



Doc Ken's Korner

NEO NATAL SCOURS (Reo-Corona Virus)

I have not seen this in buffalo but have had experience with it in cattle so will put down what I know about this virus. This is a virus found in newborn ruminants which includes buffalo. It is generally spread by ingestion or eating. The incubation in experimental calves is from 20 to 36 hours. The course of the disease is 5 to 6 days of diarrhea, but they often die 48 to 62 hours after onset. Normally they ingest the virus from nursing or licking objects in their surroundings. It may even be in the milk itself as we disinfected udders and still had the problem. We felt we got some prevention control of the virus when we milked out the heifer or young cow about 3 times and discarded the milk, while we fed the calves colostrum from older cows whose calves had not broken with it.

The only positive method of diagnosis is to send the spiral colon to a lab fresh from a calf that broke with the scours in the last 36

hours or so. This may be a problem as they often live 4 to 6 days before they die and this is too long for a diagnosis so you may have to sacrifice a calf.

There are two methods for preventing this disease:

1. Vaccinate your cows twice before they calve—once in the fall and once about a month before calving, subsequent years they only need one shot previous to calving each year.

2. Use an oral vaccine on each calf before he nurses. If given in the first ½ hour of life and you vaccinate all of them, you should get pretty good results. This does work but let me stress that you must vaccinate *all* calves or the virus buildup will be so severe that the vaccine protection will be overridden. (I have found that buffalo cows can be chased back to the herd in the first 15 minutes after calving but watch out when they return in four to five minutes! Also watch when the calf gets your smell! He will think you are his mother!)

Treatment is very difficult since this diarrhea changes the lining of the gut so that it

takes five-six days to return to normal. You must put them on fluids other than milk for five-six days or they will start to scour again as soon as they receive milk. If you can, use oral fluids and say, gentocin for five to six days, you should be able to save some of them.

Since the prevention and treatment and procedures are not very easily accomplished, I would like to give you some management procedures that may help. Do not add any other ruminant animals to your herd in say, the last five or six months before you are expecting calves. Calve out in the most spread out, cleanest area you have available. Be sure their nutrition is adequate, especially trace mineral and vitamins. Often viruses invade only when we break the biochemical chain of an animal. I do not think this is necessarily true in this case though, since I have seen corona virus in cattle in some of the best managed herds.

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