

Black spot in cheese. I have written about this phenomenon before but the cheese manufacturers are very worried about so it is worth just reiterating a few points. It occurs when the bismuth from teat sealants breaks down in mature hard cheeses to release hydrogen sulphide (also responsible for the foul smell in bad eggs). No milk buyers would want to restrict their producers from using teat sealants which are so useful in reducing levels of mastitis but there are a few basic rules which must be followed to reduce the chance of black spot.

1. If you are using an antibiotic tube as well as Orbeseal insert the antibiotic first and massage it up the teat to disperse the antibiotic into the gland. Then insert the Orbeseal but do NOT massage it. In fact if you have a heifer with small teats it is useful insert only part of the tube contents as you are only trying to seal the canal and not get sealant into the cistern at the top of the teat.
2. Do NOT put the Orbeseal into warm water before insertion as this will allow the sealant to pass into the cistern.
3. Once the cow has calved stripe the udder out completely before putting the milk in the tank.
4. You all know that some sealant can still be produced for days after calving but this is probably because it was originally introduced into the cistern. If this gets into the plant and you rinse through with cold water first it will solidify and may only move on when hot milk goes through at the next milking. Always consider a hot wash.

A new interesting disease to look out for! Idiopathic haemorrhagic diathesis is known by farmers as “bleeding calf syndrome” or “blood sweating disease” and these names describe it very well. The calf is usually under 3 weeks of age and will bleed from anywhere - the recently inserted ear tag, the nose, the rectum or just through the intact skin. The calf is usually dead within 36 hours and on post mortem there are further haemorrhages anywhere in the intestines. The bone marrow is often underdeveloped or diseased. As yet there is no known cause and no treatment but these cases are being seen throughout the country in beef suckler and dairy calves.

Finally a reminder from Staffordshire calves that they run an Authorised Rearing Unit which is run on a separate farm away from other stock so it can take calves if you are unfortunate enough to under TB restriction. Obviously it cannot take any cattle that are reactors but if you are overstocked with calves and do not want them to go direct to the abattoir consider this. Contact Brian Deane on 07860 622035.

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