Managing Calves with Scours

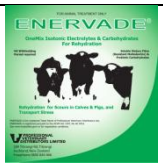
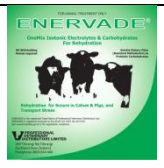
Calves with scours lose considerable water and electrolytes and dehydration is often the cause of death. A scouring calf urgently requires water and electrolytes to correct imbalances, and must also receive a source of energy. Most scouring calves can be saved with just electrolytes, whether the cause is dietary, bacterial or viral, without the need for antibiotics. When you give electrolytes (salts etc) the calf becomes thirsty. If you have given 6 litres of electrolytes it will go looking for another 4L of water to make up the rest of its daily requirement. **Fresh clean water <u>must</u> be available in every pen.**

How do you decide how dehydrated a calf is?

Scour	Dehydration %	Signs	**Electrolytes required/day**
Mild	< 5%	- mildly depressed - relatively alert - looks to feed	**25kg calf: 1.5L** **35kg calf: 2L** **45kg calf: 2.5L**
Moderate	6-8%	- eyes sunken - tight skin - depressed & lethargic but standing	**25kg calf: 2L** **35kg calf: 3L** **45kg calf: 3.5L**
Severe	10%	- above signs more pronounced - legs & ears cold to touch - unwilling to rise or feed	**25kg calf: 2.5L** **35kg calf: 3.5L** **45kg calf: 4.5L**

- ✓ Diarrhoeic calves should continue to receive at least some, if not all, of their normal milk product, as scouring calves given their normal milk ration plus oral electrolytes recover faster.
- ✓ Separate feeds of electrolytes and milk by a minimum of 15 minutes.
- ✓ Calves unwilling to drink should be stomach tubed their requirements

EXAMPLE – calves should receive electrolytes for around 4 days or until scouring stops

	**7AM**	**10AM**	**2PM**	**4PM**
45kg calf 8% dehydrated	 **x 2L**	 **x 2L**	 **x 2L**	 **x 2L**