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The Smelly & Itchy Edition

Not a pleasant topic but one that pops up often enough during regular herd health visits that I thought I should share some thoughts and ideas on how to address the issue whether it be one cow or a whole herd.

UDDER ROT – Necrotic Dermatitis – Udder cleft dermatitis

Moist, stinky, necrotic lesion may develop in areas of tightly adjacent skin of some animals such as the udder cleft. This type is seen more often in multiparous cows. It also can be seen in heifers on the outside of the udder and inside of the leg where they meet. The udder is pressed tightly causing chafing, dermatitis and necrosis. These lesions can have matted hair, pus, crusts, flakes, blood or ulcers present and are often associated with a foul-smelling odor similar to metritis or retained placenta. The worst-case scenarios are those that have eroded into mammary tissue near large veins causing animals to bleed excessively or cause septicemia resulting in sick or dead cows.

Possible Culprits: Bacteria (*Fusobacterium necrophorum* or *Arcanobacterium pyogenes*), Chorioptic mange, or Sarcoptic mange. A study out of the US by Warnik in 2002 showed that udder rot was 18% dermatitis (skin infection) and 87.5% were caused by mites.

What do we do about it?

- Limit ventral and udder edema
- Keep udders clean and hairless (clip or singe)
- Plenty of clean, dry bedding
- Treatment options
 - o Eprinomectin (Eprinex) – to kill mites – licensed for lactating animals with no milk withhold used according to label
 - o Clean & wash area with antiseptic solution – water and soap
 - o Systemic or topical antibiotic therapy may be warranted in severe cases
 - o Many other ‘old wives tale options’ such as cornstarch and baby powder have limited success
 - o Ivomectin (Ivomec or Solmectin) – used in non-lactating animals

TAIL HEAD MANGE

Caused by the mite *Chorioptes bovis* (most common in north America) or *Chorioptes texanus*. It is a skin dwelling mite, not burrowing, and its entire lifecycle is between 21 and 26 days depending on temperature and humidity. Animals get it from direct contact with another animal, stabling that is carrying it or shared brushes. Most animals are subclinically infected however, clinically infected animals show a flaking, crusty, itching lesion at the base of the tail. Crusts and ulcers may appear due to rubbing. The lesions may start down at the bottom of the cow leg (pastern) and work its way up to the udder, perineum and tail. Clinical signs tend to appear in later winter and go away in summer months. Although this disease may not seem very concerning, there is milk production loss associated with this type of

chronic infection. Studies have been shown post-treatment, animals can gain up to 1kg of milk/cow/day for the 120 next days in lactation. (Verschave, 2014; Nodetvedt, 2002)

What do we do about it?

Non-lactating animals – Ivomectin (Ivomec or Solmectin)

Lactating animals

- 1) Eprinomectin (Eprinex) – as treatment on a per cow basis and yearly as a herd preventative
- 2) Permethrin (Boss Pour-On or Vetolice) can be used with some success – must use 2 doses 2 weeks apart.

LICE – Pediculosis

Many types of lice can be found on cattle (chewing or bloodsucking) which can result in decreased body weight and decreased milk production. Animals in stressful, overcrowded and poor feed conditions tend to be more severely affected. Most cases of lice infestations we tend to see in our practice are in heifers. Animals are itchy resulting in scratching, rubbing, licking and biting of infested areas. A generally unthrifty appearance and rough coat are characteristic. Severe cases will have hair loss and scarring lesions due to excessive rubbing. Lice infestations are most prevalent during the winter and transmission occurs by close contact of others infested or stabling with live lice or eggs.

What do we do about it?

Treatment with a pour-on insecticide (permethrin), in clinic we carry Vetolice or Boss Pour On options. Follow label directions – needs to be done twice, two weeks apart. Very little resistance. Lactating or non-lactating options.

or

Treatment with Ivermectin pour-on (Ivomec or Solmectin) – label recommends once and it provides wide coverage for mange and parasites however there is widespread resistance of lice to Ivomec. Non-lactating only.

or

Treatment with eprinomectin pour-on (Eprinex) – similar to ivermectin. Also covers mange and parasites but some resistance and cost is prohibitive for non-lactating animals.

Hopefully this hasn't left you feeling too itchy yourselves 😊 Any questions please consult us at your next herd visit or call the clinic for more information.

Thanks,
Christie Morrow

New Vet Announcement!

Some of you may have already noticed a familiar face at farm visits lately. Heartland Vets is happy to announce the return of Dr. Tom Gutteridge! Tom will be working full-time with the large animal veterinary team. Please help us make Tom Feel welcome.



Hip-lifters

Hip-lifters can be a critical tool to aid in the recovery of downer cows. We feel it is important for dairy farms to have hip-lifters readily on hand, especially since they are not expensive. To meet this need, we have begun stocking hip-lifters for purchase. In the past we have had loaner hip-lifters available, however we plan to phase this out due to biosecurity concerns and logistical challenges. In the short term the loaner hip-lifters will still be available for rent. Please call for more details.

Veterinary Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Much has changed with the alarming presence of the COVID-19 virus in Ontario. During this time, it is important that we maintain a safe food supply. Our veterinarians will continue to play a role in animal health, welfare, and food safety. At the time of this writing, we are still providing herd health and emergency service. In response to the pandemic, our clinic is taking many precautions to ensure everyone's safety. We care very much about the health and wellbeing of our clients, staff, families and community. Below are some of the changes we have implemented. Please be aware that as this pandemic develops, we may have to adjust our procedures in response.

Veterinary farm visits

- Vets will be contacting farmers before our arrival to the farm to assess the level of risk, the comfort of both parties and to clarify our expectations for social distancing
- Once on farm, we will be wearing gloves during the visit and try to maintain a distance from people of at least six feet wherever practically possible
- Care will be taken to wash and disinfect hands and contacted tools and equipment before re-entering our vehicle

Technician farm visits

- Techs will continue to assist veterinarians as necessary. The same precautions as above will apply
- Technicians will continue to provide services, such as dehorning, but we ask that no farm personnel are in the immediate vicinity during their visit

Clinic procedures

- Our clinic will remain open, but business hours may be subject to change
- Clients will be met at the door by one of our customer care representatives
- Purchases will be set out at the door
- Laboratory samples will be received at the door

We thank you for assistance in helping us continue to provide veterinary care while considering the health of yourselves and our staff.

Stay healthy!

