

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT—“FROTHY BLOAT”

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Bloating in ruminants is a condition you're going to encounter when you are feeding show animals in confinement. The longer the seasons wears on the more animals will start having trouble. December is around the corner and by now your animals have been on a concentrated show ration that is grain based and rich in nutrients and energy. Some animals start becoming acidic and even chronic in regards to bloat. Rumen pH is very sensitive and must be in proper balance to be working at optimum levels. Here are some typical reasons your ruminant may be gassing up. Stress of any kind, addition of more grain or fat to the diet, not enough fiber or scratch in your hay offerings, your animal is choking at feeding time, use of antibiotics to treat another disease, reduced numbers of good bacteria and protozoans in the gut. Maybe it's time to reevaluate your roughage. Grass hay offers the least scratch due to its fine nature. Alfalfa hay can be a problem if it's all leaf and fine stemmed. Adding coarser hay to your feeding program could help. Remember that wheat, oat and sorghum hay give you more scratch. They can be mixed half and half with your existing Bermuda or alfalfa. Spiking your feed with additional probiotics and yeast culture can get you more good bugs and bacteria building in your ruminants.

Check your animals for internal parasites and coccidia. Bloating could be symptomatic of these parasites. Don't forget that B Vitamins can boost proper rumen health. Monthly injections of B12 and B Complex is always a good preventive measure. Keep mineral oil and Mylanta on hand for oral administration. PRO TIPS-----

- (1) Keeping baking soda out free choice can alleviate chronic bloating. For larger operators, we mix sodium bicarbonate in our rations by request (1-ton minimum order)
- (2) Tube dangerous bloating episodes to let off excess gas. Caution is warranted here! Get professional help if you're inexperienced with this from a vet or experienced livestock operator. The only way you are going to learn is to have them show you and coach you through it. If you have a chronic choker in the barn, consider presoaking the feed each time and feeding it wet over some big river stones in the trough. This can slow down aggressive eaters. Remember every time you run a stomach tube down these bloating, choking lambs, you are scarring the esophagus and making it rough and swollen so they will be even more susceptible to choking every time they eat. Try to massage the throat area to free the blockage and walk the gas off. Tubing is a LAST RESORT. I've resorted to running their feed through a blender and serving it wet with warm water during the winter months. If you have questions or concerns with bloating in your show stock, give me a call and we'll get a plan of action for you! Thank you and good luck with your show stock-----