

## SCOURS IN CALVES

Scouring calves are a common occurrence on many dairy farms. Scouring in young calves is typically seen in young stock whose immune system does not protect them from the bacteria, viruses and mycoplasma in their environment. It is vital that young calves be given the benefit of receiving colostrum, rich in antibodies in their first days of life or are dosed with antibody supplements. Bought in stock can also suffer from the stress of separation and transport leading to scouring. Animal Health Direct Limited electrolyte is beneficial in all cases.

During infectious scours, calves lose considerable water and electrolytes - minerals such as sodium, phosphorous, potassium, chloride and others. Treating scours is serious business. Veterinary advice is recommended

Scours, or diarrhea, is defined as an increased frequency, fluidity or volume of fecal excretion.

Scours can occur in several ways:

- ❖ Osmotic - caused by excessive osmotic pressure in the intestine.
- ❖ Malabsorption - caused by intestinal damage.
- ❖ Secretory - caused by toxins produced by organisms.
- ❖ Impaired - excessive contractions of the intestine, increasing movement of material through the intestine. A definitive identification requires a sample for microbiological

Scouring in young calves can cause death through:

- ❖ Electrolyte imbalances increasing blood acidity
- ❖ Fluid losses (Dehydration)
- ❖ Depressed feed intake leading to an energy deficit.

Good hygiene, housing and management are essential to the wellbeing of young calves and well managed young stock produce healthy, productive and profitable adults.

A popular and effective method of reversing dehydration is through the use of oral rehydration solutions. To be effective these must provide electrolytes (sodium, potassium and chloride), an alkalizing agent to correct blood pH and a readily available source of energy, such as glucose.