

Maple Syrup Urine Disease – MSUDC and MSUDF

What is it?

The calves have a defect in an enzyme that breaks down complex amino acids in the diet and the buildup of these in the body creates the urine odor and brain damage. The disease name comes from the smell of urine observed in human babies (not always noted in calves).

Affected animals

Calves are typically born without symptoms but by 2-4 days of age become slow, dull and eventually recumbent. The calves will often throw their heads back, lying on their side unable to rise. These calves may have some swelling of the brain at autopsy, but diagnosis requires laboratory investigation.