



# COCCIDIOSIS IN CALVES

## INTRODUCTION

Coccidiosis is a disease caused by protozoa. They are found in all stock at low levels, but cause clinical disease when their numbers increase. Coccidia cause disease by damaging the gut wall of young animals, leading to severe scour, weight loss and dehydration.

Calves become infected by licking dirty bedding or other infected calves or by eating and drinking food contaminated with muck. Eggs (oocysts) are ingested and then pass down through the digestive system to the large intestine. Here, they damage the gut wall lining leading to poor absorption of water and nutrients by the gut. This leads to scour and dehydration.



## KEY POINTS

Most common cause of calf scour (after worms) in older calves

Effects 3 weeks to 6 months old calves

Many calves subclinical (infected but not scouring yet)

Watery diarrhoea that may contain blood and mucus

Reduced live weight gains and decreased feed intakes

Scouring may start at times of stress e.g. disbudding / castration / weaning



## SYMPTOMS

Weight loss, depression, loss of appetite and very loose muck are the most common symptoms. The muck may then progress to watery scour containing blood, mucus and gut wall lining. Calves become dehydrated and may die due to loss of excess fluid in the scour. General poor growth rates and ill thrift are also common signs.

## PREVENTION

Management is the most effective method of preventing coccidiosis infections. Scouring calves should have their scour tested to confirm the diagnosis and they should be isolated to prevent spread of the infection.

Dry bedding and regular disinfection of feed and water troughs will help to prevent build up of infection on your farm. Always steam clean buildings between batches of calves and allow the building to dry out before bedding it up again.



## TREATMENT

Only use a coccidiostat once a diagnosis has been reached (get a scour sample tested). Coccidiostats will be useless against all other causes of scour in calves.

All infected (scouring) and in-contact calves should be treated. In contact calves are likely to be infected even if they appear healthy.



**Baycox<sup>®</sup>** 50mg/n  
**Prevent Coccidiosis**

For further information,  
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