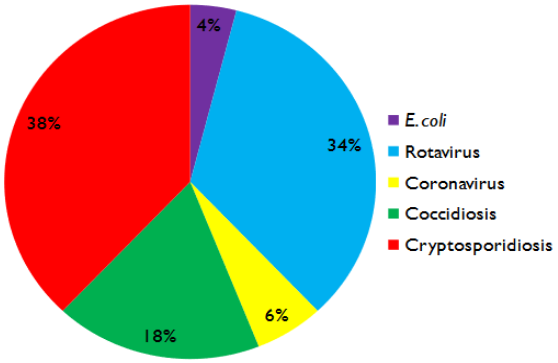
FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2020

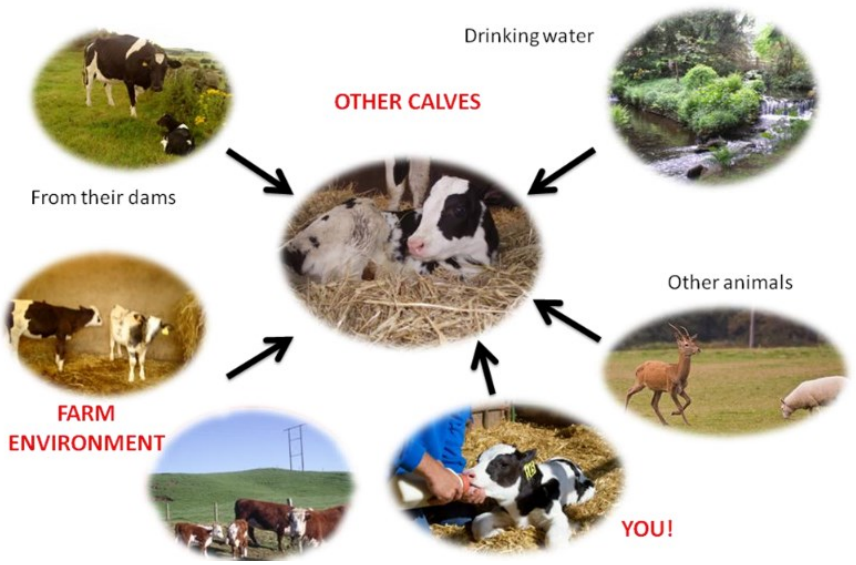
CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS IN CALVES

Current figures of calf scour prevalence in the UK (and our practice laboratory) demonstrate that cryptosporidiosis has remained the main infectious cause of scours in young calves over the last 10 years and is therefore considered a serious disease problem to the UK livestock industry.

KEY POINTS



- Cryptosporidiosis is caused by the protozoan parasite *Cryptosporidium Parvum.* As with other protozoal organisms affecting livestock such as Coccidiosis and Toxoplasmosis, Cryptosporidiosis cannot be effectively controlled by antibiotic or anthelmintic treatments.
- Cryptosporidiosis usually affects calves under 3 weeks of age. The same species of Cryptosporidium can affect humans and newborn lambs. Symptoms in calves include scours and dehydration.
- Cryptosporidium transmission to young calves can come from many sources including other calves, their mothers, animals' handlers, other animals and environment.
- The life cycle of the parasite allows it to multiply rapidly in the calf. Infected animals can shed millions of infectious oocysts in faeces which can survive for up to 12 months in the environment in cool, moist conditions.
- The parasite is opportunistic and can be found as a complicating factor in Rotavirus, Coronavirus and E Coli scours.
- Most routinely used disinfectants e.g. ***FAM30, Sorgene*** will not kill Cryptosporidium in the environment. Quaternary ammonium disinfectants e.g. ***2-3% Kenocox*** will kill 99% of oocysts after 2 hours contact time.
- There are no vaccines available to protect against Cryptosporidium although vaccinating cows with ***Rotavec or Bovigen*** and good colostrum management for their calves will help by protecting against other infectious causes of scours.
- Products such as ***Halocur, Kriptazen*** and ***Parofor Crypto*** are licensed for the treatment and control of Cryptosporidiosis requiring a 7 day course of treatment. It is important to make sure that calves do not become dehydrated.



For information about Cryptosporidiosis and it's prevention, control and treatment options please speak to one of the farm vets.

MINI VITAL 90 DAYS

This month we started our Mini Vital 90 Days investigation, if you haven't been contacted yet about us visiting your dairy then you soon will be, or you could ring the practice to arrange a date.

Housing is a time of year where we see lots of diseases around calving including twisted stomachs (both LDA and RDA), retained cleansings, dirty cows, ovarian cysts and ketosis (slow fever). This is often due to the heightened stress experienced by the cows due to combining the run up to calving along with housing, resulting in increased pressures from feeding and disease. There are lots of things that can be done to try and alleviate these pressures on the cows, resulting in a smoother transition and less disease but there is no 'one size fits all' solution. With a conservative estimate of costs from transition disease of £12,800 per 100 cows it is an area that deserves attention.

Roxanne from Elanco and Anna from the practice are visiting farms to measure the water, feed and bedded space, cubicle dimensions if present and scraped passage space as an assessment of the far off and close up dry period and calving pens. This initial data gathering will be very quick and will need next to no input from yourselves.

The report will be generated and one of our vets will be in touch to discuss the dry and transition period with you to see if there are any issues present and if there are any solutions or aids available for these cows. The feeling in the practice is that this is a very worthwhile endeavour for all of our dairy farms as it will allow informed conversations to take place around disease prevention and greater efficiency in milk production. We know that it will benefit some of our clients greatly but without the data and the conversations who will benefit the most, and most easily from it, is unclear.

Please contact the practice to book in for your **FREE** assessment as all the farms that have been visited have made incredibly positive improvements to the dry cow system.

CALF PNEUMONIA – sCan you always see it?

A recent study showed that across several large Dairy Units up in Galloway 17% of calves had lung damage associated with pneumonia. HOWEVER only 2% of the calves had been identified as having pneumonia and treated accordingly. 15% of calves therefore had lung damage but remained unidentified.

Is this a problem? YES – The presence of lung damage in the first 8 weeks of life can result in a 540 litre decrease in first-lactation 305-d milk production alone, with additional lifetime losses on top of this. If 15% of your heifers are losing that much milk in the first lactation alone – what is pneumonia costing you?

HOW can we identify this 'hidden' pneumonia? TUS – Thoracic Ultrasonography – is now available from Dalehead Vets – we can scan a cohort of calves and workout your percentage of 'hidden' pneumonia, by scanning every few months and modifying vaccination schedules and environmental factors we can work together to reduce the level of 'hidden' pneumonia and ensure heifer calves enter the herd milking to their full potential.

STAMP IT OUT!

As some of you may be aware, we are still running the BVD Stamp It Out scheme where funding enables farmers to apply for free one to one on farm health planning and BVD control visits by us. The scheme is available to all keepers of breeding cattle to help assess the BVD status of their herds and devise control strategies. The funding will include a number of milk and/or blood tests to help determine the BVD status of the herd.

We have 9 spaces left in our allocation of farms to sign up to the scheme. Now would be the perfect time to sign up with the animals coming inside for winter.

If you haven't already signed up and this is something you are interested in, please contact the surgery for more information.

VACCINATION ADVICE

With back end comes preventative vaccinations for both sheep and cattle. Whether is for clostridial disease or pneumonia it is imperative to get it right to protect both your livestock and your wallet! Here are some questions to consider about your vaccination policies. It's something we do routinely but it is always worthwhile reviewing your practices to make sure you are making the best use of vaccines and providing the best immunity that you can.

Has the vaccine been stored at the correct temperature?

- Projects by vet students have revealed that a frightening number of farm fridges are not at the correct temperature for storage of vaccines. Have you checked yours lately?
- Did you put your vaccine in the footwell of the pickup, put the heating on and go to check the youngstock away from home before putting it in the fridge?
- Did you leave the vaccine on the wall top on a sunny day and go gather the next field of sheep/ get your lunch?
- Have you injected the vaccine in the correct place?
- Where does Heptavac, Rotavec, IBR, Bovela vaccine go? Is it under the skin, into the muscle or even up the nose?

Have you given the correct dose?

- Doses of vaccines vary, some are 1ml, some are 2 ml.

Has the second dose been given at the correct time?

- Some vaccines only need one dose for the initial course. Killed vaccines however need 2 doses. One dose will not work, it won't even give you half the efficacy!!
- The interval between doses varies between vaccines. Some are 2 weeks apart; some give you a 4-6 week interval. Going more than a couple of days before or after the recommendation **does** make a lot of difference to the efficacy of the vaccine.

Have you given the vaccine time to work?

- Maximum immunity will not be achieved until 2 weeks after completion of the vaccine course. You need sufficient time for the vaccine to be effective in the risk period. A common example of where this goes wrong is when hoggs going for wintering are Heptavac P vaccinated just before travelling. The second vaccine needs to be 2 weeks **before** they travel, the first dose therefore needs to be at least 6 weeks before travelling.

Has the booster vaccine been given?

- Heifers and hoggs vaccinated as youngstock often go well over a year before they get their booster when joining the breeding stock. Their immunity will never be fully effective if another course is not given.

Is the animal you are vaccinating well enough to vaccinate?

- Animals with a fever, pneumonia, scour, on a poor diet, carrying a worm burden or immunosuppressed with ringworm for example will not respond to a vaccine as well as one that has no health issues.

Are other management procedures being done on the same day?

- Castration, dehorning, tailing and administering other vaccines will all interfere with the development of immunity if they are carried out on the same day.

How good is your injection technique?

- Dirty needles and damp muddy conditions will all increase the risk of infection and abscesses. We see deaths due to blood poisoning from injection site reactions and the meat processing losses due to carcase damage is huge. Sterimatic guns are ideal to deliver vaccines safely and changing needles often is necessary.

Have you read the data sheet with the vaccines for additional advice?

- The advice that HeptavacP should be discarded 10 hours after opening is not so we can sell you more vaccine (honestly it is not!). The vaccine is completely inactive the next day after opening.

PRODUCT NEWS

FOOTVAX

There is currently a supply problem with Footvax resulting in temporary unavailability of 250ml bottles. We still have stocks of 50ml and 20ml bottles. Please contact the surgery to place your order.

CLOSAMECTIN INJECTION

Closamectin injection for cattle and sheep is going to be unavailable probably until April 2021 however we are able to source a small number of 4x250ml packs with an end of October 2020 expiry at an advantageous price.

MEDICINES COURSE!

In recent FABBL inspections the inspectors are now asking if beef and sheep farmers have undertaken a medicines course.
If you are interested in attending the course please contact the surgery for more info and to register your details.

LABORATORY AND PARASITE UPDATE

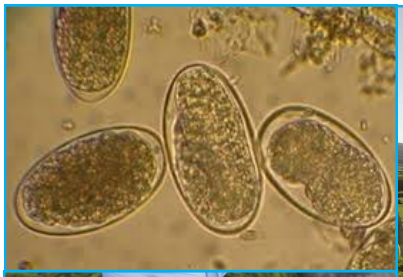
During the month of September we have performed:

- 125 Worm egg counts
- 49 Fluke egg counts
- 7 Lungworm Test
- 7 Calf scour test
- 8 Milk bacteriology
- 2 Scab examination
- 64 Cell counts

This month has revealed positive lungworm in both cattle and sheep, high strongyle (summer worm) counts in shearlings as well as high worm counts in lean tups which have been seen during pre-tupping visits. Several muck samples which have been submitted for fluke have come back positive. However blood samples taken from this years' lambs are still negative.

With this information we advise performing a worm egg count/ fluke egg count on adult ewes and tups. This will reveal if you need to clear out your stock prior to tupping time.

During September we have continued to perform efficacy testing post drench. The results are jaw dropping for white drenches, they just **don't work** when treating Strongyles (summer worms) but on a positive note, are effective when treating nematodirus. In addition, we have found resistance is developing to the other groups of wormers i.e. clear and yellow.



We advise you all to continue submitting worm egg counts for lambs. This allows us to identify what species are present on your farm, the quantity and if you actually need to dose and if so what with and don't forget to also follow through with a post drench test.

For more information or to discuss parasites, please contact the farm department to speak to a farm vet or SQP.