

# New high calcium capsule targets post-calving problems

A rapid onset, steady release, high calcium oral capsule for dairy cows to reduce the risk of post-calving milk fever and sub-clinical calcium deficiency has been developed by Animax. In carbonate form, Easycal® Capsules supply 60g of calcium, which the maker claims is 40% higher than other supplements of this type.

One capsule is given just before or after calving, to coincide with the unavoidable dip in blood calcium at the onset of lactation and work in synchrony with natural calcium mobilisation. Capsules are cylindrical with rounded ends for easy use in a purpose-designed applicator.

If required, additional capsules can be given singly at 12 to 24 hour intervals to high risk cows. These include those carrying twins or with a history of slow or difficult calvings, older individuals and cows with too high or low body condition score.

Additional to milk fever risk, vet



Dr Elizabeth Berry suggests that sub-clinical calcium deficiency is widely under recognised, with financial consequences on a par with clinical milk fever.

A farm-scale study published in early 2020 found 59% of cows and 54% of heifers had sub-clinical post-calving calcium deficiency [ref 1]. Compared to herd mates with normal levels, deficient cows had nearly double the combined incidence of ketosis, metritis, displaced abomasum and premature culling during the first 60 days of lactation.

In heifers, not normally associated with an increased risk of low calcium status says Dr Berry, ketosis and metritis were more than three-times higher in sub-clinically deficient individuals than herd mates with normal calcium. She suggests many farmers may be unaware of subclinical calcium deficiency and its consequences.

“Clearly, all these conditions will lead to reduced performance, increased culling and major financial losses,” she says.

Dr Berry explains how these post-calving problems involve calcium’s role in muscle and nervous functions. “Even when deficiency is sub-clinical, there will be effects on muscle tone and strength, which are so critical at and just after calving,” she explains.

“In addition to a quick and safe, unassisted birth for calves, peak muscle performance is essential for many other areas, for example the intestines and leg muscles. Any shortcomings are highly likely to reduce feed

intakes, probably explaining exaggerated ketosis incidence in cows and heifers with sub-normal calcium. Following a ketosis episode, of course, many animals never reach their potential.”

Easycal® Capsules do not require a veterinary prescription and are available from animal health stockists.

Further information from Dr Elizabeth Berry, elizabeth.berry@animax-vet.com, 07780 334605.

McArt & Neves 2020. Journal of Dairy Science, vol 103, no 1.

Brand	Calcium	Easycal cf others
Easycal Capsules	60g	n/a
Other 1	43g	+40%
Other 2	43g	+40%
Other 3	44g	+36%
Other 4	40g	+50%
Other 5	45g	+33%
Other 6	43g	+40%
Average 1-6	43g	+39.8%

## The 21st Century Cow

Over the years her needs have changed, so Easycal supplies 40% more calcium than competitors’ products.



Images: Maria Kelly & Richard Hodgson (Reid)



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