Vibriosis

Vibrionic Abortion

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Vibriosis (Vibrionic Abortion)

Vibriosis is a venereal disease of cattle and sheep caused by the organism *Vibrio fetus*. *Vibrio* other than *V. fetus* may be normal inhabitants of the reproductive tract and cause no ill effect.

Infection with *V. fetus* may cause breeding problems (infertility) or abortion at various stages of pregnancy. Vibriosis is found wherever cattle or sheep are raised and is one of the many costly diseases associated with reproduction.

What Are The Symptoms?

Vibriosis is an insidious disease that may exist in a herd for three or more months without recognition. Infertility and abortion are the usual recognized symptoms. The infection is limited to the reproductive organs.

The cow may appear settled and then return to heat 40 to 90 days after breeding. Infected females often have irregular estrus cycles (heat) that vary from 23 to 30 days or longer.

Required repeated breeding of cows of any age is an indication of possible infection. Herds having chronic infection may have no breeding problems other than in virgin heifers, which will require additional service to obtain conception. Immunity may be developed from infection.

Abortion is another symptom of vibriosis and may be observed in 3 to 10 per cent of the cattle. Aborting cattle often breed successfully after the infection has run its course. Abortion may be observed in early or late pregnancy.

Retained placenta (failure to clean) may occur because of infection with *V. fetus*.

Infection in the bull produces no symptoms. The organisms are found on the surface of the penis and prepuce. Infection does not interfere with the bull’s continued willingness to serve.

How Is Vibriosis Spread?

CATTLE — The mating of susceptible females to infected males is the main means of spreading vibriosis. The female may serve as the source of infection to the male.

The *V. fetus* organism may live in the hay, soil, or manure for 10 to 20 days. It will live longest under cool temperatures and moist conditions. Cattle become infected through the eyes or mouth.

SHEEP — Infection is usually through eating of contaminated feed, but the disease may also be spread by breeding.

How Can Vibriosis Be Detected?

Because numerous other infectious and noninfectious conditions may produce similar symptoms, vibriosis cannot be diagnosed definitely on the basis of breeding problems and abortions. The only sure means of establishing that the reproductive problem is due to vibriosis is laboratory isolation and identification of the *V. fetus* organism. Thus, veterinary consultation can be of unlimited value to an early detection or prevention of infection with *V. fetus*.

Aborted fetuses and the expelled membranes should be rushed to a veterinary diagnostic laboratory for examination. Laboratory isolation is a time consuming and difficult procedure.
Prevention

A vibriosis-free herd may be maintained in a clean status by avoiding contact with vibrio infected animals. Your local veterinarian can be of unlimited value in helping to keep infected cattle from coming into contact with your clean herd. Always keep all new additions to your herd apart from the rest, regardless of sex, for at least 30 days. Follow up with a complete veterinary examination before contact with the other animals is established.

Purchase cattle from known clean herds. Always secure an official health certificate before accepting the animal.

Breeding records (breeding efficiency) are of great importance in evaluating a herd’s health as to the presence of vibriosis and other disease conditions that may affect fertility.

Sexually immature cattle are the safest source of herd additions, as vibriosis usually has not had the opportunity to establish itself. One infected female may serve as a source of infection to a clean sire and, hence, to the entire herd. Thus, the purchase of a vibriosis-free sire may be useless unless all the females are free of infection.

Loan or borrow a bull only under ideal conditions and when the herd’s health regarding vibriosis is known.

No vaccine is available for vibriosis in cattle, but a vaccine has recently been made available for sheep.

Treatment

Treatment is costly because of required medication procedures and reproduction delays that are necessary for medication.

CONSULT YOUR VETERINARIAN