

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2020

CALF PNEUMONIA VACCINATION OPTIONS

Respiratory disease in calves can be an expensive problem. As well as the immediate costs of antibiotic and anti-inflammatory treatments or dead calves there are other less obvious costs. Disease in suckled or reared beef calves can increase finishing times and reduce carcass quality. Disease in dairy heifer calves, particularly in the first 3 months of life, can result in failure to attain recommended growth and age targets, increasing age at first service and calving, reducing subsequent lactation yields and ultimately, longevity.

Good calf management and housing is important to control calf pneumonia however it is difficult to remove all the risk factors associated with respiratory disease. Vaccination is an important part of any control plan for calf pneumonia. Vaccination works by increasing the immunity of an individual animal and decreasing the infection pressure within the group. For this reason vaccination is a herd strategy and all calves in the group should be vaccinated and not, for example, just the valuable dairy heifer calves!

When choosing a vaccine the following should be taken into account:

- What does the vaccine protect against? Do I know what 'bugs' are on my farm or do I need broad cover?
- From what age can the vaccine be used and how quickly will it provide protection?
- How is the vaccine administered? Intranasal, Intramuscular or under the skin? Intranasal vaccines are typically single shot vaccines and provide a quicker protection than injectable vaccines.
- How long does the protection last? Will it cover the entire risk period for the calves?

To get the maximum benefit from any vaccination programme try to minimise stress at the time of vaccination (e.g. avoid disbudding, castrating or weaning at the same time as vaccine administration), do not vaccinate sick animals. Ideally calves should be vaccinated before the main risk period i.e. suckler calves are better vaccinated before housing so that immunity has developed by the time they are brought in. Take care when handling and storing vaccines – transport them from the practice in a cool bag and store in a fridge until ready for use.

Now is the time to start thinking about vaccinating your calves for pneumonia. Which causes can you vaccinate against?

VACCINE	PROTECTS AGAINST	MIN AGE	NO. INJECTIONS	ROUTE	BOOSTERS
Bovilis Intranasal RSP	P13, RSV	7 Days	1 vacc	Intranasal	Protection lasts 12 weeks
Rispoval Intranasal	PI3, RSV	9 days	1 vacc	Intranasal	Protection lasts 12 weeks
Rispoval 4	PI3, RSV, IBR, BVD	3 months old	2 vaccs 4 weeks apart	Intramuscular	Every 6 months
Bovipast RSP	PI3, RSV, Pasturellosis	2 weeks	2 vaccs 4 weeks apart	Under skin	2 weeks pre risk period
Bovalto Respi 3	PI3, RSV, BVD	2 weeks	2 vaccs 3 weeks apart	Under Skin	6 months duration or immunity
Bovalto Risp 4	PI3, RSV, BVD and Mannheimia Haemolytica	2 weeks	2 vaccs 3 weeks apart	Under Skin	6 months duration of immunity
Bovillis IBR Marker Live	IBR	2 weeks	1 vacc	Intranasal	Every 6 months
Bovillis IBR Marker Live	IBR	3 months old	1 vacc	Intramuscular	Every 6 months

This autumn there is a **'new user' offer** on Bovilis Intranasal RSP vaccine with the first 25 doses (vaccine currently available in 5 dose bottles but soon to be available in single doses) bringing the price down to £3.70/dose. The vaccine can be administered from 7 days of age with immunity to RSV developing within 5 days of administration. To qualify for the new user offer vaccine must be ordered before the end of September. Current stocks of vaccine have an end of October expiry date. If you would like to discuss pneumonia control in further detail, please contact the surgery to speak to one of the farm vets.

RED TRACTOR FARM ASSURANCE

Now that Red Tractor Farm assurance inspections have started up again following the Coronavirus lockdown it is worthwhile reminding you of some of the veterinary standards required.

- A health and performance review form needs to be completed for the previous 12 months for all farming enterprises and a current health plan needs to be in place for us to review and add recommendations. In addition we will provide an antibiotic review from our records.
- Every dairy farm must have a Johnes Disease Control Plan drawn up by a BCVA accredited vet (all our farm vets are BCVA Johnes accredited advisers) by the time their farm assurance comes up for renewal. Test results showing the current prevalence of Johnes on the farm are required such as a 30 cow individual cow screening.
- Every farm must have a BVD eradication/control plan in place. On dairy farms this will usually involve testing of a bulk milk sample for BVD virus and a young stock antibody screen. In suckler herds a youngstock antibody screen of 5-6 homebred animals from each separately managed group of youngstock in the 9-15 month old age group, is what is usually tested.
- A requirement for a written policy detailing when pain relief (e.g. Loxicom/Metacam) should be provided e.g. after disbudding calves, difficult calving, lameness, mastitis treatment etc.
- At least 1 person who is responsible for administering medicines needs to have undertaken training and hold a 'Certificate of Competence/Attendance' from a training course in the previous 3 years. This was previously a recommendation but is now a compulsory requirement for dairy farms (currently only a recommendation for beef/sheep farms but soon to become compulsory). The '**Responsible Use of Medicines**' and '**Milksure**' courses which we run will satisfy this requirement. We are hoping to run a '**Responsible Use of Medicines**' course in the next couple of months, either 'on line' or socially distanced!



To register an interest in attending a course please contact the surgery and we will contact you when courses are arranged.

As you can imagine all this paperwork takes time to complete so please allow plenty of time for all the testing and reviews to be carried out!

QUARANTINE PROTOCOL FOR PURCHASED SHEEP

Last month we discussed using Orange (**Zolvix**) and purple (**Startect**) doses as a break dose and I promised to discuss their use as a quarantine dose - well here you go!



The aim with break and quarantine doses is to prevent resistant parasites becoming established on your holding. These new wormers have no resistance in this country which means that the Orange and Purple are the ideal products for these doses. This means that dosing ALL the group (not leaving the fittest 10% undosed) is important, as is dosing for the correct weight and calibrating your guns properly. One of the main differences between the two strategies is that you should never use a break worm dose on adult sheep whereas quarantine dosing bought in tups, ewes and gimmers is vital.



- Quarantine treatments are also appropriate against fluke, Scab, Footrot and CODD. A summary of our recommendations includes isolating bought in animals for 28 days. The isolation area should be at least 2 metres away from other stock and in a different airspace if in a building

- In terms of fluke, the age of the animal is relevant as is the time of year. This year's lambs are not likely to have been exposed to fluke yet. Shearings and older may be carrying last year's

resistant fluke so we recommend you dose them with **Closantel** then **Trodax** 6-8 weeks later.

- Inspection of the feet to identify Footrot and CODD is essential, good practice is to footbath them 3 times at 5-day intervals during isolation. Consider a foot disinfection mat in the isolation unit.
- Vaccinate to the same status as the flock, ensuring all vaccines (such as **Heptavac P**) have been stored correctly by the vendor.
- Hold in a quarantine pasture or yard for 48 hours after worm treatment then turn onto a worm contaminated pasture (i.e. one that has grazed ewes and lambs during the summer).
- Blood sample purchased sheep for scab exposure or dip/ treat with injectable product such as **Dectomax** or **Cyductin**.

ARE YOUR TUPS TIP TOP ?



It has been shown that carrying out a physical examination (not semen analysis) will identify 95% of infertile and sub-fertile tups. The fact that 30% of tups are sub-fertile illustrates that a pre breeding examination is a really useful exercise to avoid a high geld rate or late lambers. We do recommend semen tests in tups with abnormalities or where they are used as single sires. Here is a summary of the things we check in out pre-breeding examinations . The “T” theme continues !

TOES

A lame tup is not going to be able to serve ewes to his full potential. Infectious lameness (*Footrot and CODD*) are the biggest cause of lame infertile Tups that I see. One of my top tips (**SORRY!**) is to vaccinate tups with Footvax to prevent disease. Remember to vaccinate at least 6 weeks pre-tupping.

TEETH

Checking the incisors for broken mouths is an obvious inspection to carry out. The back teeth (*molars*) are equally important in allowing a sheep to be able to eat efficiently. It is difficult to visually inspect the molars, but they often feel spiky or irregular when you feel along the jaw if they are overgrown. Cud spilling or grass staining around the mouth is a tell-tale sign of advanced diseased molars.

TONE

In this context tone is used to describe the body condition of the tup. To maximise his fertility a tup should be BCS 3.5-4 at tupping. He will lose 2 condition scores during tupping time, so he needs to have some reserves going into tupping. Ideally you can gradually feed him over 8-10 weeks pre-tupping to reach his ideal BCS and supplement him daily during tupping time.

Overweight tups have a notorious reputation for poor fertility. This is because they have a poor libido!



TESTICLES

The testicles, scrotum, sheath and penis should all be inspected for abnormalities. The size and consistency of the testicles tell us a lot about the fertility of the tup. There is a minimum scrotal size we accept tups should reach when they are in the breeding season. The testes should be the same size and have no lumps or bumps within the tissue.

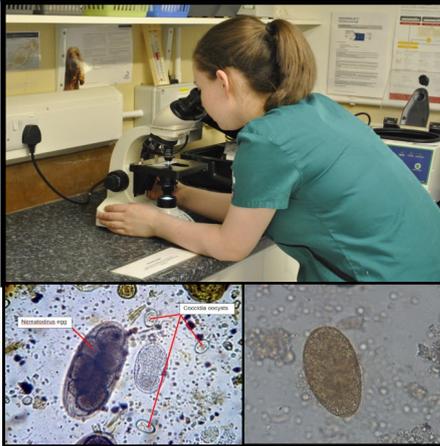
MINIMUM SCROTAL CIRCUMFERENCE	LAMB	SHEARLING
Lowland Breed	30cm	32cm
Hill Breed	28cm	30cm

TREATMENTS

The worm and fluke status of the flock should always be taken into account, remember that Tups may be on different pastures and may not have the same exposure and immunity as the ewes. Sampling is always advisable. It is also important to realise that newly purchased tups could introduce Scab, Footrot, CODD or resistant worms or fluke into your flock.

Do you have a quarantine treatment plan that you are sure is protecting you from these possibilities? A chat with one of the farm vets or SQP is worthwhile from this perspective.

LABORATORY AND PARASITE UPDATE



We are expanding our monthly parasite update to include all the diagnoses we make in our both our in-house lab and through external lab testing.

In the month of August, the in-house lab has processed 63 worm & cocci egg counts. This has revealed a surge in worm counts in lambs, the highest at 6600epg (we recommend you dose from 450 epg!). These high worm counts are very different to the previous years, this has highlighted that many farms have significant worm resistance. We have diagnosed clear drench resistance on 2 farms this month and are about to do detailed sampling on another 3 in the next few days.

One farm also had a whopper of a cocci count of 156,000 epg. Monitoring cocci counts on farms with infections allows treatment at the correct time. This level of infestation will be causing severe production losses and deaths.

A post mortem has also given us our first diagnosis of lungworm in cattle this year. A faecal sample will monitor for disease and allow preventative treatment.

FLUKE EGG COUNTS

This has identified that 20% of the flocks tested have fluke left over from lambing time and have not had a successful clear out dose. Do you know if you have cleared out fluke in your ewes and tups from last season? A simple, inexpensive Fluke Egg Count can give us this information and allow the correct drugs to be used.

We are also blood sampling lambs for fluke antibodies on 3 farms in different areas of the practice as we have done for the past 3 years. This allows us to identify when new season fluke are emerging which is vital to time our first fluke dose correctly. There is no evidence of emerging fluke at time of press. We will inform you via newsletters and social media as soon as we identify this infection.

CALF SCOUR SAMPLES

We have had a positive E. Coli K99 from a dairy calf with scour. This caused us to investigate colostrum management in this unit.

MASTITIS SAMPLES

We have had 2 diagnoses of environmental E. Coli mastitis in mid lactation cows. This is likely to be due to recent weather causing unhygienic conditions in heat stressed cows with poor immunity.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Whilst things are slowly starting to open up in society, we are still working under Covid restrictions at the surgery which places additional pressure on the time it takes us to complete routine tasks. We are also trying to control the numbers of visitors to the surgery at any one time. With this in mind, we would like to politely request that all parcels are telephoned in to the surgery prior to collection. Pre-ordered parcels will be placed in the normal out of hours parcel cupboard at the end of the building, the door will be left open during office hours (8.30am-5.30pm).

FARM ANIMAL DRUGS AND SUPPLIES:

If you phone **BEFORE 12.00**, drugs will be ready for collection **AFTER 3.00pm**

If you phone **AFTER 12.00**, drugs will be ready for collection **THE NEXT DAY AFTER 9.00am**.

BENTHAM parcels for same day collection **MUST BE PHONED IN BEFORE 12.00** for collection **AFTER 4.00pm** the same day.

Farm vets are not always available or on site so PLEASE do not go to the practice to talk to a vet! If you want to speak to a vet, phone the practice, staff will take your name and number and a vet will phone you back - THIS MAY NOT BE IMMEDIATELY, please be patient.

Please keep a 2 metre distance between yourself and our staff or other clients at all times, even if talking through a car window or vent in a trailer! Thank you for your anticipated cooperation in these matters. **STAY SAFE.**

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