

TOP FARMERS KNOW-HOW

IDENTIFY AND TREAT SCOURS

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KNOW-HOW

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A calf gets scours when it accidentally eats more scours-causing germs than its immune system can handle. This happens if:

- Its food/environment contains too many scours-causing germs (hygiene) AND/OR
- Its immune system isn't working as well as it could be (colostrum management)

Despite your best efforts to prevent it, you may still get scours cases.

Monitor your calf treatments in a book in the calf shed, and get your vet out ASAP if you:

- Are treating more than 1 out of 10 calves with electrolytes or medicines*
- Have more than 1 out of 30 calves die before weaning* or if you
- Have a spike in the number of scours cases or deaths

Identifying scours:

- Reduced appetite
- Lagging behind
- Standing hunched up
- Drooping ears/sunken eyes
- Dirty backside/tail
- Liquid or bloody faeces

Nutritional scours possible if:

- Many calves have loose faeces
- Recent change of diet
- All still bright

** Ring vet if unsure whether scours is nutritional or infectious

Isolate and treat scouring calves as soon as possible.

Act immediately if they show any of these signs of dehydration:

- Sunken eyes
- Weak suckle reflex
- Skin stays lifted when you pinch

If you are having a scours problem:

- Get your vet involved ASAP
- Check hygiene and colostrum management practices
- Take samples if vet can't come out straight away
 - As many fresh faecal samples as possible

- From calves which have started scouring within the last 24 hours
- Put into clean plastic pottle or glove
- Label with calf or pen ID
- Take samples to vet clinic ASAP

- Alternate milk and electrolyte feeds to scouring calves
- Nipple feed or tube 6-8L of total fluids each day
- Tube calves with electrolytes if they won't drink

	Moderately scouring	severely scouring
7:00		
7:30		
8:00	2L milk	2L milk
8:30		
9:00		
9:30		
10:00		
10:30		
11:00		
11:30		
12:00	2L electrolytes	2L electrolytes
12:30		
1:00		
1:30		
2:00		
2:30		
3:00		
3:30		
4:00		
4:30	2L milk	2L milk
5:00		
5:30		
6:00		
6:30		
7:00		
7:30		
8:00		2L electrolytes
8:30		
9:00		
9:30		Free Choice electrolytes Overnight

- If calf can't suckle or stand, have vet treat with IV fluids or humanely euthanase immediately
- Use a commercial electrolyte — follow label instructions
- Provide additional free choice water and electrolytes
- Treat calves with any necessary antibiotics or anti-inflammatory drugs prescribed by your vet — double check dosages and treatment schedule

FOR MORE:

Visit [TopFarmers.co.nz](https://www.topfarmers.co.nz)

Or find us on YouTube by searching: [TopFarmersNZ](https://www.youtube.com/topfarmersnz)

Or visit: msd-animal-health.co.nz

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REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL READING

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