

Diagnosing and Treating Calfhood Diseases

Always work with the farm veterinarian when diagnosing and treating calfhood diseases. He/she 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 (diarrhea):

- Increasing resistance through good colostrum management and adequate nutrition.
- Reducing pathogen exposure (good equipment sanitation, clean housing, adequate ventilation).
- Reducing impact of parasite infections by feeding a coccidiostat.
- 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 adequate nutrition.
- 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 adequate nutrition.
- 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.”