

ABORTIONS IN ANIMALS



NORTH DAKOTA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
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ABORTIONS IN ANIMALS

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Not all cases of abortion (immature birth) are the result of Bang's disease.

Abortion may be caused by poor care and feeding, lack of certain elements in the feed necessary to the development of the fetus (any young animal before time of normal birth). Some diseases other than Bang's disease also cause abortion.

In all cases of abortion it is wise to call a competent veterinarian, whatever the suspected cause. If no veterinarian is available, information can be obtained from the State Veterinarian, Bismarck, North Dakota or Veterinary Department, North Dakota Agricultural College, Fargo.

In the report give a complete history of herd management, feeding and recent purchase of animal.

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WHAT TO DO WHEN AN ANIMAL ABORTS

- (1) Separate the aborting animal from the herd or flock at once.
- (2) Pick up the fetus and membranes and spray the ground, fences and other soiled objects with a strong disinfectant.
- (3) If possible, have the fetus and dam examined by a veterinarian. If it is impossible to have the fetus examined, burn it and the membranes.
- (4) Do not return the aborting animal to the herd or flock as long as she shows evidence of disease.
- (5) Do not breed the aborting animal until sure she had no disease which may be transmitted to the male.
- (6) If Brucellosis (Bang's disease) is suspected and the animal is not of high value, it is sometimes the best policy to sell her for meat purposes.
- (7) Trichomoniasis, another cause of abortion, can only be diagnosed with certainty by laboratory examination of material obtained from the fetus or fluid from the aborting cow. The material must be fresh for satisfactory examination.

PREVENT SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

- (1) Select healthy animals for foundation stock.
- (2) Don't buy animals without a history of the herd or flock from which they come.
- (3) Keep all newly purchased animals apart from your herd or flock for at least 30 days.
- (4) Do not use calf vaccination for Bang's disease control except on the advice of and under the supervision of the North Dakota Livestock Sanitary Board. Some vaccines are of no value.
- (5) Do not allow animals to mix with herds and flocks where disease control measures are not good. The community pasture is one of the most frequent places where diseases are spread from herd to herd.
- (6) Do not visit herds and flocks where disease is present and then return to your own farm without sterilizing your shoes.
- (7) Develop water wells or ponds so that the source of water will not be contaminated or soiled. Use water troughs wherever possible.
- (8) Feed hay, grain or concentrates from racks instead of spreading them on the ground.
- (9) Remove any animal showing symptoms of disease and keep sick animal from rest of herd.
- (10) Do not use community sheds, chutes, corrals, or carriers that have not been properly cleaned and disinfected.
- (11) Do not vaccinate in an outbreak of disease without a diagnosis of the disease, so that you are absolutely certain what it is.
- (12) Clean sheds and barns often. Do not make large manure piles. Spread manure on fields not used for pasture.
- (13) Burn all afterbirths.
- (14) Have dead animals removed by a rendering company or burn them. Some diseases live for years in the soil.

MOST COMMON CAUSES OF ABORTION IN CATTLE

Brucellosis (Bang's disease) is an infectious disease of particular importance in cattle. Animals become infected with Bang's disease germ by eating feed that has been soiled with discharges from infected cows, or by licking cows that have recently aborted. Water may become soiled and flow from pasture to pasture and spread the disease.

This disease appears to spread from cattle to most other farm animals and to people also. Bang's disease may cause heavy losses in swine. The disease in man is called undulant fever or Brucellosis. People are usually infected by handling aborted feti, removing after-births and sometimes by drinking milk from infected cows.

When Bang's disease is suspected, disinfect your hands and instruments after handling recently calved cows and boil the milk before using it for household use.

TRICHOMONIASIS, AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Trichomoniasis is an infectious disease of cattle in which abortions are common, but will not spread to other kinds of animals. This disease is spread only through the act of breeding. Cows may recover and stop spreading the disease, but bulls seem to harbor the infection throughout their lives.

If an infected cow is introduced into a herd, she is of no immediate danger to the herd, but as soon as she is bred the bull becomes dangerous to all cows later bred to him. In Bang's disease abortions may occur at any time, while in Trichomoniasis abortions usually occur in the first half of the gestation period.

POISONOUS FEEDS NOT SERIOUS

Feeds containing poisons of plant or mineral nature are not as a rule serious

factors in causing abortions. Ergot may cause abortion, but usually there are other symptoms and lesions.

In cases where several animals abort at the same time it is well to look at the feed and try to find if a feed lack is present or if a toxic, or poisonous feed is being fed.

LACK OF RIGHT KIND OF FEED CAUSES ABORTION

A shortage of carotene (pro-vitamin A) is often the cause of abortions in cattle, sheep and swine. In a serious vitamin A shortage there are other things to observe. First, the young born in the early winter may be normal at birth but die after a month or so. Later in winter the younger animals, heifers, gilts, or yearling ewes, may abort while older animals carry the young to term. Some animals may be blind.

In any case where the young are born premature, weak, or die soon after birth increase the carotene in the ration by feeding good green hay, alfalfa meal or a vitamin A concentrate. Improving the ration will, of course, not stop the abortions due to Brucella infection or to Trichomoniasis.

Abortions may also be caused by not enough minerals in the rations. All animals in North Dakota should be fed by free choice common salt, limestone and bonemeal. Iodine and cobalt can be added to the salt at a rate of one-half ounce sodium iodide and 1 ounce cobalt sulfate per 100 pounds of common salt.

ACCIDENTS SOMETIMES CAUSE ABORTION

Except in sheep, accidents appear to be of small importance in causing abortion. Cows and sows occasionally slip or are crowded together and may be injured.