Dairy Australia

10 STEPS TO KEEP YOUR CALVES FREE OF ANTIBIOTIC RESIDUES

It is important that everyone caring for calves on your farm understands how antibiotic residues may happen and ensures that all calves sent for slaughter are free from antibiotic residues.

Any antibiotic residues in calves sent for slaughter are a major concern for the Australian dairy industry. Calves are frequently tested at abattoirs for the presence of antibiotics. Detection of antibiotic residues could result in loss of this valuable outlet for your calves.

Since 2011, Dairy Australia has run a program to help dairy farmers reduce the risk of antibiotic residues in their calves. The following advice is based on the findings of our investigations on farms where antibiotic residues have occurred.

For more detailed advice on managing antibiotic residues in calves, refer to chapter 6 of the Dairy Australia publication 'Rearing Healthy Calves, 2nd edition'. To access online or order a hard copy, visit **dairyaustralia.com.au/healthycalves**

TAKE THESE 10 SIMPLE STEPS TO KEEP YOUR CALVES RESIDUE-FREE

Prevent disease - develop a plan for colostrum management, prevention and treatment of calf diseases - ask your vet for advice if you are unsure what to include.

Training - make sure that everyone who cares for your calves understands and follows your management plan.

Separate housing - keep calves destined for sale separated from the calves you intend to rear.

Dedicated equipment - feed your sale calves with separate equipment that is clearly marked and used only for this purpose.

Fluid therapy - use electrolytes as the first option for treating sick calves. Remember many common causes of calf scours do not respond to antibiotics.

Follow directions - use antibiotics carefully and only after discussing the treatment options with your vet. Always read the label and observe the meat withhold period. Don't feed sale calves with waste milk from antibiotic treated cows.

Manage treatments - treat calves individually, preferably by injection to minimise cross contamination. It is risky and ineffective to mix oral antibiotics with milk.

Identify treated calves - make sure any treated calves are highly visible and kept away from other calves until the drug withhold period has elapsed.

Keep records - record every treatment, for every calf, every time.

Avoid contamination - buckets, feeders, drench guns and syringes that have been in contact with antibiotics are common sources of contamination. Mark them clearly and do not use them for feeding or dosing your sale calves.

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