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INSIGHT WITH EXTENSION
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Bugs, bugs, bugs... the role of our livestock entomologist is currently really busy. The comparison of mosquitos to Volkswagens on Facebook recently is accurate, the fly numbers blew up seemingly overnight and they are as thick as bugs on the bumper as well. Now we have screwworms in the U.S., which is not a surprise and it is being dealt with. But the current issue with ticks is more concerning to me than either of those.

I am going to focus mainly on two: the Longhorned tick and the Lone star ticks.

Theileria is a disease in cattle that is infecting red blood cells. These infected cells are damaged and either break down in circulation or are removed by the body, leading to anemia. The severity of disease is related to the severity of the anemia. Transmission of an uninfected animal primarily occurs through the Asian longhorned tick, an invasive species that has been steadily moving thru states. The tick acquires the organism when it consumes a blood meal from an infected animal then transmits the organism through its saliva to other animals within the herd or nearby herds.

For those familiar with anaplasmosis, the symptoms are similar. However, a key difference is that symptoms associated with anaplasmosis are seldom seen in cattle less than 2 years of age whereas symptoms associated with Theileria are seen in both calves and adults.

Mechanical transmission is transfer-

ring disease through contaminated equipment. This would include items such as needles, dehorning, castration, implanting and implanting tools. This is well-demonstrated mode of anaplasmosis transmission, and can happen for Theileria but not as prevalent.

Symptoms may vary in look and severity. In mild cases, cattle may exhibit symptoms such as elevated temperature, depression, and pale mucous membranes all the way to abortion and possible death in a few. Mortality rates are generally low, and young calves or females in late gestation or early lactation are more likely to be clinically affected. Many infected cattle never show symptoms at all. It has been suggested that once the first clinical case is seen in a herd, a large percentage of the animals may already be infected.

Following the peak of the infection, animals enter an asymptomatic carrier state and maintain a low-grade infection for the rest of their life. The benefit of the carrier state is that an animal rarely develops clinical disease again. However, they do serve as a reservoir of the organism within a herd so culling carrier animals may be warranted if disease prevalence is low.

There are currently no approved treatments in the U.S. for Theileria. As Theileria is a protozoan and not a bacterium, antibiotic treatment is generally not effective. This is why controlling the Asian Longhorned tick is significant.

Additional recommendations for managing clinical cases focus on providing supportive care, including minimizing stress, avoiding unnecessary handling, and ensuring access to feed

and water. In some cases, separating clinically ill animals to reduce their need to compete for feed and water may be beneficial. Blood transfusions may also be an option for more valuable animals.

Still in the realm of ticks but catching a different gear is the Alpha-gal syndrome as a type of food allergy. It can happen after a tick bite to humans. The allergy is to red meat and other products that come from mammals. Alpha-gal syndrome can be life-threatening.

In the United States, the condition most often begins with the bite of the lone star tick. These ticks have spread further west and currently are found in the eastern half of Kansas.

The lone star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*) is identified by a distinct, single silvery-white spot on the back of adult females, while males feature varied white streaks or spots around their margins. They are reddish-brown, have long mouthparts, and are aggressive hunters, often causing a bull's-eye appearing rash.

So, as you are progressing thru the summer, watch the condition of the cattle and be proactive in parasite control but not to develop resistance to the pour-ons used for internal parasites. While I am leery of burning pastures in Western Ks, it will help control tick numbers. Controlling cedar trees will also make a big difference. Do not ignore the dogs and cats as they are going to be picking up ticks as well. This is a very condensed description due to space restraints, but more information can easily be accessed at any local extension office.

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26

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