



What is Summer Scour Syndrome?

- Summer Scour Syndrome is a relatively new condition and has not yet been widely researched. It is a collection of clinical signs, characterised by scour and rapid weight loss, lethargy, lack of rumination and weakness which can progress to profound weakness and death. Some calves may develop oral and oesophageal ulceration or ulceration of the muzzle. Other infections or infestations that cause similar signs in calves at grass have been ruled out before a diagnosis can be made. These include coccidiosis, a high worm burden, mineral issues such as molybdenum toxicity (with or without concurrent copper deficiency) and copper toxicity, rumen acidosis (from heavy concentrate feeding), salmonellosis and BVD. Your vet can distinguish between these diseases and summer scour.
- Not all calves in the group are affected and severity can vary from year to year and farm to farm. It typically occurs in dairy calves within a month of turnout to grass and up to 12 months of age.

Why does it happen?

- High oil content and low fibre content of lush spring grass cause build-up of acid (similar to cows). Excessive N intake causes ammonia toxicity.
- As weaned calves are often fed concentrate to develop the rumen, if oily/low fibre grass is added, there is very little fibre in total diet.

How can I prevent it?

- Ensure calves are properly weaned. The rumen is still developing, and the products of fermentation must be able to be absorbed so as not to cause build-up of acid. Make sure they have had sufficient access to concentrate over the pre-weaning period and are eating ~2kg/d at the point of complete milk withdrawal. Continue offering them the same amount of concentrate feed after turn-out, it should be their primary feed source.
- Turn-out calves to stemier grass (+fibre) where possible. If this is not possible, also offering low energy hay/straw in feeders can reduce the risk of scouring by reducing the proportion of grass in their diet. Use this approach for first 12 weeks of life.
- Reduce stress – ensure calves have access to sheltered areas, fresh water and that dietary changes are made gradually (2-3 weeks). Ensure

How do I treat it?

- If scouring does occur, re-house calves and offer concentrate and hay/straw and return to partial milk diet if concentrate intakes are low (<1kg/d) to ensure sufficient energy intake.
- Rule out pathogens such as coccidiosis and worms by discussing with vet.
- Treating calves for acidosis has been found to be beneficial (buffers, yeasts, Vit B and fibre source).
- Rehydrate calves using hypotonic electrolyte to correct metabolic acidosis and electrolyte levels.