

Abortions

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County agricultural agents are frequently asked about abortions and the reason for them. It is safe to say the abortions and abortion diseases may be one of the major problems for our cow/calf operators.

Based on the best information available, a diagnosis is not always possible. The causative agents may be complex and illusive.

The first calf to die is the most important one you will have during the season, provided every effort is made to find out the cause so corrective measures can be taken.

In case you are confronted by a cooperator on help with an aborted fetus:

Recommend that a veterinarian be consulted as quickly as possible. The vet can make additional recommendations to the producer. If a veterinarian is not available, suggest the following procedure.

Identify the cow that aborted and isolate it from the rest of the herd as soon as possible.

Recover the aborted fetus and membranes (cleanings), store in a clean

new plastic bag if possible. The fresher the fetus and cleanings are the better chance for a diagnosis.

Review the existing health program for the entire herd as to vaccines, origin of the bulls, conception rate, or in essence, a herd history.

The producer then has some decisions to make as to the use of the collected material.

Should it be taken direct to the diagnostic lab or wait until your veterinarian can get to it? Either way can be very effective, but one way should be acted on.

The veterinarian will probably do a field necropsy or may recommend that you take the specimen in. Owner field necropsies are not recommended. Material from a field necropsy would be collected by the veterinarian and submitted to the laboratory.

If possible the entire fetus and membranes should be submitted.

Refrigerate but do not freeze.

Wrap in a clean plastic bag or other leak-proof material.

The decision of procedure may depend on the size of the aborted fetus:

Length of Gestation Size

Two months	Mouse
Three months	Rat
Four months	Cat (small)
Five months	Cat (large)
Six months	Small dog - hair starting to show
Seven months	fine hair over body
Eight months	hair coat complete, teeth slightly erupted
Nine months	Incisors erupted

Blood serum from the cow would be advisable but may not be possible for the producer.

If specimen is shipped by public carrier, care should be taken to prevent leakage from the container.

Tissue should not be sent for a weekend or holiday arrival. It may be necessary to submit specimens more than once before getting a diagnosis.





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