

Cow Calf **Pinkeye**: Strategies for Management

References: Sheedy et al. 10.1016/j.animal.2021.10024

Also known as bovine keratoconjunctivitis (IBK)

Signs:

- Tearing
- Closed or squinted eye
- Reddening of the white part of the eye
- Eye ulcers

Possible consequences:

- Slower rate of weight gain due to pain
- Production loss
- Cost of treatment



GENERAL STRATEGY

Consider the logistics of management and the **costs** of treating pinkeye (expense, labor) while making a strategic **plan with your veterinarian** for reducing pinkeye in your herd

RISK FACTORS



Age

Calves are affected more often than older cattle



Breed

Hereford cattle are more at risk due to lack of pigment around their eyes



Season

Warm months and increased sunlight favor infection



Flies

Face flies increase the risk of pinkeye

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PROACTIVE PLANNING

Prepare for seasonal outbreaks

- Monitor for cases of pinkeye as face fly numbers increase, especially in spring and early summer months
- Provide shade to reduce UV light exposure
- Reduce plant awns (ex. foxtails) that could cause eye damage

Fly control

- Confirm that selected insecticide targets face flies
- Follow manufacturer's guidelines for duration of use of tags
- Consider a variety of strategies to manage face flies
 - Tags, dust bags, traps, insect growth regulators

Vaccination

- Vaccinate before the expected start of face fly season
- Consider labor and vaccine costs vs. expected benefits
- *Note:* Vaccines have shown little or no advantage in published field trials and side effects are possible, especially if combined with other vaccines for Gram negative bacteria

Genetics

- Consider selective breeding for darker eyelid pigmentation and low susceptibility to pinkeye
- Expect any improvement in herd genetic resistance to be slow
- Unknown whether selective breeding to reduce susceptibility to pinkeye is linked to undesirable traits

TREATMENT

Initial Considerations

- Check to make sure pinkeye is the cause of the eye damage versus cancer eye, mechanical ulcers from foxtails, etc.

Antibiotic therapy, as advised by your veterinarian

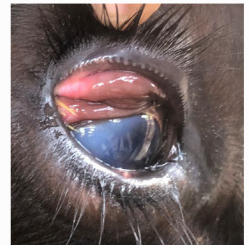
- Recognize when not to treat, in order to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics in the herd
 - *Note:* Treatment is unnecessary when blood vessels have reached the eye ulcer
- Follow your veterinarian's instructions for antibiotic treatment, as it requires a prescription
- For complicated cases of pinkeye your veterinarian may recommend removing the eye or culling the cow based on welfare considerations

Alternative and Supplemental Treatments

- Eye patches, serum, hypochlorous acid spray, surgical interventions – consult with your veterinarian



Cancer



Foxtail

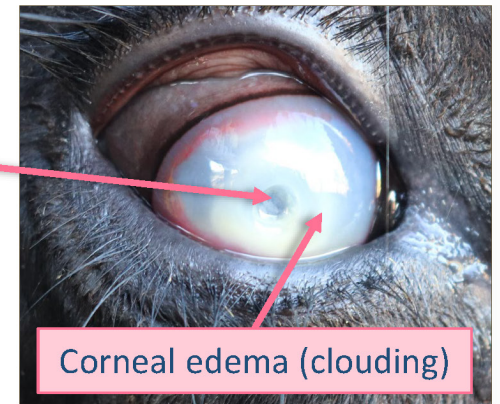
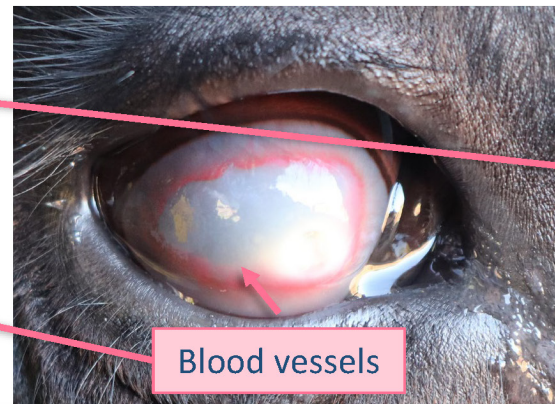
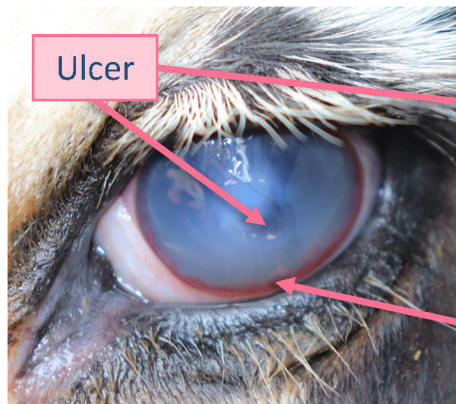


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Below are images to assist in treatment decisions regarding **pinkeye** in cow calf operations. Sharing pictures from your individual clinical case may help your veterinarian identify the stage of disease.

Consult with your veterinarian prior to making decisions regarding treatment.

CONSIDER TREATMENT



TREATMENT LIKELY NO LONGER NECESSARY

