

Jejunal (Intestinal) Hematoma in Cattle

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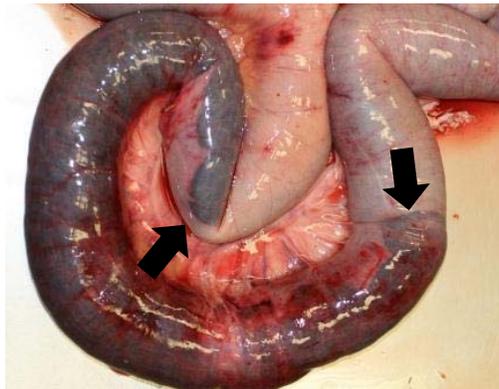
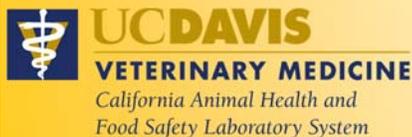
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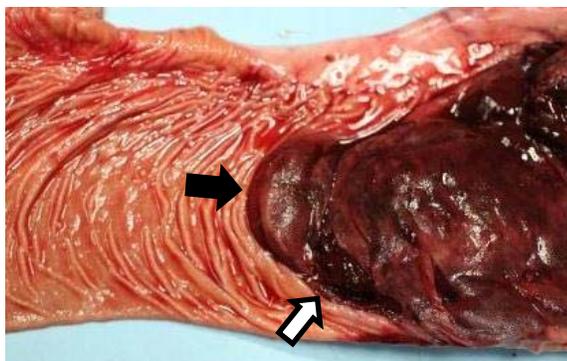


From the serosa note lines of demarcation (black arrows) between the dark and light areas that indicate the margin of the hematoma.

Jejunal or intestinal hematoma is a condition that is recognized as a cause of death in adult dairy cows. The typical history is a mid-lactation (>100 days in milk) high producing cow on a high ration with a short duration of being 'off' possibly with bloating, abdominal pain and blood in the feces. Some animals may demonstrate weakness or even appear drunk and many are found dead without prior clinical signs.

On post-mortem examination there is a variable length area, usually of the mid-jejunum, with a hematoma (this resembles a 'blood blister') within the wall of the intestine creating a partial obstruction of the lumen. Occasionally there is more than one hematoma present. The intestinal lumen will also be filled with a large amount of clotted blood. There is commonly a large amount of green liquid and some feed distending the intestine proximal to the hematoma due to obstruction and ileus preventing normal movement. The rumen and abomasum may also be distended with content. Ultimately the cause of death is exsanguination into the intestine. The underlying cause for this entity is not certain. Some research suggests *Clostridium perfringens* type A as the cause but this bacterium is a normal inhabitant of the bovine intestine and seems to proliferate whenever there is blood present in the gut. In addition, the histologic lesions of jejunal hematoma do not resemble those seen in other clostridial diseases. Fortunately, these cases are usually sporadic with no more than a handful occurring on a dairy within a given period of time and therefore losses from this entity do not become catastrophic. Other names for this entity include 'hemorrhagic bowel syndrome' and 'bloody gut syndrome' but these may apply to a wider spectrum of intestinal problems.

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On the mucosal side the hematoma is below the elevated mucosa (black arrow at edge) and tears (white arrow) are appearing in the mucosa.