

Naval Infection in Calves Hard to Diagnose

It's pretty obvious when a calf has scours. It's not as obvious with pneumonia, but with a stethoscope, or ultrasound, or just paying close attention most calves with pneumonia can be identified. But infected navels, unless they are severe can harm the calf yet be hard to diagnose. Older calves with umbilical hernias are one indicator of a previous naval infection, although most naval infections do not result in hernias. When there were large numbers of veal barns in the area, I got to necropsy a lot of calves, and it was surprising the number that had evidence of a naval infection. The University of Guelph lists naval infection as the most under reported calf disease, and as the third most significant calf disease of calves.

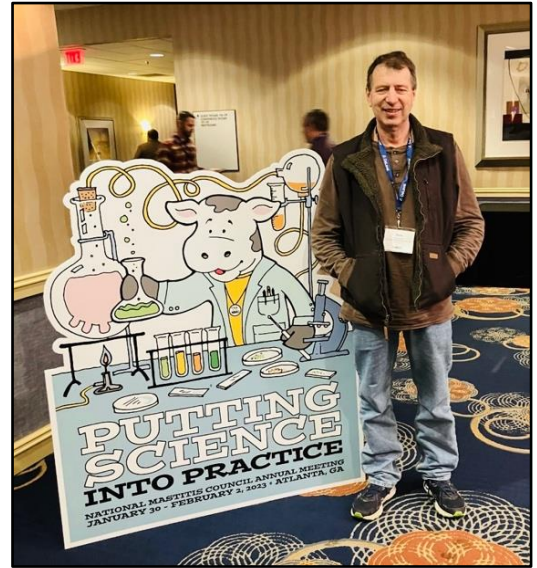
A naval infection is insidious. There is usually an abscess that forms inside the calf, with bacteria constantly finding their way into the blood stream. This can lead to infections in the heart, kidney, liver, brain and commonly in joints. Swollen joints in calves under 3 months of age are almost always from mycoplasma, usually fed in the milk, or a repercussion of naval infection.

Treatment is simple, but often not very successful because the diagnosis comes after the damage has been done. Broad spectrum antibiotics are used for extended times.

Prevention is key, and that involves a very clean calving environment and very clean housing for the next couple days. A newborn calf with any manure on its body anywhere indicates a high-risk calf for having a naval infection and an environment where other calves will be at risk.

Prevention is also supported with a naval dip, iodine products being best, although the Methamphetamine people managed to get the good 7% tincture products expensive and hard to obtain. Naval dipping is not a substitute for a dirty environment. Dipping is better than spraying because it soaks the naval. One idea I read about recently was to use a dixie paper cup to help apply the dip, then the cup can be discarded, and a new cup used for each calf.

Any evaluation of a newborn calf's environment should be critical of how clean the calf housing area is, and the navel's can be felt for swelling and small amounts of pus drainage.



Mastitis Meeting

Dr. Mark attended the National Mastitis Council meeting in early February in Atlanta, Ga. The meeting offered educational opportunities with people from all over the world in attendance including milking equipment suppliers, academic professionals, milk plant field staff, dairy producers, and regulatory officials. These are colleagues he can reach out to with on-farm problems related to milk quality, a special interest of his. Kari, in our milk lab, also attended the meeting virtually.

Local Farm Wins

Milk Quality Award

The Mastitis Council meeting announced the national milk quality awards, "cream of the crop," and one client, FW Rahn & Sons received the silver award.

Nationally, with the three levels of awards, there were only 44 recipients. The cut points for this award include somatic cell count, plate count, mastitis treatment rate, and culling rate. The cut points aren't averages, a single high plate count and you are no longer eligible. Congratulations!

Xylazine Becoming Part of Fentanyl Crisis

Xylazine or Rompum® issues are affecting us and will ultimately affect you. There is a fentanyl crisis in this country, and lately xylazine has become part of the problem.

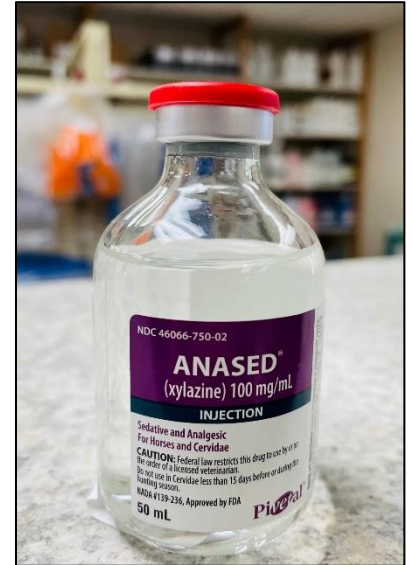
Fentanyl is produced illegally, often in China, and smuggled (against the law) into this country where it is illegally sold (against the law). It is produced as a bulk powder. In veterinary medicine we use xylazine daily as a sedative for cattle, horses, sheep, and goats.

Years ago, we used it in dogs and cats routinely, but better products are available that are extremely expensive, especially if we were going to use them on a 1,500-pound cow. We use a legally produced product in diluted injectable form.

Congress has a bill they are going to vote on that will make xylazine a scheduled product like morphine or codeine. This will significantly increase our time involved with record keeping along with every business involved in the legal distribution of xylazine. Add to the records requirement, the storage and transportation laws associated with a controlled substance increase costs. If the product only doubles in price, I will be surprised.

So, there will be a new law, effectively increasing the cost of xylazine within the legal framework of agriculture. It will have no impact on the illegal production in China and the smuggling of product from China, but it will make congressmen feel good because they did something.

The government is ALWAYS the cause of inflation.



Antibiotics Removed from Non-Prescription Sales

The FDA has removed all antibiotics from non-prescription sales.

As of June 11, any antibiotic will require a prescription to obtain. In our practice we require a farm visit every 6 months in order to obtain a prescription, so that we are familiar with your operation and your ability to avoid residue problems with milk and meat.

Please plan ahead for something as simple as LA200.

Salt on Sidewalk a Threat?

You can't make this up. The city of Madison passed an ordinance that if you put down too much salt on your sidewalk, you must sweep up the excess after the ice is gone. Their reasoning is salt is considered a handicap impediment and an environmental threat. There is a fine if you don't clean up your sidewalk and the building inspector enforces the ordinance.



Vet Featured in Magazine

Dr. Al and his three dogs are pictured above on this month's edition of the Wisconsin Agriculturist. He talks about conservation practices he's putting in place on his farm outside of Waupun.