Improving Calf Health – A Holistic Extension Approach

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Background
- High newborn calf morbidity (34%) and mortality (5%).
- Sick calves have lower fertility as heifers and produce less milk as cows.

Diseases in US dairies (reported by producers)

- Gastrointestinal: 21%
- Respiratory: 12%
- Navel: 2%

Disagrees with research studies: *16 to 30%* of calves have navel disease

Hypothesis
- Navel disease is under-reported in CA.
- Navel disease increases the risk of morbidity and mortality.
- Some management factors increase the risk of navel disease.
- Improving navel care and minimizing risk factors reduces navel disease.

Frequency of Disease
- Navels were measured in 23 dairy farms
- 905 female and male calves between 3-10 days old were enrolled
- ≤ 13 mm: adequate, ≥ 20 mm: inadequate

Navel Size Distribution

Problem
- Disagrees with research studies: *16 to 30%* of calves have navel disease

Health Implications
- Gastrointestinal
- Respiratory
- Navel

Risk factors
- On-going Outputs
  - Share results with each participant dairy and allied industry partners.
  - Outreach: Newsletter article, industry presentations.
  - Manuscript publication.
  - Presentation in scientific meetings.

Current Practices
- Next Steps
  - Expected Outputs
    - Develop evidence-based guidelines on how to care for the navel.
    - Design training materials aimed at dairy workers.

Producer’s perception
- Ongoing Outputs
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- Expected Outputs
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