

# North Star Veterinary Services Newsletter

March 2019

## Calf Diarrhea (Scours)

Diarrhea in calves can happen for multiple reasons. The best way to keep calves on track is to identify calves with diarrhea and treat quickly and appropriately. The most important thing for calves during bouts of diarrhea are fluids. Not all calves that have diarrhea require antibiotics. In order to determine this, it is important to look at the whole calf.

These signs can indicate if a calf is sick

- Attitude - one or both ears dropped, dull, slow to rise and move
- Appetite - not drinking or eating; not finishing milk; not drinking milk aggressively
- Temperature - Below 100.0F or above 103.0F
- Posture - arched back; dropped head; down

If a calf has diarrhea but appears normal (using the indicators above), fluids and supportive care are necessary.

- Electrolytes in warm water: These are what is used to replace the fluids that is lost from the diarrhea.
- Lactaid: This is a pill that is added to milk to help calves break down the lactose (milk sugar).
- Probios (probiotics): These help to repopulate the gut with good bacteria.

## Feeding Electrolytes

- For calves with loose manure but it still sits on top of the bedding, give 2 quarts per day of warm electrolyte solution. For calves with watery manure that soaks into the bedding, give 4 quarts of warm electrolyte solution per day.
- Electrolytes can be given between milk/milk replacer feedings or after giving milk/milk replacer feedings.
- Continue to feed electrolytes until the manure is back to normal.
- Electrolytes can be given in an esophageal feeder IF the calf can sit up without assistance and/or does not have a full abdomen.
- Provide fresh water at all times.

If a calf has diarrhea and appears sick - off feed, dull, stands with an arched back, drinks slowly - or has a temperature that is greater than 103° F or lower than 100° F, then antibiotics IN ADDITION TO fluids and supportive care may be necessary. Banamine (flunixin meglumine) could also be given.

There are certain antibiotics that can help treat scours, depending on what pathogens are causing issues on your farm. However, antibiotics are not always indicated when a calf has scours. Contact your veterinarian to come up with a calf scour antibiotic treatment protocol that will work for your calves. When using antibiotics, follow label directions. Treatment is considered successful, even if manure is loose, but the calf is eating aggressively and has a bright attitude. It may take 5-7 days for manure to return to normal.

## **BAYTRIL (ENROFLOXACIN) IS ILLEGAL TO USE FOR DIARRHEA IN CALVES**

### **Contact NSVS if:**

- There are more calves than normal becoming sick and/or dying
- A calf is flat out and/or non-responsive
- A calf has been given antibiotics but is still sick
- A calf is sick but you are unsure of treatment or you do not have a calf treatment protocol in place

**\*\*Effective March 1<sup>st</sup> – Hourly Farm Visit rate will be \$90.00 / Horse hourly rate will be \$125.00**

DA Surgery is \$125.00 / Annual Increases in drug pricing from manufacturers\*\*

When contacting North Star call 518-483-6223