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College of Veterinary Medicine

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## **Clostridial Enterotoxemia as a Cause of Sudden Death in Young Calves**

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Abomasal disease with bloat, hemorrhage, and ulcers occurs sporadically in calves and lambs. Theories to explain the pathogenesis have included the following: 1) dietary changes, especially, the feeding of coarse roughage that traumatizes the mucosa, 2) pica secondary to chronic enteritis, 3) hyperacidity, 4) vitamin E deficiency, 5) lactic acidosis, 6) mycotic infections, 7) copper deficiency, and 8) trichobezoars. Several cases of endemic acute hemorrhagic abomasitis in young calves have been submitted to the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in recent months. In one herd, the problem caused high calf mortality despite various treatment approaches. The results of diagnostic investigations including molecular characterization of clostridial isolates will be presented. Time will be left for audience discussion about treatment approaches (“practice tips”) that help minimize losses due to clostridial abomasitis.