

Coccidia

By Dr. Ann Wells

Coccidia is a management disease, occurring most often in wet, unsanitary, crowded conditions. Conditions rarely seen in grass-based systems. The only time I really see in a grass-based system is when there is an overabundance of rain and animals are unable to move to dryer areas.

So the first solution is to keep livestock, especially young animals dry and clean. Livestock develop immunity to coccidia as they approach weaning age and so adults should not be affected at all, unless they have something else seriously wrong.

Many people feed coccidiostats because they have been led to believe that they have no other choice. Coccidiostats also help with feed efficiency, another reason people think they should feed them. Then others don't realize you can get mineral and feed supplements without coccidiostats.

One time I was working with a group of grass-fed cattle who were co-mingled from 11 different farms all onto one farm. One calf broke with coccidia. They were moving daily and were on excellent pasture. I really didn't think we'd have any problem but I used the homeopathic remedy ipecachuanu for a week in the drinking water. We didn't have any other problems except for that one calf for two days. He never looked sick and no one else ever did either.