Where do cattle get the Pinkeye organism?
The introduction of a new calf into a herd can serve as a source of the organism, *M. bovis*. However, this organism is often found as part of the resident bacterial population in a herd. *M. bovis* can reside in the eyes and upper respiratory tract and not cause disease until predisposing factors are present.

Predisposing factors.
Pinkeye predisposing factors fit into two classes. One class would be anything that interferes with the immune response of the animal and includes such things as:
- Cattle are not getting enough energy (poor feed quality or insufficient feed amounts).
- Vitamin and/or mineral imbalances and/or shortages, particularly Vitamin A.
- Water sources that are not clean or contain toxicants such as nitrates.
- Concurrent disease such as fescue endophyte poisoning, IBR, BVD, etc.
- Stress.

The second class of predisposing factors includes anything that irritates eyes, such as:
- Excessive ultraviolet light (lack of shade).
- Dust and pollen irritation.
- Long dry grass stems and seeds.
- Face flies.

What is the economic significance of Pinkeye?
Pinkeye causes a significant decrease in weight gain and may result in the loss of an eye. Several independent studies on nursing calves indicate reduced weaning weights of 25 to 40 pounds. Although cows are not infected as readily as young animals, they do get Pinkeye and milk production is severely reduced. It is estimated the U.S. cattle industry loses over $150,000,000 per year from this disease (this loss does not include treatment costs).

Preventing Pinkeye.
Pinkeye is prevented by management to eliminate or reduce exposure to as many predisposing factors as possible and the use of a good vaccination program.

"Over the last ten years, our practice has used four different commercial vaccines. Of these vaccines we have found MAXIGUARD® Pinkeye bacterin to give the best results in terms of efficacy, safety and ease of administration. This vaccine, when combined with reasonable good management, will achieve well over 95% protection."  K. Froman, D.V.M.

Treating Pinkeye.
Pinkeye treatment recommendations may vary somewhat between veterinarians. We would like to make the following recommendations:
1. Consider Pinkeye a contagious herd disease.
2. Vaccinate the entire herd with MAXIGUARD® Pinkeye bacterin to stop the spread of disease.
3. Give injectable Vitamin A to the whole herd. We find Vitamin A enhances the health of the eye tissues and also enhances the immune response we get to Pinkeye vaccine.
4. Use long acting oxytetracycline, at least on the infected animals.
5. Many veterinarians will also inject the eye lid of infected eyes with antibiotic and suture eye lids on severely infected eyes.
6. Clip long stumpy pastures. On rescue this also reduces the intake of endophyte which concentrates in the stems and seeds.
7. Administer some form of fly control if flies are present.
8. Try to eliminate other predisposing factors including stress.

K. Froman, D.V.M.