



RETAINED PLACENTA IN ORGANIC CATTLE

Guidance

Retained placenta is usually defined as failure to expel the placenta within 8-24 hours of giving birth. Manual removal of the retained membranes is not recommended and is potentially harmful.

Retained placenta can be caused by:

- Hard calving
- Twin births
- Low Selenium/vitamin E levels
- Low-grade milk fever

NOP REGULATIONS AND PCO POLICY

The National Organic Program (NOP) regulations require that livestock producers establish and maintain preventive livestock health care practices. When preventive practices and veterinary biologics are inadequate to prevent a sickness, such as retained placenta, a producer may administer synthetic medications, provided that such medications are allowed according to the NOP regulations. If allowed medications fail, you must not withhold a medical treatment from a sick animal in an effort to preserve its organic status. All appropriate medications must be used to restore an animal to health when methods acceptable to organic production fail. Livestock treated with a prohibited substance must be clearly identified and shall not be sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced. §205.238

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SYMPTOMS OF RETAINED PLACENTA

Signs of retained placenta may include:

- Foul odor
- Possible fever
- Metritis- infected discharge- which can have significant negative effects on productivity and reproductive performance

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

MuSe injection can be used 2-3 weeks prior to expected freshening date as a source of selenium and vitamin E. Low blood calcium levels can also be addressed to prevent retained placenta. Please note that all vitamin injections are restricted to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian. §205.603(a)(21).

PROHIBITED TREATMENTS

Stimulating uterine contractions by the use of drugs such prostaglandins to expel the retained placenta is a prohibited conventional treatment.

APPROVED INPUTS

All inputs must be reviewed and approved by PCO prior to use, so be sure to check with us or consult a current PCO Approved Materials List, OMRI, or WSDA list prior to purchasing or using a product. PCO does not endorse any of the products listed in this guidance document. This is not an all-inclusive list and other inputs may be allowed. Please contact PCO if you have any questions on materials or restrictions.

- **Uterine infusions:** check with your vet about possibly using: Iodine, garlic/aloe, herbal tincture.
- **Homeopathy,** dependent on cow's symptoms. Pulsatilla is a frequently used option.
- **Oxytocin** may currently be used as medical treatment in postparturition therapeutic applications. Records must be kept documenting specific animal treated, treatment/dosage used, and duration of treatment. Oxytocin is not permitted for use in routine milk let-down, but it is allowed for postpartum evacuation of uterine debris, postoperative contraction of the uterus following a cesarean section and control of uterine hemorrhage. Oxytocin will be removed from the National List on March 15, 2022, at which time producers must discontinue use of any products containing oxytocin. *§205.603*

PCO is not endorsing the efficacy of any of the approved treatments, and producers should work with a trained professional to treat any distressed animals.

RESOURCES

- <http://articles.extension.org/pages/67231/organic-dairy-herd-health:-reproductive-management-from-breeding-through-freshening>
- The Barn Guide to Treating Dairy Cows Naturally by Hubert J. Karreman, VMD (available from Acres USA)