

Food poisoning of the Cow

Each year it seems we see more frequent digestive upsets in dairy cattle. Often just a couple cows are involved and symptoms include mild to severe off-feed, diarrhea, and milk production declines. Sometimes the cow looks like a Salmonella or winter dysentery cow, but the culture is negative for Salmonella and if only a couple cows are sick it is unlikely that it's winter dysentery. We feel it's related to spoilage in wet fermented feeds. Think food poisoning in your cows.

As agronomy practices have changed we have seen more soil contamination of harvested feeds. Also on some farms, more manure contamination. This leads to greater chances of not only improper fermentation but also pockets of odd soil type bacteria or molds in those areas of the silage that don't ferment correctly. If these areas are of spoiled feed are fed that is where we may see the digestive issues arise.

Some of these bacteria and mycotoxins can pass thru to the milk causing problems in human health. One producer just lost 4 cows to Listeria, which is a bacteria that can grow in areas of the silage that spoiled due to improper fermentation. These problems are real and can have a huge economic impact to the bottom line.

Prevention starts at harvest time. Do the best job possible to rapidly harvest, pack and cover your feed. Use good quality inoculants to help drive the fermentation process of the silage. During feed out remove any spoiled feed and throw in manure spreader, not the heifer or dry cow ration. Realize that the bad feed extends beyond the area visible to your eye, so be liberal in your discard technique. Even though the feed you throw out is considered a loss, it doesn't compare to the damage it can do to your dairy herd. If you start experiencing several digestive upsets in the herd call your nutritionist and look for any possibility of spoiled feeds. Consult with one of us and we can guide you thru the treatment process and what to expect for recovery.

There are different tests that can be run on the feed looking for some of the culprits and now Rock River Labs is offering a TMR hygiene test that looks for mycotoxins and the different bacteria that can cause digestive problems. If you have questions about this don't hesitate to call.



Al- 210-9902
Monty-579-0408
Jeff- 960-6602
Mark- 579-3428
Ralph-382-8040
Cass- 583-6546
Kolby-212-0475
Abbie-344-1718
Steve-948-3124



If anyone is interested in getting emails on dairy pricing changes, contact Brian Gould at bwgould@wisc.edu and get on his email list. It's free, they are really short and brief, and are informative.



It's war out there.

At a recent Dairy business Association meeting one of the topics of concern was that ground almonds and ground soybeans can be labeled milk and the FDA is not concerned. With that logic, the use of antibiotics would be organic as long as the antibiotics arise from a natural mold (they all do) or that milk and hamburger are vegetarian as long as all the cattle consume are plants. Actually, milk from cows that eat only plants that are not processed (fermentation is OK) would then classify as 'Raw Vegan'

Milk is produced by mammals.
Ground almonds are nuts!

Time has a way.....

I was right out of veterinary school. The dairy industry was ramping up feeding of components at levels to meet high lactation needs. The Harvestore company was putting up silos all around the county, and they were teaching producers to make really good feed by cutting hay early. I stepped right into a huge increase in the Displaced Abomasum rate in the dairy industry.

It was frustrating for the vets and producers, and honestly, the only good thing about it was that the vets made more money. And unlike today when our goal is to help producers prevent problems, all we did was run around fixing broken cows.

The producer milked 30 cows and kept back 10 heifers every year as replacements. The herd tended to freshen as a group over a couple months, a holdover from the years of milk base. So 8 of his 10 heifers had freshened and I was doing a surgery on the eighth one, and I had cut the prior 7 as well. Understandably, not a happy farmer.

"Doc, what am I doing wrong that I'm having all these DA's? I didn't have one last year." Of course I had no answer, and I wouldn't for 30 years, and sometimes we still don't, but it was a beautiful fall day, I was happy, and I was a smart ass, no doubt.

Dead serious I looked at the farmer and said, "You don't give enough money to the church."

Now if someone had said that to me I would have had to agree. And since I don't think God works that way I would have seen the humor, and realized the vet didn't have a clue why we were 8 for 8 on DA's, but....

"Young man, I'll have you know..." was how the next ten minute sermon started. I actually came away with a better appreciation of helping those less fortunate, but I also came away with an appreciation about questioning a man's value system, even jokingly, when he's frustrated.

This is a picture of what the gut of a cow that died from HBS or Hemorrhagic Bowel Syndrome looks like. The cow was normal the day before it died, giving over 100 pounds of milk. The picture gives testament to why treatment seldom works. →



We are-

Oh so
LUCKY
to have
you!

Choose US!



