

Neonate Diarrhoea and gastroenteritis

RUMA guidelines are as follows.

“Treatment for scours is very similar regardless of the cause. It should be directed toward correcting the dehydration, acidosis, and electrolyte loss. Antimicrobial treatment can be given simultaneously, with the treatment for dehydration but is not always necessary. Dehydration can be overcome with simple fluids given by mouth early in the course of the disease. If dehydration is allowed to continue, intravenous fluid treatment becomes necessary.”

The emphasis should be on fluid therapy, with antibiotics reserved for calves that are dull or have haemorrhagic diarrhoea. For older calves of around a month plus, due consideration should also be given to coccidiosis as a cause of diarrhoea. 'Scour boluses' may have a non-specific diarrhea suppressing effect, but will tend to generate resistance that will cause problems when calves are more severely sick, and will not adequately compensate for dehydration, poor colostral immunity and high environmental challenge.

Bolus preparations available for oral treatment of calves with scour are trimethoprim-potentiated sulphonamide and clavulanate-potentiated amoxicillin. As potentiated amoxicillin is useful in a wide number of on-farm situations, it should be reserved as a second line oral antibiotic in cases of calf scours.

Spectinomycin is licensed for prevention of enterotoxaemia (watery mouth) in lambs. Its spectrum and resistance pattern is very similar to streptomycin, and resistance is consequently likely to be common although high local concentrations in the gut may partially overcome this.

There are no other licensed preparations, and its use may be unnecessary if there is a suitable concentration on hygiene and the provision of colostrum, adequate milk supply and shelter.