



Countryside Veterinary Clinic, LLP

February 2017 Newsletter



DA's: Points to Remember

Dr. Peter G. Ostrum

One of the more common disorders that dairy clinicians diagnose and treat are displaced abomasums (DA's). The 4th stomach of the cow normally lies in the right front quadrant of the lower abdomen just inside the 7th-11th rib. Under certain circumstances the abomasum may fill with gas and migrate to either the left (LDA) or the right (RDA) side of the cow. While listening with a stethoscope and simultaneously percussing with one's hand or snapping finger the characteristic "ping" will be heard. The majority of LDA's are diagnosed within the first month after calving while RDA's can happen any time, usually after an abrupt feed change has occurred.

Typical symptoms include loss of appetite, reduced milk yield, a slow moving rumen often accompanied with mild bloat, ketosis and abnormal manure. You should be very suspicious of a LDA if a cow remains ketotic despite being treated several days for ketosis. LDA cows that are not diagnosed promptly will lose weight and linger in the herd with a poor appetite and mediocre production. RDA's on the other hand go off feed abruptly, rapidly drop in milk, are often not ketotic and unlike LDA's are at significant risk for dying. Because of their more serious nature, suspected RDA's should be examined immediately by a veterinarian.

Several treatment options exist when DA's are diagnosed. LDA's may be successfully treated with: 1. Surgery (standing right sided pyloro-omentopexy) 2. Sterner Toggle Procedure or 3. Medical treatment. Your veterinarian will discuss the pros and cons of surgery vs toggles when evaluating individual cases. (Michael Zehr) Each procedure has pros and cons that need to be addressed after a complete physical exam is conducted. Medical treatment alone (stomach pumping, IV calcium and dextrose) will occasionally be successful but in most cases the DA will reoccur within a few days. Unlike the various options for LDA corrections, surgery is really the only logical treatment for RDA's.

Despite a very high probability of a successful outcome (appetite and production returns to normal) when surgery is performed, all cows do not warrant surgical correction. Depending upon the age of the cow, stage of lactation, other concurrent diseases and cull cow prices, culling the cow may make the most economic sense. In addition, if replacements are readily available or if overcrowding is an issue, selling the cow may be the best option. However, in the majority of cases, spending money on surgery to repair the cow will be the right decision. Your veterinarian now has access to economic spreadsheets that will help guide you to the correct treatment option.

In order to prevent displacements farm's need to focus on sound feeding management programs especially during the transition period. If you're experiencing more than 1-2% DA's in recently fresh cows, a meeting should be scheduled with your nutritionist and veterinarian. Important risk factors to investigate should include:

1. Body Condition Score at Calving: Fat cows (>3.5 on body score) are more prone to poor appetites and ketosis.
2. Feed Bunk Management: Anything that reduces dry matter intake or promotes slug feeding such as inadequate bunk space, overcrowding, restricted bunk access time or limited feed availability may increase DA's.
3. Dry Cow, Prefresh and Fresh Cow Diets: Properly balanced diets utilizing quality forages with adequate chop length are key to a successful transition.
4. Metabolic Transition Cow Diseases: Milk fever, RP's, metritis, ketosis and mastitis will all negatively affect fresh cow appetites thereby increasing the incidence of displacements.

In summary, uncomplicated LDA's and RDA's can be corrected successfully if they are diagnosed in a timely fashion. The quicker a DA is discovered and repaired the better the outcome. If you would like help diagnosing DA's, please talk to your herd veterinarian. In addition, a good stethoscope is an excellent investment that will greatly improve your diagnostic capabilities. Remember that the majority of DA's can be prevented. Focusing on transition cow management and nutrition will help to ensure that your fresh cows get off to the best start possible.

Newsletters on line

If you missed a newsletter or want to go back and read one again they are now on our website, www.cvcpets.com under Dairy tab on left, then newsletters. 2016 are currently on-line and 2015 will be added shortly.



Business Change

Dr. Mark Thomas has left Countryside Veterinary Clinic, LLP effective January 1, 2017 to devote his full time to the business development of Dairy Health and Management Services (DHMS) and national leadership responsibilities of various professional organizations such as the American Association of Bovine Practitioners for which he is currently serving as President. Everyone wishes Mark all the best in his future endeavors.

***Dr. Charles Allen, Dr. Peter Ostrum,
Dr. Stacy Kenyon, and Dr. Craig Pauly***

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