

PREVENTING AND TREATING *CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS*

Cryptosporidium infection can cause serious problems on some farms and current statistics indicate this parasite is the commonest cause of scour in young calves in the UK.¹

The parasite

Cryptosporidium parvum is a protozoan parasite that can infect a range of mammals including people.

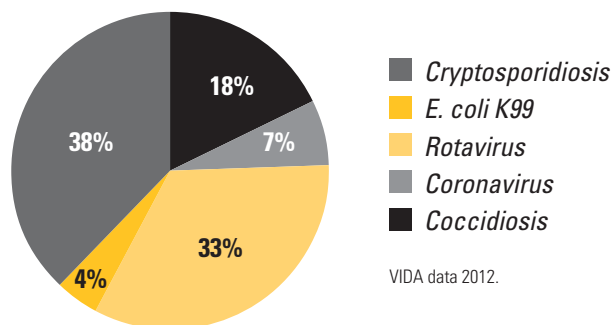
- Oocysts (eggs) are shed in the dung by an infected animal.
- At peak shedding, millions of oocysts are excreted for 7 to 10 days.
- Only 5 oocysts are needed to cause infection, so a single calf has a huge potential to infect other calves.
- Removal of the parasite from contaminated housing is extremely difficult.

The effect

Clinical infections tend to occur in neonatal animals, whereas in adult animals infection does not tend to be associated with clinical signs. In the calf, infection leads to:

- Severe damage to the lining of the intestines.
- Destruction of the ability to absorb nutrients, water and salts.
- Profuse watery diarrhoea.
- Dehydration, weight loss, dullness and sometimes death.

Causes of infectious calf scour



Halocur[®]

Halocur is available in 490ml and 980ml bottles. It is indicated primarily for *cryptosporidium* prevention, but can also be used for early treatment of infected animals. In animals treated with Halocur:

- A reduction of oocyst excretion has been demonstrated.
- A reduction of the severity of calf diarrhoea due to *Cryptosporidium parvum*.



5 STEP ACTION PLAN FOR FARMS WITH A CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS PROBLEM

1. Diagnose

If you have scouring calves you should consult your vet to gain an accurate diagnosis of the cause. Treatments differ depending on the pathogen(s) involved.

2. Clean and disinfect

Muck out, steam clean, disinfect and leave to dry as frequently as you practically can.

Many common farm disinfectants are not effective against *cryptosporidium* so it is important that you use those which are effective and licensed against *cryptosporidium* (Keno™Cox, Hydrogen peroxide, Neopredisan and Ox-Virin for example).

It is important that you make sure you leave pens to dry fully as *cryptosporidium* does not like desiccation.

3. Colostrum

Implementation of the 5 Qs of colostrum management (Quantity, Quality, Quickly, sQueaky clean and Quantify) is critical to setting your calves up to having the best immunity possible. For further information please refer to the Practical Colostrum Management leaflet.

4. Control

The cause of scour is often multi-factorial and so there is no one silver bullet to scour control. Good biosecurity, vaccination and nutritional policies will help to minimise the cases of scour factors on the farm.

Implementing some of the following quick control tips may help to reduce scour in your youngstock:

- Use disinfection on the entrance to calf sheds.
- Vaccinate dams against rotavirus, coronavirus and *E. coli* to minimise the impact of these other scour-causing pathogens.
- Do not mix young calves with older ones as older calves may still shed *cryptosporidium* oocysts.

- Muck out, steam clean, disinfect and leave pens to dry as frequently as you can.
- Keep all calves warm and hydrated. This is particularly important if they are scouring.
- Quarantine sick calves as soon as possible after scouring starts, do not mix them back in with the healthy calves for at least one week after scouring stops.
- Make sure you tend to your healthy calves before your sick ones so you don't transport pathogens back to the healthy herd.

5. Prevent and treat

Use a licensed product for the prevention and treatment of cryptosporidiosis to reduce oocyst excretion and the severity of calf diarrhoea due to *Cryptosporidium parvum*.

To prevent with Halocur you should dose all new-born calves with Halocur within the first 24-48 hours of life and then follow the protocol as detailed in the product leaflet.

To treat with Halocur you should dose all calves within 24 hours of diagnosis of *cryptosporidiosis* and then follow the protocol as detailed in the product leaflet.

If you are using Halocur it is important to treat the calves **after feeding** for 7 consecutive days and to dose as accurately as possible whether you are using Halocur to prevent or to treat *cryptosporidiosis*.



This 5 step action plan has been developed in conjunction with Moredun Research Institute.



Reference: 1. *Cryptosporidiosis* in Cattle, the Moredun Foundation, News Sheet Vol. 6, No. 1, February 2014.

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