

PRACTICE TIPS

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Diagnosing and treating water mouth in lambs

Watery mouth, sometimes called rattle belly or slavers, is an important disease of neonatal lambs which can cause severe losses in some flocks with morbidity reaching 24 % and mortality of those affected often as high as 80 per cent. It is a disease of young lambs upto three days old. A combination of factors predispose lambs to watery mouth. These include reduced or delayed intake of colostrum, gastrointestinal hypomotility and ingestion of bacteria, usually *E. coli*. Endotoxins (structural components of Gram-negative bacteria released after bacterial death) play the major role in the pathogenesis of the disease. A relative neutrality of abomasal contents and reduced gut motility found in newborn lambs may encourage the survival and growth of bacteria especially in the absence of colostrum. Gut stasis, caused by endotoxins may compound this effect. Access to the systemic circulation by these bacteria and their products may be aided by the normal pinocytotic mechanisms which exist for the first 24 hours of life to allow transport of large molecules intact from the gut.

Watery mouth is seen in young lambs between 12 and 72 hours old. Initially they are dull and refuse to suck, then develop the characteristic wet chin due to excess salivation. The condition quickly deteriorates. Lambs become reluctant to stand and a distinct distension of the abdomen often develops. Occasionally diarrhoea is also present although in other affected lambs constipation is a feature. Unless treatment has been started promptly, affected lambs will die within 24 hours. On postmortem, abomasum may be distended with gas and is often full of saliva and clots of milk. Retained meconium is present in some cases.

Treatment is only successful if started early in the course of the disease oral fluid therapy (e.g ORS; Nimkol) and lamb warming in conjunction with both oral and parenteral antibiotics appears to be the most effective treatment, although there is a possibility, as yet untested, that parenteral antibiotics may actually increase the circulating endotoxins. Glucose given

orally or by intraperitoneal injection may rectify any hypoglycemia and treatment with anti-inflammatory agents such as flunixin, diclofenic sodium or dexamethasone is indicated to help combat the endotoxic shock. Enemas are often advocated and by stimulating gut motility, may help remove the primary source of infections. Prevention should focus on:

- i. Ensuring an early and adequate consumption of colostrum.
- ii. Lambs which cannot consume an adequate amount of colostrum (e.g. due to maternal agalactia, sibling competition or neonatal diseases) should be fed on stored colostrum, or cow colostrum.
- iii. Hygienic measure at lambing.
- iv. Prophylactic use of antibiotics.

(Abridged from King T. and C. Hodgson, 1991. Watery mouth in lambs. In Practice, January, 1991, pp: 23-44).

An easy way to stop panting during canine clinical examination

When auscultating the heart of a panting dog, whistle softly once or twice. This is a faster and safer way to stop panting than holding the dog's mouth shut. (Dr. Arich C. Hoffman, Philadelphia).

An easy contrivance to address pets loneliness

Place a radio or old television set close to the ward or runs so that dogs can hear it. It makes the pet feel more at home and helps control barking in lonely dogs. (Kelly Cook, Vet. Asstt., Clarkston, Washington, USA.)

A painless method for removing embedded sutures

To soften an encrusted, fibrin clot in order to remove embedded sutures, instruct the owner to apply Neosporin ointment to the wound 24 hours before suture removal. Next morning the wound is covered for 5 to 10 minutes with a gauze sponge soaked in an isotonic solution; then the sutures are removed. With this procedure, removal is virtually painless and the sutures are easier to find (Becker S. J., 1985. Tricks

of the Trade Emergency Med., April 30, 1985, 17: 130).

Chinese herbal treatment of mastitis

Traditional Chinese medicine and/or veterinary Medicine hold that mastitis results mainly from affections of the udder by the external evil (which is a naive recognition of pathogens) through the teat canal or udder wounds, and disorders of the related channel (meridian) systems that are considered to distribute over the udder and teats. These predisposing factors may lead to the disturbance of blood circulation and stagnation of the milk in the udder with the result of inflammatory swelling. The therapeutic methods, therefore, should be directed to eliminate the external evils (pathogens), promote blood circulation and dredge the stagnated milk out of the udder. Some herbal preparations administered orally and stipulated according to these therapeutic principles have been found effective for the treatment of human and bovine mastitis. Chinese workers at Deptt. of Vet. Med. Zhejiang Agri. Univ. Hangzhou (China) reported that the Dandelion Complex Decoction (DCD) had a cure rate of 81.8 % for the clinical mastitis and 33.3 % of the bacterial infections were eliminated. The results were comparable to the control group (Penicillin-streptomycin intramammary infusion). DCD, the concentrated medicinal liquid that was filled in the 500 mL bottle for field use, was composed of the following herbs: dandelion (*Herba taraxaci*), honeysuckle flower (*Flos loniceræ*), dyer's woad root (*Radix isatidis*), Baikal skullcap (*Radix scutellariae*) and chinese angelica (*Radix angelicae sinensis*). Better bacteriological cure rate was achieved when the complex was complemented with the intramammary infusion of an antibiotic. These herbs have an antipyretic-detoxicant action in animal's body.

(Abridged from: Fang W. H., H. R. Liu and X. G. Qu, 1989. The non-antibiotic approach to the treatment of bovine mastitis. Proc. World Assoc. of Veterinary Food Hygienists Xth (Jubilee) International Symposium, Stockholm, 2-7 July 1989. pp. 281-284).

Vitamin E supplementation to reduce mortality in poultry

I often prescribe vitamin E (Tab Evion, E. Merck 200-400 mg/5 liters of water) for 3-5 days to reduce mortality associated with viral diseases of poultry e.g. Newcastle disease, Gumboro disease etc. In addition, I also recommend Vitamin E supplementation when vaccinating birds against these diseases. This vitamin help alleviate the phenomenon of immunosuppression

which is a hallmark of these diseases. The addition of supplementary vitamin E in the treatment of bacterial diseases often reduces mortality because this vitamin improves intraphagocytic killing of bacteria engulfed by phagocytes.

(Dr. Najamul-Islam, Veterinary Officer, Directorate of Poultry Production, Faisalabad).

Minimizing human exposure to infections during removal of retained placenta

Veterinarians have been known to contract brucellosis and other contagious diseases from animals while removing retained placenta or treating dystocias. In order to minimize the risk of these infections, the best safeguard is to operate using gloves lubricated with disinfectants. Should someone find it difficult to perform these tasks with gloves on, he/she should first generously smear both the arms with undiluted Dettol, Sep-Guard or savlon, then apply some simple oil or antiseptic cream/ointment on the arm before introducing it into the genital tract of the animals. Repeat the same several times during the procedures. After the task is over, thoroughly rinse the arms and feet with lukewarm water containing a disinfectant (e.g. Dettol; Osmodex; Savlon, Beloran)

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Crop pesticides as cheaper ectoparasiticide for animals

A host of ectoparasiticide veterinary formulations are used to treat and control ticks and mites on animals. However, these are quite expensive and sometimes toxic. As a cost curtailment effort, the use of crop pesticides of pyrethroids group was evaluated in the treatment and control of ticks and mite infestations in cattle, buffalo, goats and dogs. The application of 0.05, 0.1 and 0.15 % emulsions of Cyperkil, Permasect and sumicidin as wash provided 90-100 and 100 % control of one-host and multihost ticks, respectively. The moderate and severe infestations of sarcoptic mange were cured without recurrence with one or two applications of these pyrethroids at an interval of 10 days. A long residual effect of 8-15 days coupled with inhibition of oviposition and production of nonviable progeny, low treatment cost and lack of any toxicity were the desirable attributes of these crop pesticides when used on cattle, buffalo, goats and dogs.

(Modified from: Khan M. H., 1996. Efficacy of pyrethroids against acarines infesting animals. Indian Vet. J., 73: 1257-1259).