

FACT SHEET:

Cryptosporidia

What is it and what does it do?

Is a protozoal parasite which infects the cells of the intestine, growing and multiplying and destroying the cells. The intestine has villi which are finger like projections and they are necessary for absorption of fluid and nutrients.

As the cells die off the villi become damaged and very short, thus they no longer can absorb fluid and nutrients and thus scouring occurs.

It can occur at any age but is usually between 4 days and 4weeks. The scour is generally very watery and results in severe dehydration, the infective form of crypto is shed in the faeces as soon as the scour begins and for several days after it ceases.

The scour can persist for a couple of weeks.

Often there is a mixed infection with rotavirus, coronavirus, BVD or e- coli being involved as well.

Cryptosporidia can be confirmed in a faecal sample.

Treatment & Prevention

As with any cause of calf scours, treatment always consists of providing energy and fluids, therefore electrolyte therapy is the most important treatment, whilst maintaining milk intakes as well.

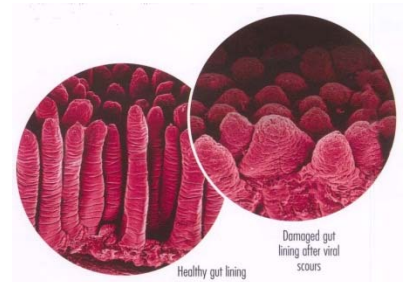
Specific treatment of crypto involves the feeding of antibodies against crypto, by adding rotagen/crypto combo powder to the milk, or by administering the drug Halocur orally to each calf daily for 7days.

Halocur is very effective but the safety margin is low, thus it is important to weigh calves and treat with an accurate dose. It is best used as a preventative. Once crypto is confirmed in a shed, it is recommended to treat all calves with Halocur for 7days including new calves.

Bear in mind when dealing with calf scours that Cryptosporidia is able to infect humans so your own hygiene is most important.

Disinfection every day with Vetsan is recommended when an outbreak of scours is occurring, making sure that the floor, walls, calves and equipment are sprayed. Also you will need to disinfect clothing and boots between infected and non-infected pens, or if possible have a different set of overalls and boots for each.

Consider starting a new shed for newborns to reduce the spread.



Once Cryptosporidia is in a calf shed it can be difficult to eliminate as it is hard to get enough disinfection on all surfaces and deep within bedding. Disinfection is still important though to decrease the contamination in the shed of cryptosporidia and other diseases that will take advantage of already sick calves.

At the end of the season it is advised to thoroughly steam clean your calf shed and then saturate all surfaces with Vetsan. Re-spray with Vetsan just prior to the next season once the bedding has been put down.