

Learning from your cousins – part 4

THE 46th Annual Conference of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners took place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, last September 2013. I was fortunate enough to attend the conference itself plus an excellent two-day pre-conference seminar on "The replacement heifer from birth to calving" (which I've reported on previously).

A total of 1,900 vets, technicians and students from 16 different countries attended the conference, giving it a truly international feel. If I was hoping for an easier schedule following the long days of the pre-conference seminar, I was to be disappointed. Breakfast meetings started at 6.30am and the last seminars of the day finished at 6pm.

Organisation needed

There were so many different streams running you had to be really organised to ensure you attended everything you wanted to – a handy pocket guide and the AABP app helped with this!

There were clinical forums, general sessions, beef sessions, dairy sessions, sessions for students, research

summaries, poster sessions, practice tips, a veterinary technician programme and, of course, an extensive commercial exhibition with 115 exhibitors.

On top of this there were evening dinner receptions, dessert receptions, the Amstutz auction, Annual Business and Awards luncheons, student "Quiz Bowl" (a very animated American version of *University Challenge*) and even

the fur is clean and just apply alcohol (no clipping) and allow 9cm depth on your probe.

This is using a rectal ultrasound machine – the one that sits in the car boot the whole time when not on a fertility visit! Dr Ollivett was able to perform an examination in about a minute – it's good for diagnosis, assessment of management on farm and assessment of pharmaceutical response.

Other excellent research summaries included Sabine Mann's work on research farms suggesting different nutritional planes in the dry period had no significant effects on IgG concentrations of bovine colostrum.

Andrew Kryzer won the award for the best student research summary demonstrating the Perfect Udder system to heat-treat colostrum is equal to other pasteurisation techniques on the effects on passive transfer of IgG in neonatal Jersey calves.

Comprehensive review

Geoff Smith presented one of the most comprehensive review studies I have ever seen into antibiotic decision-making in calf scours. Looking back over decades of research from several countries, he summarised that the use of oral antibiotics in the treatment of calf scour had no discernible benefits whatsoever.

However, in the sick, scouring calf the use of injectable antibiotics was justified – if not for a primary pathogen then due to the risk of overgrowth of resident gut microflora and the risk of secondary septicæmia from a compromised intestinal lining.

OLIVER TILLING

presents the last of his reports of a visit to the conference of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners with an account of some take-home points from the main streams



a 5km run!

Of course, at the end of all this excitement it would have been entirely rude to not partake in one or two liquid refreshments with colleagues from around the globe!

There were lots of take-home messages from such a diverse number of speakers – I'll try to highlight some of them.

The first clinical forum I attended was "Cow-calf production: value added services for your clients", chaired by Mark Hilton of Purdue University. Highlighted here was that only 35% of US beef cows are PDd and yet this is the lowest hanging fruit for the vet.

In fact, whenever on a beef unit we were encouraged to always ask the question: Did you PD the cows last time? Depending on feed costs, finding one out of 100 cows empty pays for the visit; 95% pregnant is ideal but 100% is actually a sign the cows are being fed too much.

To make more money out of the beef cow is to spend less on the cow – make her work harder. There are several beef-only computer programs in the US and getting a client onto a records program was encouraged: once you've got the records you're attached to the farm and then the vet is needed.

Summary sessions

Research summaries were fantastic bite-size knowledge transfer sessions – at 15 minutes each you could dip in and out.

Theresa Ollivett of the University of Guelph presented two summaries, one on ultrasonography for diagnosis of subclinical bronchopneumonia in dairy calves; and one on progression of lung consolidation after experimental infection with *Mannheimia haemolytica* in Holstein bull calves.

BRD affects both the longevity and first lactation milk yield of a dairy cow, and yet it is easy to ultrasound a calf's lungs for bronchopneumonia. Ensure



A small section of the exhibition which had 115 exhibitors.

Huge concern

On the final day of the conference I attended a clinical forum run by Mike Apley of Kansas State University on applied pharmacology. By far and away the biggest discussion point was how to navigate residues and regulation – a huge concern for American vets and farmers, and there is clearly a lot of legislation in the USA.

Other key points included the fact that the withdrawal periods of drugs in colostrum are being looked at in America; and the concept that if a drug is perceived to fail, is that because it can't treat that pathogen or because the patient is too immunocompromised to respond?

Attending this conference and the pre-conference seminar was the best CPD I have ever done. There was the opportunity to learn from internationally recognised experts, it was excellent value for money, I got to travel to the brewing capital of the USA and meet some truly wonderful cattle vets from around the world. I would thoroughly recommend it.

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The author got his photo on the front of Bovine Veterinarian.

Oliver Tilling, BVSc, BSc, MRCVS, went to Liverpool University to study zoology in 1998, completed a BSc in 2001 and went on to study veterinary science, qualifying in 2006. After four years in mixed practice in Skipton, North Yorkshire, he joined Shepton Veterinary Group in 2010, where his particular interests are in youngstock and fertility work.



Lunch – a good opportunity to make new friends; and (below) cultural exchange with some great Canadian vets.

