

Preventing Staggers in Cattle

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Overview of staggers

- Causes
- Risk Factors
- Clinical signs
- Treatment
- Prevention



Causes

- Poor ability to regulate magnesium levels
- Only source is through daily feed intake (10-35% from diet)
 - Inadequate nutrition
 - Reduced feed intake
- Main losses are through kidneys and milk



Risk factors



- Inadequate nutrition:
 - Stage of grass
 - Reduced transit time
 - High ammonia and potassium levels on grazing
- Reduced intake:
 - Stress
 - Disease



Clinical signs

- Depression or dullness
- Stiffness, seizures, recumbency and sudden death
- Other diseases to consider: blackleg, milk fever, poisoning, anthrax (report)



Treatment

- Individual cases:
 - Speed is vital
 - Magnesium products under the skin
 - Test 6 healthy animals
- Whole herd supplements:
 - Magnesium chloride flakes in the water supply
 - Provide hay and additional sources



Prevention

- Avoid risk factors: certain fertilisers, at-risk pastures, maintain feed intakes
- Magnesium supplementation
- Grass spraying
- Forage analysis



Summary

- Prompt treatment vital
- Herd supplementation cost effective
- Forage analysis can predict risk
- Prevention better than cure!

