FLANK APPLICATION FOR BLOAT CONTROL


Summary

Flank application with paraffin oil and/or tallow decreased both mild and severe bloat in a field trial with dairy cattle. Teric 16A22 ester controlled both levels of bloat to a lesser level, but controlled all bloat for some high susceptibility cows. There was evidence of cows associating licking of oil with bloat cure, which was not apparent with the ester.

I. INTRODUCTION

The most widely practiced method of bloat control in Australia is application of paraffin oil or an oil/tallow mixture to the flank of the animal. These are only anti-foaming agents, i.e., curatives whereas Teric 16A22 ester, being a detergent, is a bloat preventative. This trial aimed at comparing Teric 16A22 ester to oil/tallow in order to improve this traditional bloat control method.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A Rochester (Vic) farmer's herd was divided into control, oil treated and ester treated groups according to bloat occurrence in a pre-treatment period. Groups were treated at milking and scored twice daily as either nil, mild or severe bloat. Normal farm grazing rotation was followed throughout the trial.

III. RESULTS

The trial has indicated:
(i) Both oil and Teric 16A22 ester decreased mild and severe bloat,
(ii) Oil controlled severe bloat better than Teric 16A22 ester,
(iii) Teric 16A22 ester controlled all bloat for some high susceptibility cows,
(iv) Cows associated licking of oil with bloat cure. This was not evident in the ester group.

IV. DISCUSSION

The apparent superiority of the oil over the ester may be due to medication wisdom since the ester is a better bloat preventative from drenching trials. The reduction of bloat incidence in this trial does not mean this is a satisfactory technique as cows are still under bloat risk to some extent, so deaths may still occur under severe bloat conditions.

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