

River View Veterinary Service Newsletter

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News and Upcoming Events:

- Big thank you to all that attended our AI and Breeding school last month! Looking forward to a great breeding season!

*Welcome to the River View Veterinary Service Newsletter,
designed to provide cattle producers with
timely information and education on a variety of topics.
Sarah Foust, DVM and Terry Foust, DVM*

Pasture Bloat

Pasture bloat (otherwise known as frothy bloat) can occur in animals grazing wheat or lush legume (alfalfa, ladino, white clover) pasture. It can also occur in cattle being fed green-chopped legumes.

When cattle consume feed, gas is created through digestion. Bloat is a form of indigestion marked by excessive accumulation of gas within the rumen. Typically, gas is expelled from cattle through eructation (belching). With bloat, normal gas elimination is impaired. With pasture bloat, the gas within the rumen forms a froth or foam. This formation further prevents eructation.

Visually, bloating in cattle can include distention of the left side of the animal, discomfort (stomping feet, treading, kicking belly), labored breathing, frequent urination or defecation, and sudden collapse.

Acute bloat should be treated as soon as possible! A bloat trocar or needle can be inserted to relieve gas but carries a higher risk of infection. A stomach tube should be passed to relieve pressure. An anti-foaming agent (Therabloat, etc.) or mineral oil can be administered through the stomach tube to help break down the froth.

Prevention is best for pasture bloat. Plant mixtures of legumes and grass in pastures to keep legume concentration at no more than 50 percent. Sweet clover and red clover are lower risk legumes. Monitor for plant growth patterns and rates in the pasture, interseeding heavy legume growth with grass. Fertilizing with nitrogen will help stimulate grass production. Supplements within the diet will also prevent bloat, but can get very expensive. Ionophores (Rumensin) reduce bloat and are available as supplements or in molasses blocks. Feed cattle to their fill with dry hay before turnout onto legume pasture. Wait until the pasture is dry (mid-day) before turnout. Once the cattle are on the legume pasture, leave them there. Otherwise, cattle may learn to wait to eat until moved into the pasture every day. Some cattle are genetically susceptible to pasture bloat. Eliminate their genetics from the herd by eliminating cattle that bloat.

If you have questions about bloating or pasture management, please do not hesitate to ask! Pasture bloat is a mostly preventable disease of grazing cattle. Proper knowledge and handling can give you the best chance of dealing with bloat.