

# Valleywide News



VALLEYWIDE VETERINARY  
SERVICES

## Time to Start Thinking About Pink Eye!

Dr. Stephanie Bandoski

The time to work on decreasing the amount of pink eye in your herd is right around the corner. The key to pink eye control is prevention, so we recommend taking the following steps before you start seeing pink eye in your herd. As a reminder, pink eye is caused by damage to the cornea, or outer layer of the eyeball. Once the cornea is physically damaged it can become infected with bacteria, making the damage worse. Different bacteria can contribute to pink eye, including *Moraxella bovis*, *Moraxella bovoculi*, and several strains of *Mycoplasma*.



- Prevent corneal damage by eliminating flies, blowing bedding or feed.
- Decrease stocking density, add fans and/or sprinklers to decrease bunching.
- Control flies by using pour-ons (such as UltraBoss, Eprinex etc), used motor oil, parasitic wasps, or fly tags (careful of placement as to avoid additional eye irritation). Improving air flow and **keeping facilities clean** will also decrease the number of flies.
- **Start fly control 1 month prior to seeing flies!**
- Vaccines can help decrease the severity of pink eye. Commercial vaccines are available. We recommend using *M. bovis* vaccines as a **minimum with the addition of the *M. bovoculi* vaccine for better coverage**. These vaccines need to get boosted 3-4 weeks after the initial vaccine. You want all animals to be boosted 2 weeks prior to the start of fly season, so consider vaccinating starting in March! The vaccines only provide 3-4 months of immunity. Talk to your veterinarian for specific protocols for your herd.
- An autogenous vaccine can be created from cultures of pinkeye bacteria on your farm, talk to your veterinarian if you are interested in this option

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## Over the Counter Drugs Moving to Prescription

As a reminder, the FDA has ordered for the transition of antimicrobials from over the counter to prescription labeling in June 2023. This motion was put in place to help de-



crease antimicrobial resistance in animals as well as humans. We all have a responsibility to make sure antibiotics are used at the correct dose and duration, and only in situations where they are likely to cure disease.

Antibiotics that have been available over the counter have some of the highest rates of resistance, which is affecting our ability to treat human and animal diseases. This means you will no longer be able to purchase any antibiotics at farm stores. Farmers

that already work with a veterinarian and follow agreed upon protocols to treat their animals should not notice any change. Following these best practices will help protect our ability as animal owners to use these medications that are also critical to human health.

# Nursing Care is Essential to Down Cow Management

Dr. Elizabeth Martens

Down cows are a challenge on all farms and can be very frustrating. Providing adequate nursing care in addition to treating the primary problem is essential for the cow to make a full recovery. A group in Australia recently defined “adequate nursing care” of down dairy cows and showed a strong association between different levels of care provided and the chances of recovery.

Below is a table outlining the most important aspects of down cow care. Good to excellent care is defined as fulfilling half or more of these things all the time, or doing all of these things at least half of the time. Poor or very poor conditions would be anything below that standard. In their study, no cows that were kept longer than 5 days under poor conditions recovered, compared to almost half of cows that had good to excellent nursing care.

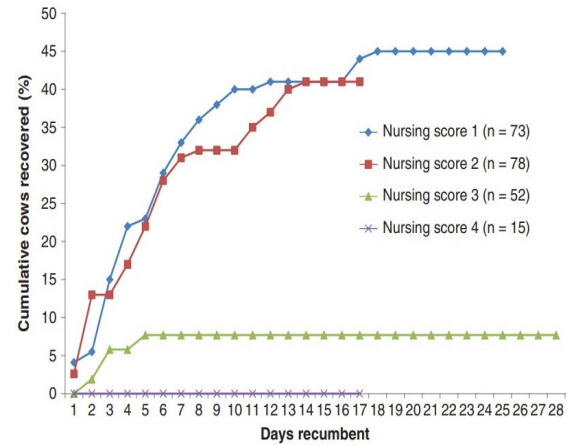


Figure 1. Daily cumulative recovery percentage by overall nursing score for 218 downer cows.

<b>Treatment</b>	Prompt, appropriate treatment of initial problem Frequent observation and high level of “tender loving care”
<b>Location</b>	Small, sheltered area away from other cattle, with good footing Barriers to prevent cows from crawling – this can cause nerve damage
<b>Bedding</b>	Deep, dry, clean bedding. No part of the cow should touch the floor. About 1 foot deep sawdust or sand, 1.5 foot deep straw.
<b>Movement</b>	Roll cow from side to side every 6 hours Use hip lifters <u>effectively</u> Transport down cows in a way that does not inflict further damage
<b>Feed &amp; Water</b>	Access to feed and water at all times
<b>Udder Care</b>	Milking optional unless cow is leaking milk Teat disinfection twice daily

Using a hip clamp to lift the cow can be a very good form of physical therapy if done correctly. “Effective” hip lifting means that the cow can support at least 2/3 of her own weight and the clamps are only helping her to rise and providing some support. If the cow cannot support her weight, or if she is hanging at any time, damage to the hips can be so great that she never stands.

At the following website, there are several short videos where Dr. Poulton demonstrates tips for lifting cows and, most importantly, when to let the cow back down to avoid causing damage. I recommend the videos titled “Lifting the down cow” and “Hip clamp” as a 5 minute review for anyone involved in caring for down cows. <https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/animal-management-and-milk-quality/animal-health/down-cows>

The cost and time commitment associated with nursing a down cow back to health may not always be deemed worth it for the value of a cow that has gone down, and that is okay. It’s important to recognize that and to euthanize the cow before she suffers unnecessarily.

Cows most often go down after calving. They tend to be weak due to low calcium, are usually in a new pen with new herd mates and may have mild temporary nerve and muscle damage from giving birth. Provide a safe, undercrowded fresh cow pen with comfortable stalls, good footing and plenty of bunk space. If cows are going down after the fresh period, floor grooving, stall design and nutrition should be assessed. Preventing cows from going down in the first place will be the best use of time and resources.