

Alberta

Bacillary hemoglobinuria in a beef herd

A few days after moving 110 Simmental and Simmental-cross cows and heifers to a different field, the producer noticed a 5-year-old cow passing blood-colored urine. Her temperature was 41°C. She was treated daily, starting immediately, with 6 g of oxytetracycline for three days followed by 9×10^6 IU of procaine penicillin G for an additional three days. Recovery was slow but complete.

One week later, a dead cow was found. She had been seen healthy five hours previously. Postmortem examination revealed perianal staining with blood, subcutaneous petechial and ecchymotic hemorrhage, and serosanguineous fluid in the pericardial sac, thoracic, and peritoneal cavities. Blood mixed with ingesta was seen in the caudal small intestine and throughout the large intestine. Several 5–15 mm abscesses were present on the anterior surface of the liver. On the caudal lobe of the liver, a mottled, swollen, firm, well demarcated area was seen. Microscopic examination of this area in the liver revealed coagulation necrosis surrounded by a zone of degenerated neutrophils with numerous large Gram-positive rods within the infarct. Based on the postmortem lesions, a diagnosis of bacillary hemoglobinuria was made. The entire herd was vaccinated with an eight-way clostridial vaccine and no further losses occurred.

Bacillary hemoglobinuria is diagnosed occasionally in Alberta. This incident occurred during the winter

on an irrigated farm after a change of pasture and feed. This herd had not been vaccinated in the past five years. The only water source was from a dugout built the previous summer.

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Cross-Canada Disease Report

*Contributions are welcome
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