

Udder and teat lesions – cattle –



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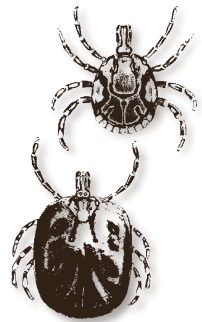
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A healthy udder is one of the important parts of the cow's body. It produces good-quality milk for both human consumption and the calf. Certain preventative measures should, however, be applied to promote good udder health. These measures differ and depend on the specific conditions.

Teat lesions can be mild or severe. Immediate attention should be given if any lesion is observed. Many of these conditions cause milk shortages to the calf or for household purposes.

TICK BITES

- There are different types of ticks, some of which have long mouthparts, e.g. bont-legged ticks, bont ticks and Karoo paralysis ticks. These are the ones that cause most damage to the teats when they feed on the animals. This is because their mouthparts cut and penetrate into the skin, causing abscesses.
- Proper tick control can help reduce this problem.
- These lesions can lead to fly strike, bacterial infection and can permanently affect milk production.



CUTS

- Cow udders are prone to cuts, especially when in an environment that has sharp objects. For example, thorns in the bushes, kraals not properly constructed with wires sticking out or wires and screws lying on the ground.
- Germs can enter the udder through these cuts and cause disease.
- Cuts should always be cleaned properly and a disinfectant applied. If the cut is deep and it goes through the teat canal, it should be closed (sutured) by a veterinarian.

PEELING/SLOUGHING OFF

Mastitis

In some severe cases of mastitis, the skin of the udder and the teats peels off. The udder is crusty and when the crusts are removed raw, red, seeping sores are seen.

Photosensitivity

There are certain poisonous plants which, when eaten, cause animals to be very sensitive to light. Areas exposed to direct sunlight, especially with light pigmentation (colour), are affected first and most, especially where the hair cover is sparse. This can affect the udder.

Chemicals

Use only registered teat dips for teat dipping. Avoid home-made dips!

Udder oedema

Sometimes the udder gets bigger than normal because fluid collects in the tissue. As the cow walks, the udder rubs against the inner thighs, causing reddening of these areas. Constant rubbing at these areas causes the skin to peel off, leaving raw lesions on the udder.



Blue udder

This disease of the udder is caused by a bacterium. The udder and teats have a blue-black colour and the skin peels off.

Extremely cold environment

During cold-weather periods the udder may start to peel off.

LUMPS

Lumpy-skin disease (LSD)

- This is a viral disease. It is called lumpy-skin disease because of the lumps it causes on the body of an animal, including the udder and teats.
- LSD can be prevented by vaccinating all animals (cattle) above the age of 6 months and then annually thereafter.
- LSD can be confused with Allerton disease (bovine herpes *mammilitis*) which also causes lumps on the body and udder.
- LSD is a controlled disease and if suspected should be reported to your nearest state veterinarian or animal health technician. Infected animals should not be moved to other areas.

Warts

- Warts are caused by viruses.
- Warts can be cauliflower like or thin and long in shape. There are up to 7 different shapes.
- Warts sometimes disappear within 2 months but sometimes they persist and have to be removed.
- Cattle can also be vaccinated against warts. The vaccine used, is made from warts.

Cancer

This also causes lumps on the udder.

OPEN AND CRUSTY LESIONS

Sometimes red blisters are seen, which later are filled with pus. They then rupture (open) and form a crust.

Pseudocowpox and cowpox

- These diseases are caused by a virus.
- In the case of pseudocowpox, when the skin under the crust is healed, it leaves a characteristic horseshoe-shape lesion on the teats.
- Lanolin-based iodine ointments are used to treat the lesions.
- Cowpox is rare.
- Take care when handling cows with these diseases because they are zoonotic diseases (diseases that humans get from animals).

Herpes mammilitis

Lumps caused by this disease dry up and slough off, leaving raw ulcers that become covered with dark-brown or black scabs.

BRUISING

Bruising can be a serious condition. The udder looks red and swollen.

INVERTED TEAT OPENINGS

This condition, where the teat opening folds inward, can be congenital (female calf is born with the defect), but it is mainly caused by high-vacuum pressure when using a milking machine. To prevent this condition, read the instructions and set the machine vacuum level and other settings according to the manufacturer's recommendation.

OTHER UDDER AND TEAT PROBLEMS

Extra teats

- Extra teats may be located anywhere near the normal teats or even fused with them.

- Extra teats can be removed when the animal is 1 week to 1 year old.
- Removing extra teats facilitates milking because they can make it difficult to attach the cluster or even milk by hand. Extra teats can also harbour organisms which can infect normal, healthy teats.

Blocked teats

- Teats can be blocked by a blood-clot or swelling after injury, narrowing of the teat canal or growths in the teat canal.
- Teat blockage can be permanent or temporary, depending on the cause and extent of damage.
- Ointments can be applied to reduce the swelling, teat dilators inserted into the teat canal and special instruments used to cut the growth inside the canal.

Leakers

- Leakers are cows that drip milk continuously. These cows usually have a deep teat injury or a large teat canal.
- Little can be done to correct this condition.

For further information contact your nearest animal health technician or state/private veterinarian

or

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