

## **Managing Retained Afterbirth (Kusarira Chibereko)**

Taruinga Magwirotu

A retained afterbirth (kusarira chibereko) can be messy. For various reasons, the afterbirth may be retained and the farmer is worried whether that is a serious condition or not.

Retained afterbirth occurs when the animal fails to expel the placenta after giving birth. It is a pathology usually associated with infected placenta (e.g. in contagious abortion) or due to dystocia of any cause. Whatever causes it, the farmer has to respond to the situation. Here is how to go about it.

Usually, if the placenta is infected, the partially expelled organ hangs down the animal's vulva. It may be dark and discoloured. The danger with it hanging around like that is that it may get infected when the animal lies down, resulting in ascending infection. This means that the placenta allows infectious agents to climb up from outside the animal to inside the animal. That is why the first thing is to deal with the hanging part.

The first thing you do is wash the vulva area and "test" whether the presenting organ will easily pulled. If there is any resistance, leave it because if you force it, it may cause internal bleeding because it means that the placenta is still attached firmly to the uterus.

The next thing is then to cut off the "hanging" organ close to the vulva. This is done to prevent it being contaminated as the animal lies down. By doing this, you minimise the chance of ascending infection.

The final thing that you do is to use antibiotics to minimise the risk of infection spreading from the uterus to the whole body (septicaemia). You do this in two ways: first, make use of a local antibiotic which you introduce via the vagina into the uterus. Most of these antibiotics are in tablet form (uterine pessaries). In the absence of a uterine pessary, an injectable antibiotic can be introduced inside the uterus by syringe (without needle).

Finally, you can help the locally acting uterine treatment using a different antibiotic class injected intramuscular.

Observe our animal in the coming days. Normally the animal will make a quick recovery and will eat well. The retained placenta will decompose and get expelled over the following few weeks.

NB: Never use a weight or brick to force the organ to peel off. You cause bleeding and can cause permanent scars to the uterus which may affect subsequent births.

Till next time, happy farming.