

# The use of homeopathic remedies for the treatment of calves with diarrhea

E. M. Boldyreva, DVM, PhD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Weston Learning Centre, Vaughan, ON, L4L 0A2, Canada; Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Veterinary Department, Moscow, 117198, Russia

## Introduction

An experiment conducted to evaluate the use of homeopathic remedies for the treatment of calves with gastrointestinal disorders (diarrhea) was performed on each of two large farms in the Moscow region of Russia. On one farm, complex homeopathic remedies produced by the German company Biologische Heilmittel Heel GmbH were used, and on the other farm, single homeopathic remedies produced by a local company were used.

## Materials and Methods

Each of the farms used in the two experiments had a history of gastrointestinal problems in calves, which was characterized by a two-phase onset of severe diarrhea. The first onset of diarrhea began at two days of age and was generally not as severe as the second onset of diarrhea. The second onset of diarrhea began between five to nine days of age and was characterized by severe dehydration (prolonged skin tent, pale mucous membranes, sunken eyes), lethargy, loss of appetite, and watery, yellowish-white feces. Evaluation of fecal and necropsy samples revealed normal microflora within the gastrointestinal tract in addition to rotavirus, coronavirus, and other diarrhea viruses. Results of CBC performed on some calves revealed no consistent abnormalities.

For experiment 1 (conducted on farm 1), calves with diarrhea were allocated to either a control or treatment group in equal proportion. Treatment was initiated at the onset of clinical signs. Calves in the control group were treated with IM administration of the antimicrobial drugs (Trimerazinperos and Bicillinum) typically used on the farm. Calves in the treatment group were treated with SC administration of a combination of two complex homeopathic remedies (*Mucosa compositum ad us. vet.* and *Berberis-Homaccord ad us. vet.*; 2.5 mL). *Mucosa compositum ad us. vet.* contains extracts of mucous membranes derived from the organs of pigs (D8 dilution) and plant, mineral and metallic ingredients in dilutions from D4 to D28. It is used in human and veterinary medicine for the treatment of patients who suffer from mucous membrane inflammation of various organs, including the intestines. *Berberis-Homaccord ad us. vet.* contains

a combination of three plant ingredients, each having four dilutions ranging from D4 to D200.

For experiment 2 (conducted on farm 2), calves with diarrhea were again allocated to either a control or treatment group in equal proportion. Treatment was initiated at the onset of clinical signs, and the control group was treated in the same manner as the control calves in experiment 1. Calves in the treatment group were treated with a combination of three single homeopathic remedies (*Argentum nitricum*, *Pulsatilla*, and *Nux-Vomica*); each of these remedies was pelleted in a dilution of D3, and calves received five pellets of each remedy in water daily.

For both experiments, treatment efficacy was defined as the duration of diarrhea. A clinical cure was defined as complete resolution of diarrhea.

## Results

For both experiments, a total of 94 calves, ranging in age from zero to 21 days, were evaluated. In experiment 1, mean days to clinical cure for the homeopathic treatment group was 2.8 days and that for the control group was 5.0 days. In experiment 2, mean days to clinical cure for the homeopathic treatment group was 3.5 days and that for the control group was 4.1 days. Overall, 72.7% of the calves in the experimental groups were cured within the first three days after initiation of treatment; whereas only 40% of the calves in the control groups were cured within the first three days after initiation of treatment.

## Significance

Homeopathic remedies are safe for calves. In contrast to antimicrobials, homeopathic remedies do not cause bacterial resistance or require withdrawal periods, and generally do not induce any adverse effects in treated calves. Following completion of these experiments, the homeopathic remedies used have been incorporated into the standard protocols for the treatment of calf diarrhea on the two farms. Moreover, the results of experiment 2 were used as justification for the development of new commercial preparations produced locally.