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FEBRUARY 2020

BELMONT FARM & EQUINE VETS

XL Vets Farm

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER

Case Report -
Spectam Resistance

In late March 2019 one of our clients who was lambing 200 Texel ewes indoors, reported a higher than usual mortality rate in neonatal lambs due to Watery Mouth Disease. All lambs on the farm had received a pump of Spectam shortly after birth and navels were sprayed with iodine as soon as possible.

Samples were collected from a deceased lamb and sent for bacterial culture and sensitivity which revealed multi drug resistant E.coli. More specifically the strain of E.coli found was resistant to Spectinomycin (Spectam), Tetracycline (Alamycin LA/ Engemycin) and Trimethoprim/ Sulphonamethoxazole.

E.coli resistance to Spectam is being found widely in UK sheep flocks with some reports showing that up to 70% of flocks sampled had resistance. For flocks that use injectable Betamox LA at lambing, resistance to Amoxicillin has been found in up to 20% of flocks.

This brings to light the growing concern of antimicrobial resistance and our role in reducing whole flock injectable and oral antibiotic treatment in lambs. This has been a hot topic in health planning sessions and during farm assurance antimicrobial reviews with emphasis being placed upon colostrum intake, hygiene and disinfection, management of lamb groups and selective usage of antibiotics.

For the farm in question above we have put in place a plan for the forthcoming lambing season as follows:

- ***Reducing stocking density in the lambing shed by creating more shed space and lambing Herdwicks and late lambing/ low risk singles outside***
- ***Ensuring clean gloves are used for every assisted lambing***
- ***Navels dipped in 10% iodine immediately after birth and repeated several hours later***
- ***Individual pens are cleaned out and lime disinfected between each inhabitant***
- ***Single and strong twin lambs turned out ASAP, whilst weaker lambs are moved to a clean nursery pen until deemed fit to turn out.***

Colostrum plays a vital role in preventing infection in the first few days of life. Provision of sufficient quantity of good quality colostrum is vital for preventing infections such as joint ill or navel ill in the first few days of life, and therefore reducing dependency upon antibiotics.

Therefore most importantly on this farm we have put in a protocol to prioritise colostrum intake. Blood samples will be taken from the ewes 2-3 weeks prior to lambing to assess protein and energy levels in the ewes. This directly correlates to colostrum quality and therefore will provide time to make dietary adjustments in the last few weeks of pregnancy if needed. Following on from that in order to ensure lambs receive sufficient colostrum triplet and twin lambs will be tube fed either artificial colostrum or colostrum direct from the ewe within the first few hours of life. Single lambs will be monitored and suckled or tube fed if deemed necessary. Assessment of colostrum intake will then be performed by measuring blood protein levels in lambs under 7 days old. This will provide an indication of the level of antibodies in the blood and therefore if the lamb received sufficient colostrum. This will indicate whether our protocol is working or needs adjustment.

Changes to drugs

Calciject6 is no longer in production, we will be introducing Calcibel as an alternative in the coming weeks.

If you have any questions please speak to someone at any of our offices.

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Clinical Vets: Dominic Alexander • Will Allman • Mike Bellamy • Andrew Cooke • Nick Gibbon • James Hipperson • Hannah Mitchell
Alex O'Malley • Matthew Pugh • Caroline Rank • Amelia Stevens • Harry Walby • Charlotte Watkins
TB Testers: Jacek (Jack) Andrychiewicz • Petre Balanescu • Ovidiu Mircea-Oltean • Tudor Patcas • Diego Sainz Garcia • Javier Sisamon • Krasimir (Kris) Stefanov
Support staff: Michelle Harris • Sybil Legge • Laura Langford • Alice Mainwaring • Ros O'Sullivan • Sophie Powell • Andrea Smith
Pam Strange • Victoria Tully • Millie Whitlock

Lungworm

If you heard your cattle coughing at grass last autumn, this means they could have been harbouring lungworm burdens that compromise growth rates and lifetime milking performance.

Most lungworm cases are reported at the back end of the grazing season.

Unfortunately, lungworm larvae can overwinter on pasture and in carrier cattle to propagate infection year to year, which means cattle can pick up infection as soon as they are turned out in the spring. And if they do, it could be very costly.

It pays to vaccinate

Vaccination against lungworm is a no brainer. In the dairy herd, lungworm infection could easily cost you £140 per cow with lost milk production averaging 4kg per cow per day – and that's a conservative estimate – because you can also lose cattle to lungworm.

Home-reared dairy replacements tend to graze on a separate pasture away from the milking herd and are often treated with long-acting wormers, perhaps in both the first and second grazing seasons. When this replacement group enters the main herd, they have no immunity to lungworm and the risk of a disease outbreak at grass is very high. Lungworm is unpredictable and best controlled through vaccination.

Boost immunity through vaccination

Bovilis Huskvac is a live vaccine, made from irradiated lungworm larvae, which are incapable of causing disease. Vaccination should be completed at least two weeks before the herd is turned out to grass. Wormers should not be given until two weeks after the final dose of vaccine.

The vaccine allows a small number of lungworm from natural infection to complete their life-cycle, this means there is a continued development of natural immunity throughout the grazing seasons. Typically you'll only need to vaccinate your cattle once, natural immunity from low-level exposure to lungworms over the life of the animal will protect her in the future. Over-reliance on wormers does not allow this natural boosting to occur.

Vaccination with a pre-turnout course of Bovilis Huskvac is the most reliable and cost-effective way of ensuring the development of immunity to lungworm.

Please contact the practice to plan your lungworm control strategies for this season and to order Bovilis® Huskvac.

Why should I put a hole in my roof? Part 2

There has been a large increase of pneumonia cases this season especially with this stale fogging air and changeable temperatures. If you are experiencing more disease than usual, then getting your shed design correct will improve your herd, not just in the bad years, but also the good ones.

Working out your required outlet

As stated last month, lack of outlet is one of the main contributors to decreased fresh air flow. A rule of thumb for outlet requirements at 0.1m² for adult cows or 0.04m² for calves.

Therefore if a shed contains 50 cows and calves, then the outlet required is **(50 x 0.1) + (50 x 0.04) = 7m²**

If the shed is 10m x 30m, then the open ridge would run along the length of the shed would need to be **30 ÷ 7 = 0.23 or 23cm** or just a bit wider than this piece of paper.

For comparison, if you have a vented ridge, each gap is 0.067m² or the equivalent of 2/3rds of a cow or 1.5 calves.

The worry people have about having a hole in your roof is that too much rain would come in. The annual rainfall for Herefordshire is 961mm per year. Therefore over one year 6.7m³ or 6.7 tonnes of water would come through the hole. In one day a suckler cow produces roughly 50 litres of water a day in urine, faeces and off the breath. In this shed housing 50 cows, the cattle will produce **50cows x 50L = 2500L or 2.5 tonnes of water.** Within 3 days, the cows would have produced more moisture than the rain would have coming through the hole in your roof.

As stated before, inlet from the sides of the shed should equate to 2 – 4 times the required outlet, or 14 – 28m² in this particular shed. This can be achieved by the use of space or Yorkshire boarding, but thought must be given for draught reduction. A good way to evaluate your shed is the use of smoke bombs or using our fogging machine to show where the air movement occurs and whether elimination is adequate.

Making sure that the requirements for the ventilation of the shed and the cycling of fresh air are adequate won't just help reduce pneumonia, but also will help to eliminate all the moisture produced from the cattle creating a drier environment and bed and can actually save on straw costs as well.

If you would like to discuss your shed's requirements for outlets and inlets, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Welcome and goodbye

This month we welcome Vicky, a new member of staff in our Bromyard office. We hope you'll join us in giving her a very warm welcome to the Belmont family.

We also sadly say goodbye to Harriet. Harriet has been with Belmont Farm and Equine for more than five years and we are very sad to see her go. She's on to pastures new with Jubilee Seeds, I'm sure you'll join us in wishing Harriet the best of luck for the future.