

diagnosis was made on the basis of clinical signs and known exposure to white snakeroot. Other plants known to cause necrosis of skeletal or cardiac muscle were not found on the farm, and the cattle were not given gossypol in their feed. Because of the calf's clinical signs prior to death and pathologic findings at necropsy, historical evidence of white snakeroot on the farm property, and lack of known exposure to other potential toxicants, white snakeroot toxicosis was considered to be the most likely cause of death. Given the high clinical suspicion of white snakeroot toxicosis and history of white snakeroot exposure of cattle at the farm, further testing was declined by the calf's owner.

White snakeroot is a perennial plant that is found in the southern, eastern, and Midwestern United States. It grows in shaded and wooded areas and matures in late summer and early fall.<sup>3</sup> The plant is typically 2 to 4 feet in height and has oppositely located, heart-shaped, serrated leaves; white flowers; and white, branched roots.<sup>4</sup> The toxic metabolite of white snakeroot is trematol or trematone.<sup>3,4</sup> Clinical signs of white snakeroot toxicosis include reluctance to move, incoordination, tremors, signs of depression, progressive weakness, recumbency, and death.<sup>3-5</sup> Following ingestion of the plant, the onset of clinical signs varies from < 2 days to 3 weeks.<sup>3</sup> Trematol is excreted in the milk of cows that ingest white snakeroot, which decreases the cows' susceptibility to its toxic effects but may result in in-

toxication of suckling calves.<sup>3</sup> For the calf of this report, a lactogenic source of trematol was suspected. Consumption of cows' milk containing trematol can cause milk sickness in humans.<sup>3,6</sup> Clinical signs of milk sickness in humans include weakness, anorexia, abdominal pain, and vomiting. Terminal cases can progress to delirium, coma, and death.<sup>3,6</sup>

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