Preface
Bovine Respiratory Disease: What’s New?

Since the recognition of the importance of bovine respiratory disease (BRD) several decades ago, much effort has focused on improving our understanding of causes, designing preventive health programs, and developing treatment and control methods. Unfortunately, producers and veterinarians still must manage the production and economic risk of this disease. Given the importance of BRD for both beef and dairy cattle, the disease complex has been the focus of an issue of the Veterinary Clinics of North America: Food Animal Practice approximately every 10 years since the journal’s inception. This frequency of issues on the topic may lead the reader to wonder how there can be anything new to say about BRD. Realizing this, we have asked our contributors to focus on information from the past 10 years, or to address topics that have not previously been investigated in-depth. Thanks to their efforts, we are able to present you with an issue that contains, we hazard to guess, something you haven’t heard before, or perhaps something you haven’t thought of. While you’ll recognize the focus on the epidemiologic triad: cow, infectious agent, and environment/management, we think you will also appreciate some new or different perspectives that might even be considered a paradigm shift in the way we approach BRD diagnosis, attempt to control the interaction of cattle and the microbes in or around them, and care for cattle at different phases in the production and marketing chain.

One topic you might not expect that we felt merited public airing is the impact of market forces on decisions producers make regarding practices that can decrease BRD. Any producer or veterinarian should hope to see less BRD in the cattle they oversee, but some of us may have been a bit naïve in the degree to which we thought our research could improve cattle health when some producers actually have financial incentive to buy cattle at high risk for BRD. It is our hope that the information provided here will help people who care for cattle find new pathways to actually keep them healthier, whether these be microbiological, environmental, or economical.
We offer heartfelt thanks to our colleagues, who have written the articles included here. They were all surely too busy to even open the e-mail containing our request for their participation, but nonetheless they have used their limited time to research and summarize a topic that, we hope, will provide the reader with information to use as a reference as well as to challenge some biases.

Amelia R. Woolums, DVM, MVSc, PhD
Department of Pathobiology and Population Medicine
College of Veterinary Medicine
Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, MS 39762, USA

Douglas L. Step, DVM
Boehringer Ingelheim
Animal Health USA, Inc
12940 N 124th East Avenue
Collinsville, OK 74021, USA

E-mail addresses:
amelia.woolums@msstate.edu (A.R. Woolums)
dl.step@boehringer-ingelheim.com (D.L. Step)