

By Dr. Grant Dewell, ISU Beef Extension Veterinarian

Anaplasmosis cases on the rise in Iowa

Recently we have seen an increased number of cases of Anaplasmosis from submissions to the Iowa State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (ISU VDL). Although the disease is not enzootic in Iowa it is observed regularly. Environmental conditions this year may be enhancing the spread of anaplasmosis within the state.

Anaplasmosis is caused by a protozoan parasite (*Anaplasma marginale*) that is spread by ticks and biting insects. Additionally, it can be transmitted by needles or surgical equipment. Once the parasite reaches the blood stream it infects red blood cells (RBCs) where they multiply. Anemia results from an erythrophagocytosis of the

RBCs. Anemic animals will develop icterus but not hemoglobinuria because RBC destruction occurs from erythrophagocytosis rather than hemolysis.

Clinical Signs

Clinical signs of anaplasmosis are associated with anemia (hematocrit less than 15%). In acute anaplasmosis, cattle will be febrile and anemic with increased heart and respiratory rates. Cattle may also have muscle weakness, inappetence and depression. Mucus membranes will be pale. Icterus develops several days after onset of symptoms. Peracute anaplasmosis can be seen in highly susceptible animals such as adult purebred animals

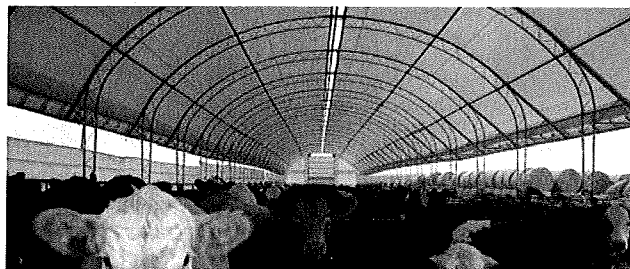
or high-producing dairy cows. These cattle can succumb to the infection within hours. Chronic anaplasmosis may follow an acute infection for up to 3 months of poor response. Young animals will show less severe clinical signs, due to a more responsive production of RBCs. Abortions are common in pregnant cattle with acute anaplasmosis. Bulls may show a temporary infertility which could be important in a fall breeding program.

For more about diagnosis, treatment and control of anaplasmosis, see the VDPAM Beef Extension web page here <http://vetmed.iastate.edu/vdpam/extension/beef/current-events/anaplasmosis-iowa>

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