



DR. MURRAY RUNSTEDLER DR. PAUL SOSTAR DR. ANDREW MACLEOD  
DR. JOHN TOKARZ DR. KELLY HAELZLE DR. IAN BISHOP

3860 Manser Road, Linwood, Ontario N0B 2A0 (519) 698-2610  
1-800-663-2941 Fax (519) 698-2081  
[linwoodvet@linwoodvet.ca](mailto:linwoodvet@linwoodvet.ca)

Clinic Hours: Mon-Fri 7am – 5pm Sat 7am – 12pm

Hwy 89 Clinic: Mon-Sat 7am-1 pm

Orders for Delivery: ***call by 9:30am at the latest*** for same day local delivery Monday to Friday  
24 Hour Emergency Vet Service

### MARCH 2012 NEWSLETTER

#### Clinic News

Please note the clinics will be **closed** April 6 for Good Friday.

**7<sup>th</sup> Annual Waterloo Wellington Beef Farm Tour** – April 11, starting 11:00 am at Lester R. Martin's farm 571389 Sideroad 57, Mount Forest. For info call Melvin Steckle, 519-338-5381

## **Use Propylene glycol to help fresh cows with subclinical ketosis**

Propylene glycol has long been used to treat clinical ketosis but, its effect on subclinical ketosis has not been studied.

Recently, the use of the urine KetoStix and KetoTest sticks for milk have made it easier to diagnose subclinical ketosis and has opened the door to treatment strategies for subclinical ketosis in early-lactation cows.

According to the results of a field trial conducted by researchers at Cornell University and the University of Wisconsin, oral propylene glycol (Glycol-P) was an effective treatment for subclinical ketosis-positive cows.

Here were their findings:

- Propylene glycol-treated cows were 1.5 times more likely to resolve their subclinical ketosis than untreated cows.
- Treated cows were 0.54 times less likely to develop clinical ketosis than control cows.
- Treated cows produced about 1.5 pounds more milk per day during the first 30 days of lactation than untreated cows.

Ask your Veterinarian for advice if you suspect a negative energy issue in your freshening cows.

## **The impact of calving difficulties on the cow and calf**

Researchers in the UK recently studied the effects of calving ease on the fertility and production of 50,000 first lactation Holsteins and their 10,000 Holstein heifer calf offspring. The study found the following:

- Cows requiring vet-assisted calving:
  - required 0.7 more services to conceive
  - needed an additional eight days to reach first breeding
  - had a 28-day longer calving interval

- Milk losses were significantly higher in cows with calving difficulties, producing approximately 4.4 pounds less milk per day than cows without calving difficulties.
- Calves born as a result of a difficult calving produced 1,565 pounds less milk in their first lactation compared to calves born without difficulty

**Calving difficulties have a lifelong effect on the dam as well as the calf.**

## More on Impact of Calving Difficulties

According to the NAHMS 2007-08 Research data, "Still born calves accounted for nearly half of calf losses (44.5 percent) during the first 6 months of 2008 and another 13.5 percent of losses occurred in the first 24 hours following birth." Stillborn calves or those that die shortly after birth are quite obvious and dramatic sources of loss, but calving difficulties can also have long-term implications for these calves.

What a stressful birth can mean to a calf in their first hours of life:

- Decreased ability to maintain body temperature
- Decreased protective antibodies from colostrum due to insufficient nursing and absorption.
  - \*contributes to a greater risk for infectious disease, such as diarrhea or respiratory disease.
- Differences in weaning weights.
  - \*calves with early intervention in calving or no problems versus ones that had a high degree of difficulty showed a difference of 42 pounds at weaning.

## Watch for Dystocia

Plan to intervene in calvings on the early side, research indicates that early intervention (defined as 30 minutes after presentation of the water sac with feet outside the vulva) greatly benefits calf survivability and future reproductive performance of the cow/heifer.

You should also keep in mind, though, that aggressive actions too early in the calving process have the potential to injure the cow or the calf.

The following conditions indicate the need to examine and possibly assist the cow:

- The water sac is visible for 2 hours and the cow is not trying.
- The cow has been trying for over 30 minutes and making no progress
- The cow has been trying and then quits for more than 15 minutes (rests normally should not exceed 5 to 10 minutes.)
- The calf is showing signs of distress, such as a swollen tongue, brown/rust tinged embryonic fluids (caused by the meconium of the calf being passed prematurely), or placenta coming out before the calf is born.
- Or if it appears that an abnormal delivery is occurring due to the position or presentation of the calf

While these guidelines can help you make decisions about assisting with calving, the suspicion of anything abnormal in the calving process is reason enough to at least examine the cow or call on your veterinarian to identify the particular problem.

Checking cows every 3 hours will increase your chances of knowing what stage of labor cows are in and how long they have been at that stage to determine if intervention is needed.

And as always, consult with your veterinarian if any abnormal calving situations arise.