



497 Research paper

Preconditioning systems: a solution to decrease respiratory diseases in young bulls fattening units?

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In **Significant Impact Groups:**

Pathogen management \ Vaccination Feed / gut health

Species targeted: Beef;

Age: Young;

Summary:

Preconditioning of young bulls is implemented to prevent bovine respiratory diseases occurrence in fattening units. A control/case study was set up in nine cow-calf operations and four fattening units to compare preconditioned and control cattle in a French context. Preconditioning protocol consisted of weaning calves 50 days before sale, with adaptation to solid feedstuff and housing. A trivalent vaccine protocol (BRSV, BPI3, Mannheimia haemolytica) and vitamins and micronutrients supplementation was also implemented in order to improve immunity to respiratory diseases. Contrary to what was expected, diseases incidence and lung lesion score were higher for preconditioned young bulls compared to controls. These results could be explained by the epidemiology context of fattening units, poor housing conditions in cow-calf herds and individual immune competence, in relation to immune status and previous vaccination. Pathogens detected in fattening units (BCoV, Pasteurella multocida...) were essentially different from the vaccine valences. This study identifies critical parameters for the settlement of preconditioning programs, and highlights the necessary adaptation to local conditions and husbandry factors.

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