Diagnosing and Treating Calf Diseases

Always work with the farm veterinary surgeon when diagnosing and treating calf diseases. They will advise you regarding:

- **Threshold of symptoms that indicate treatment is needed.**

- **Selection of the drug most likely to succeed in treatment.**

- **Prescribed dose of the drug to achieve minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC).**

- **Prescribed duration of the treatment most likely to restore health and prevent relapses.**

1. Managing scours:

- Increasing resistance through good colostrum management and enough good food to eat to gain an average of at least 500g daily at 28 days.

- Reducing pathogen exposure (good equipment hygiene, clean housing, adequate ventilation).

- Reducing impact of parasite infections by treating with coccidiocide.

- Matching fluid intake to fluid losses.

- Providing electrolytes as needed.

- Observing carefully and regularly for secondary diseases.

2. Managing respiratory illness

- Increasing resistance through good colostrum management and enough good food to eat to gain an average of at least 500g daily at 28 days.

- Reducing pathogen exposure (housing, adequate ventilation).

- Early diagnosis and treatment (including BVD-PI screening, bulk tank sampling for mycoplasma as needed).

3. Managing infected navels and hernias

- Increasing resistance through good colostrum management and enough good food to eat to gain an average of at least 500g daily at 28 days.

- Reducing pathogen exposure (clean calving conditions, navel dipping, avoiding exposure to adult cow manure).

- Early diagnosis and treatment.

4. Managing external health problems such as lice, ringworm, flies, fly maggots, pink eye

- Reduce exposure through good environmental sanitation.

- Seasonal patterns permit seasonal treatment.

- Early diagnosis allows treatment of a few infected animals rather than all the heifers housed together.

See also the companion resource, "Managing Calf Diseases: HACCP Application" click on www.calffacts.com, select Metric calf facts and scroll to this title.

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