holbrook vet centre

COMPANION REPRODUCTION PRODUCTION

ECONOMICS OF BLOAT PREVENTION FACT SHEET

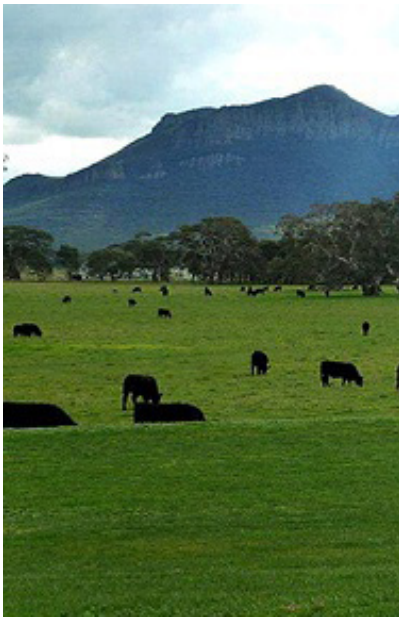
Pasture bloat, or frothy bloat is a seasonal problem triggered in cattle systems by the rapid consumption of lush, highly digestible pastures (legumes in particular). A stable foam develops which is unable to be eructated, leading to a build-up of gas within the rumen. This pressure obstructs both air and blood flow, with consequent death due to failure of the heart and lungs.

	Risk Factors
Animal Factors	- Young stock (note: all ages are at risk) - Hungry stock with empty stomachs
Grazing Factors	- Turning out onto new paddocks after overcast, wet conditions - Heavy dew present - Cooler temperatures - Highly irrigated pastures
Pasture Factors	- Lush, immature, rapidly growing pastures - Lush legume pastures (Sub clover, lucerne, white & red clovers) - Cereal crops when high in moisture, low in fibre

Preventative Product	Quantity Required	Cost $/hd/day
Hay	2kg/hd/day	$0.40/ hd/ day
Bloat Blocks	20kg/ 15 hd/ approx. 15 days	$0.15/ hd/ day
Water trough treatments: Teric Bloat oil	High risk: 40ml/hd/day Maintenance: 20ml/hd/day	$0.15/ hd/ day $0.10/ hd/ day
Anipro molasses and teric oil syrup	1L/hd/week	$0.25/ hd/ day
Pasture Spray	85ml/hd/day	$0.27/ hd/ day
Bloat Bombs (Currently unavailable)	1 capsule/100 days	$0.15/ hd/ day

Recommendations

Deciding on which product to buy and apply should be considered in light of efficacy, economics, labour requirements and practicality to individual systems. Trough treatments have been identified as the cheapest option, however a static water supply is required to maintain adequate preventative concentration. The bloat capsules, which have a reported prevention efficacy of 80%, have not been available for purchase since 2013, their return is anticipated in 2017. Pasture sprays often require twice daily application, an option in dairy systems but unpractical for beef producers. Similarly, feeding out hay results in an increase labour input, raising the overall cost of prevention. Syrups and bloat blocks are anecdotally very palatable for cattle, although ensuring uniform consumption across a herd can prove to be a challenge.



Overall recommendation

For properties with trough based systems, water treatments should certainly be considered. Producers without static water supply can look to syrups, bloat blocks or hay. During high risk periods, a combination of these preventatives may be required. Trialling the different products each season will identify the most effective and beneficial preventative strategy for each individual production system.