



# *Merrick's* **TECH BULLETIN**

## **Deccox vs. Bovatec**

Deccox and Bovatec are both manufactured by the same company, Alpharma. Deccox (decoquinat) is a coccidiostat that stops the growth of coccidia, but does not kill coccidia. It works by inhibiting the activity of the cell's mitochondria, interfering with energy production within the cell. Deccox acts at 5 developmental stages of coccidia, and provides the widest range of action of all the anticoccidial agents

Bovatec (lasalocid) is a coccidiocide that kills coccidia. It is an ionophore that moves potassium, sodium, calcium and magnesium into the cell causing the cell to burst. Bovatec works primarily on a single developmental stage of coccidia, providing a more narrow range of action than Deccox.

Research studies evaluating the performance of both anticoccidial agents under the same conditions report similar levels of coccidia control.

For best results, the anticoccidial agent selected for use in milk replacer should also be the same anticoccidial agent used in the calf starter feed. Since a calf typically consumes a fixed amount of milk replacer each day (1 gallon), it therefore consumes a fixed amount of anticoccidial agent each day. The amount of anticoccidial agent the calf needs is based on its body size. As the calf grows it consumes more and more starter feed. If the only source of an anticoccidial agent is the milk replacer, the amount of the drug consumed may soon be inadequate for proper coccidia control. If, for example, the milk replacer contains Bovatec and the starter contains Deccox, there will be a critical period of time during the calf's development where it does not consume enough of either drug to provide coccidia control.

A similar situation can occur with Rumensin, a medication commonly added to growing heifer diets. Like Bovatec, Rumensin (monensin) is an ionophore and is an effective anticoccidial agent. However, Rumensin is not approved for inclusion in milk replacers. Medicating the calf starter feed with Rumensin and the milk replacer with either Deccox or Bovatec, may lead to a period of inadequate dosing and control of coccidia. If coccidia control in pre-weaned calves is the objective, providing a single, approved medication in both the milk replacer and the calf starter feed is the best course of action.

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