

SICK CALVES - WHAT TO DO – treatment is mainly supportive

- a. Segregate the sick calf, keeping it in a separate area with fresh deep bedding.
- b. Keep the sick calf comfortable (clean and dry) and hydrated.
- c. Continue to feed milk or milk replacer. It is advisable to offer small frequent feedings particularly if the calf is not feeding well. Use a sterilized esophageal feeder to administer any solution not consumed.
- d. Make fresh potable water available.
- e. If the calf is scouring and/or showing signs of dehydration, feed 2 – 4 litres of an oral electrolyte solution between milk or milk replacer feedings but not at the same time. At least one hour should have elapsed from last milk replacer feeding before feeding electrolyte solution to avoid any possibility of excess sodium consumption which would cause further dehydration.
- f. Bacterial culture analysis will provide the cause of the infection.
- g. Use antibiotics when they are known to be effective for treating the bacterial infection that is identified.
- h. Consult your veterinarian for further assistance with treatment if antibiotics are required.
- i. Supplementation with probiotics may help to restore the balance of intestinal flora particularly after the use of antibiotics.

Dr. Sheila M. McGuirk, DVM, PhD of the University of Wisconsin-Madison advises to use the 5 C's as an effective formula for managing the young dairy calf:

Colostrum * Cleanliness * Comfort * Calories * Consistency

Visit www.calfcare.ca to learn more about the 5 C's and to obtain other useful information on good calf management.



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