



From the Dr's desk...Dr. L. Roggenbuck *A possible fix for "neurological (dumb) scour calves"*

I have been troubled through the years by the occasional calf that goes backwards and slowly dies after what appeared to be a fairly mild case of scours. Perhaps most of the calves on the farm are battling scours and responding well to supportive care. While others become listless, depressed, unwilling to rise and unable to drink despite being only mildly dehydrated. These calves even appear to be over their scours and have pasty manure. We now believe the cause is D-Lactic Acidosis.

These calves usually started out with Rota Virus, Corona Virus, or Cryptosporidium. These scour causing pathogens have damaged the small intestine of the calf enough to allow a lot of undigested milk to pass into the hindgut where normally harmless bacteria ferment it into D-Lactic Acid. This D-Lactic Acid is a neural toxin which poisons the brain. A very helpful diagnostic clue is a slow or absent blink reflex. If you touch the calf near the corner of the eye, or swat your hand toward the eye as if you're going to strike it, the calf should blink instantly. You can compare the blink reflex to normal healthy calves to aid in your diagnosis.

Treatment for these calves is directed at:

1. Calves can be offered milk but do not force feed milk with an esophageal feeder. This may put milk in the rumen where it can ferment and make more D-Lactic Acid.
2. Two quarts of a sodium bicarbonate-containing oral electrolyte 2-3 times per day. Use an esophageal feeder to tube feed if needed. Not all electrolytes contain sodium bicarbonate so read the label. Diaque™ from Boehringer Ingelheim contains sodium bicarbonate, we are going to be carrying this product and available on drop ship.
3. Give 500mg of oral amoxicillin twice a day for 3-5 days. This will kill some of the bacteria that are producing the D-Lactic Acid.
4. Do not use Lactated Ringers on these calves. Normosol R is an IV or SQ liquid that can be used instead of Lactated Ringers.
5. Give 1 dose of 500mg Thiamine subcutaneously. This is 5cc of B Complex or 2.5cc of Thiamine Hydrochloride.
6. Refrain from use of probiotics on these calves. They probably contain bacteria that will produce more D-Lactatic Acid.

It will take 12-24 hours to see improvement in these calves, so be patient and push oral electrolytes to flush the D-Lactate out through the kidneys.

It is important to realize that D-Lactic Acidosis is usually secondary to scours and treating it is not as important as preventing the scours to begin with. However, if we can recognize these calves and treat appropriately our death rates due to scours should go down.

Diaque™ and Normosol®-R are both available at our Deckerville branch as well as on Drop Ship. Diaque™ has a promotion going on right now on their 12 pack. \$14.50 DVC price , Drop ship ranges from \$11.46 (5%) - \$12.01 (10%) per 12 pack.



Check it out! www.centerfordairyexcellence.org Lots of useful dairy info for producers, such as benchmarking & tools for educators to use in classroom settings or public addresses.

Have you checked us out? We have a new website: www.deckervillevet.com

We have expanded our links to popular Pharmaceutical company's and sites pertaining to the dairy industry, drop ship order forms, listen to Dr. Ann's "Ask the Vet" radio show & companion animal news letter. This is a continuous work in progress. Let us know if you'd like to see something on our site. Email: carrie@deckervillevet.com