

# Attica Veterinary Associates

116 Prospect Street, Attica, NY 14011

585-591-2660 / fax 585-591-2898 / Text line 585-356-3420

[www.atticacows.com](http://www.atticacows.com)



Newsletter – February 2023

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## **Bleach Is Not Enough**

**It is very tempting to just rinse out a nursing bottle or other calf feeding equipment rather than clean it thoroughly. We figure that all the “germs” can be killed with a good soak with bleach.**

The bad news is that in most cases bleach actually cannot kill the “germs.” So, why doesn’t it kill bacteria on milk or colostrum feeding equipment?

If equipment is completely clean, chlorine bleach does give an excellent kill rate for bacteria. Notice the words, “completely clean” in the above statement. If a biofilm exists on the interior surface of a nursing bottle it acts as a buffer between the bleach active ingredient (sodium hypochlorite) and the bacteria.

It’s easy for a biofilm to develop on equipment if it is not cleaned completely after every use. For example, washing feeding buckets every morning and then just rinsing after PM feeding allows the biofilm to accumulate.

These films often are thin enough that we can’t see or feel them. However, be assured, they can be present unless we have a good four-step wash-up procedure that is followed after every use.

Remember, (1) use a lukewarm prewash rinse, (2) brush using hot water for the wash with both detergent and bleach, (3) use an acid rinse and (4) allow the equipment to dry thoroughly between uses.

When we substitute a bleach rinse for regular washing, equipment biofilms support large Staph and Strep species populations. At low levels, these bacteria are not necessarily harmful to young calves. However, we frequently find high bacterial concentrations in milk, milk replacer or colostrum that come in contact with bottles, tube feeders and pails that are cleaned by “bleaching” them.

Use bleach all the time when washing. Soak with bleach and hot water occasionally to back up an effective washing program. Or, you may wish to use chlorine dioxide solution as a soaking liquid. Soaking clean equipment for at least one minute in a 100ppm chlorine dioxide solution will kill any remaining pathogens including cryptosporidia. Check with your veterinarian or call the office for directions for using chlorine dioxide. We have long-shelf life packets available as well.

## Deworm Before Spring Turnout

With some of the nicer weather we've been having, spring is on all of our minds. Now is the time to plan for deworming so it's not something forgotten in the chaos of spring work.

Economic losses from worms are most common in young stock. Most of these cattle do not show obvious signs of infection. By the time that we can visibly see worms in the manure, the animal is extremely infected and has an enormous amount of worms in their body.

Worms burrow into the lining of the stomach and intestinal tract damaging the intestinal lining. This lowers the efficiency of feed conversion and rate of growth. This causes cattle that are not as profitable as ones not affected by worms. *Worms can suck the profit out of your dairy before you even realize it.*

How do heifers get infected? They eat or drink contaminated feed, bedding or water in the winter. In summer, pasture plants are a major source of worm larvae. One of the best ways to break the infection cycle is to deworm heifers before they go out to pasture. Their manure will contain very few eggs.

We recommend that heifers be dewormed prior to spring turnout or as soon as possible this spring. All pasture animals should be dewormed before turning out on to the pasture. Please call for current pricing on available wormers.



### FOR SALE

Springing Holstein Heifers

Approximately 20 of them, but willing to sell individually  
or in smaller groups. . Due around May.

585-813-6204