



VPP Beef Niche Market Cull Cow earns a premium BCS #3

BEEF TRIM



Unworthy of selling into the VPP Beef Niche Market BCS #1

Sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health

Southwest Region

Cancer Eye/Tumor of the Bovine Eye

(This is the second in a series to address the losses suffered by dairy producers from condemnation of whole or part of a carcass)

A condition for condemnation/loss of food product in cull dairy animals is Cancer Eye. Cancer Eye besides being a health problem for the animal is also an economic problem for the dairy producer - it also requires you to make humane handling decisions for affected cows. Public perception is a real concern as animals with advanced stages of Cancer Eye are visually offensive and will be condemned. Carcass condemnation from Cancer Eye accounts for 12% of all condemnations at the packing plant.

There are four stages of Cancer Eye tumors and as always early detection is the key to treatment. Stages 1-3 are non malignant appearing as white elevated spots on the eye or surrounding tissue or eyelid. Stage 4 is when the growth appears bloody or cauliflower-like which is diagnosed as a carcinoma/malignant.

What can you do to manage any economic losses to your dairy?

- Routinely check cows, observe their faces and eyes
- At risk are cows with no pigment around the eyes (white)
- Cattle as young as three years are at risk
- Increased risk to cattle exposed to sun (ultra violet rays)
- Cattle 7 to 8 years are at higher risk
- Tumors are common in both eyes
- Surgical treatment can be effective on early pre-malignant lesions (trimming the growth from the third eyelid, etc.)
- Small tumors can be frozen
- If the carcinoma has spread to regional lymph nodes it will continue to expand and grow
- advanced stages are foul smelling

Cancer Eye can be genetic; if a cow is diagnosed positive it is suggested to cull her as well as her calves from your breeding herd.

Solution: treat (early treatment has a 90% success rate) or cull affected animal as soon as possible. If animals have lesions that have spread around the eye or to the head they should not be marketed but humanely euthanized.

Remember a USDA veterinarian is the only person who can condemn an animal at the packing plant. If a carcass is in question it will be pulled from the line but has to be inspected by the USDA veterinarian. The sole reason an animal is condemned is that it is not safe for human consumption. Cull dairy animals need to be of the quality that you would feed it to your family. Market animals need to be a good source of safe food.

How can you prevent condemned cows at the packer? Sound herd health programs in place can help to prevent diseases. Work with your veterinarian to make sure protocols are followed and that employees are trained to identify or look for symptoms in cows.

If you have any questions please refer to your herd veterinarian for more information and remember, that your veterinarian is very interested in any condemnation reports. These can be used as a tool to help improve herd health!



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Stage 4 Cancer Eye



Animal Health

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