

# LDA

## LEFT DISPLACED ABOMASUM

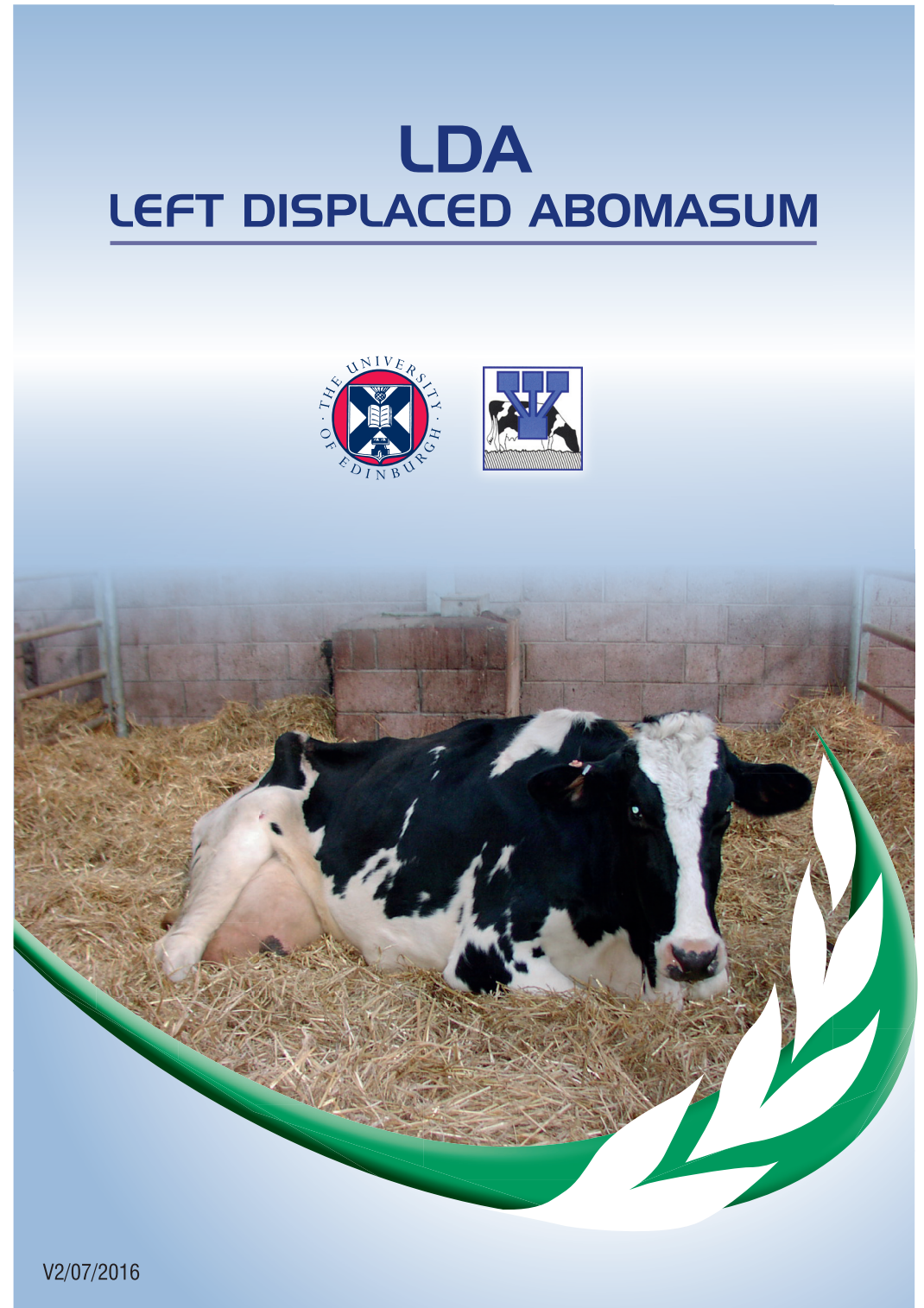


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## What is it?

- LDAs occur when the abomasum (the “fourth stomach” of the cow) moves from its usual place in the lower right hand side of the abdomen, fills with gas and slides over to the upper left side.
- This causes a partial gut blockage which interferes with feed intakes, digestion and milk production.
- The target is to keep levels of LDAs below 1-2% each year.

## Clinical signs

- 80% of cases occur in the first three weeks of lactation.
- Sudden drop in milk yield.
- Cows are off food, dull and depressed.
- Secondary ketosis often develops.
- Milk fever, metritis and lameness often initiate cases.
- Most simple cases will have normal temperatures.

## What causes it?

- When the cow calves, it leaves a large potential space within the abdomen where the calf was. Ideally this space needs to be filled with the rumen to prevent the abomasum moving into it.

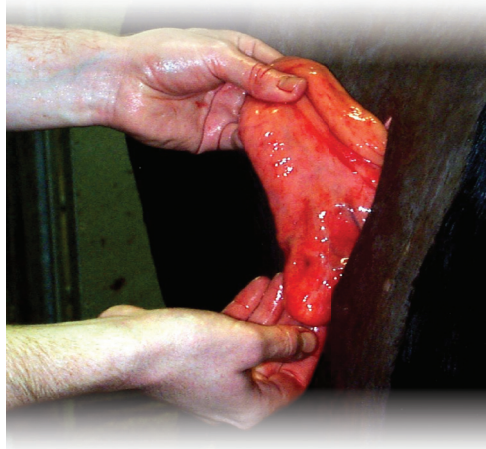
- Poor feed intakes and concurrent diseases will reduce rumen fill and result in more available space within the abdomen.
- If there is a sudden change in diet at calving, this will result in poor rumen function in the abdomen and partially digested food entering the abomasum. This food continues to ferment in the abomasum, resulting in gas production which makes the abomasum rise on the left side.
- Concurrent diseases such as metritis and milk fever will predispose to LDAs by reducing rumen fill and affecting abomasal contractions and gut movement.

## Diagnosis

- Should be made by your vet. LDAs produce a characteristic “pinging” noise when listening with a stethoscope over the left side of the abdomen.

## TREATMENT

- The aim is to return the abomasum back into its correct place, and then fix it to stop the LDA recurring.
- This usually requires an operation from your vet.



## PREVENTION

### Maintain dry matter intakes precalving

- Keep the rumen as full as possible by challenging the “close up” transition dry cows to eat 12 – 15 kg DM as a group average in late pregnancy.
- Feed quality forages for the last 3 weeks of pregnancy, of the same type that they will get after calving.
- Straw must be chopped to 2-4” in length and mixed through the diet to make the cows eat it.

### Minimise changes in ration at calving

- Feed 2 - 3 kilograms of good quality concentrate in the last 3 weeks precalving to get the rumen ready for concentrate feed.
- Avoid subclinical rumen acidosis around calving.

### Prevent milk fever

- Calcium is required for gut muscle to work effectively, and so milk fever will predispose to LDAs.
- See our Milk Fever handout for ideas on control of milk fever.

### Treat diseases promptly

- Diseases such as metritis, ketosis and lameness will all predispose to cows developing LDAs.
- Monitor cows closely, and treat any disease problems promptly.

### Avoid fatty liver

- A number of studies have shown that cows with fatty liver around calving (as indicated by high levels of NEFA in the bloodstream) are at an increased risk of developing LDAs.
- Avoid excessive body condition score and fat cows in late pregnancy.
- Blood test in late pregnancy to assess energy balance and monitor for the prevention of LDAs.

## Discuss prevention of LDAs with your vet and nutritional advisor

