

## A CASE OF RARE MONSTROSITY IN A COW CALF

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### SUMMARY

A case of monster in a crossbred Holstein Friesian heifer is reported. The delivered calf had two muzzles, two sets of rudimentary teeth, four eye sockets with eyes, two ears and two lower lips. On the basis of the duplication of the organs, the monster was termed a diprosopus.

**Key words:** Diprosopus monster, cow calf

Malformation involves only one organ or a part of the body, however, if the deformity is extensive then the individual is termed as a monster (Roberts, 1971). Inherited development anomalies which occur most commonly in cattle are usually due to a single autosomal recessive gene. Some of the other factors causing malformation include aging of the ovum prior to fertilization, chronic poisonings, hormonal disturbances, alterations of the environment of the oviduct or uterus, altered blood supply and oxygen tension to the fetus, deficiencies of vitamin D or B12, viral infections, imperfect implantation, or defective ova or sperm (Robert, 1971).

A crossbred Holstein Friesian (HF) heifer suffering from dystocia due to double fetus was brought to the Teaching Veterinary Clinical Complex, College of Veterinary Sciences, Hisar, Obstetrical manoeuvres were used by a local veterinary doctor to relieve dystocia but without success. On vaginal examination, two heads were observed and the fetus was present in anterior longitudinal presentation with two forelimbs in the birth canal. On the basis of physical examination, it was decided to perform caesarean section.

The animal was prepared for aseptic surgery in lateral recumbency. The incision was given lateral and parallel to milk vein under local anesthesia with 2% lignocaine hydrochloride. Following caesarean section,

a dead fetus which had a single head with two identical faces which were fused medially was delivered. There was bone to bone and skin to skin attachment in the cephalic region yet there were two separate mandibles each with oral cavity bearing rudimentary teeth and tongue. The calf had two muzzles with nostrils and with two lower lips (Fig. 1). Four eyes in total, two on the lateral aspect and two on medial aspect of the face were observed. The delivered fetus was fully developed and female in sex. The neck and body were single and normal. Post operative therapy with parenteral administration of antibiotics, analgesics and antiseptic



Fig 1. A diprosopus fetus with partial duplication of face.

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dressings was prescribed for seven days to prevent post operative complications.

Fetal monsters are relatively more commonly observed in cattle and buffalo as compared to other species. On the basis of the duplications, the monster may be termed as diprosopus, distomus, diotus and tetra-ophthalmos. Like that of present case, Sreemannarayana *et al.* (1980) reported a double faced (*Diprosopus*) monster in a buffalo. Similarly, Thirumalesh and Azeemullah (2001), Selvaraju *et al.* (2002), Shukla *et al.* (2007) and Patil *et al.* (2008) reported *dicephalus dipus dibrachius* buffalo calf monster. Such type of fetus is monozygotic arising from a single ovum.

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