



## 6 tips to reduce a pinkeye outbreak in your herd

Pinkeye, also called infectious bovine keratoconjunctivitis (IBK), is a common disease that is not typically fatal, but is highly contagious. Several factors increase the risk of pinkeye and contribute to its spread in a herd. For the health and well-being of the animal, prevention is the best offense to keep pinkeye at bay.

### Pinkeye prevention checklist

1. *Watch for early signs of pinkeye and isolate infected cattle to reduce the spread of disease* – Typically, the first signs of pinkeye include swelling, redness, frequent blinking and/or a cloudy cornea. Removing infected animals from the rest of the herd and treating them as soon as possible is a key factor in breaking the disease cycle.
2. *Provide shade for your herd* – Cattle become more susceptible to the diseases when ultraviolet light from the sun causes irritation. That's why it is important to provide a space where animals can get out of direct sunlight.
3. *Control face flies* - The primary infectious agent for pinkeye is the bacterium *Moraxella bovis* (*M. bovis*). Face flies spread the disease as they feed around eyes and nostrils. Many methods are available to control flies including fly tags, sprays, dust, and other products that provide fly control.
4. *Keep pastures trimmed and minimize irritants of tall grasses and weeds* - Weeds and brush can irritate the eye area. In addition, eyes can be scratched or irritated when cattle eat from the middle of large bales of hay. Spread the hay out instead of making the cattle reach for round bales or an overhead feeder. Other irritants include dust, pollen, and chaff.
5. *Vaccinate at least 6 to 8 weeks prior to fly season to ensure immunity has been established before the threat emerges* – BOVILIS® PILIGUARD® Pinkeye vaccine by Merck Animal Health has a long-standing reputation and has been shown effective against pinkeye in healthy cattle. Vaccinating a herd with BOVILIS PILIGUARD Pinkeye vaccine has been shown effective against infections and can reduce the severity of infections when outbreaks occur

Another option to take the stress out of pinkeye is with a combination vaccine like BOVILIS® 20/20 VISION® 7 with SPUR®, which offers the trusted clostridial disease effectiveness of BOVILIS® VISION® 7 with SPUR® against clostridial disease and pinkeye caused by *M. bovis* in one convenient dose.

6. *Consult with your veterinarian* – Work closely with your veterinarian to develop a program tailored to your operation and remember a broad-based approach that includes vaccination, fly control and pasture management is best.

### Take-home message

Pinkeye can be a challenge to treat, especially if producers are not accustomed to handling cattle on a regular basis. That's why prevention is paramount to reducing the risk of disease from either entering or spreading through a herd. The best way to manage pinkeye is to get ahead of it and stay ahead of it.

