications.

Wilson explains, "I feel that by administering ancillary therapies beyond antimicrobials in situations like these, we are asking a calf to respond to additional stimuli at a time when the calf's system is overloaded simply trying to respond to the immune challenge and survive. We may be overloading the system, so to speak."

"At a minimum, there appears to be no justification for using any of the three ancillary therapies tested in this experiment," he added.

Ultimately, the researchers summarized that ancillary treatments are most likely as unnecessary expense and offer no benefit to calf health or performance.