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Clinical study of an outbreak in feedlot cattle by poultry litter consumption

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A clinical study in a feedlot cattle in Michoacan is described. The disease occurred in November 2017, in a feedlot beef cattle herd, 35 out 130 were affected. Clinical signs included anorexia, diarrhea, tachycardia, dyspnea, low weight gain and four animals, corneal opacity. The animals were fed with rations of grains (50%), poultry litter (35%), soybean paste (10%) vitamins, mineral salts (5%) and roughage. Daily water intake was low since there were no drinking sources. The treatment consisted in antibiotics, vitamins, antihistamines and hepatonics. Three months later, 64% of the animals were blind. The clinical diagnosis was poultry litter intoxication. Samples of poultry litter and water were collected from the production unit to confirm

the diagnosis. Lead (Pb), mercury (Hg), chromium (Cr), copper (Cu), arsenic (As) and cadmium (Cd) were analyzed by the atomic absorption spectrophotometry technique coupled to a flame detector; phosphorus and sulfates by UV light spectrometry. Mercury and copper in the poultry litter were found out of the recommendations. In the water, arsenic, mercury and sulfates were found outside too. It is concluded an acute poisoning by Cu associated with Hg by exposure of bovines to contaminated water and poultry litter. The water contaminated caused a lower consumption due to taste, and a low nutritional performance reflected in the clinical picture of the intoxicated animals.

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