

OCTOBER 2021



FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER



Farm

EMERGENCY SLAUGHTER OF CATTLE

To protect the consumer from the exposure to potential health risks through consumption of meat an animal must be healthy at the time of slaughter.

As veterinary surgeons a great responsibility falls on our shoulders to ensure food safety and public health is maintained particularly when it comes to deciding on the eligibility of an animal entering the food chain via emergency slaughter. As such all animals must be subject to an ante mortem (pre-death) inspection before they are slaughtered.

An exception in the rules for only live animals to be accepted for slaughter permits the emergency slaughter of domestic cattle outside the slaughterhouse and is as follows; 'An otherwise healthy animal must have suffered an accident that prevented its transport to the slaughterhouse for welfare reasons'.

It is important when interpreting these guidelines to consider what truly and honestly constitutes an emergency and what constitutes an accident.

What is an emergency?

'Emergency' implies an event requiring immediate action or at the very least at the earliest available opportunity. Therefore, an animal suffering from a chronic condition or one that has been attended to immediately cannot be eligible for slaughter for human consumption.

What is an accident?

The dictionary definition of 'accident' is 'an unforeseen or unexpected event, especially one causing injury or damage'. When assessing an animal following such an event, the attending vet must consider its circumstances and establish that it was a true accident.

Essentially the vet must be satisfied that the situation complies with the rules.

Health of the animal

The vet must also be satisfied that the animal is healthy at the time of slaughter and has suffered no deterioration in health. To be clear the animal must remain in a healthy condition up until the time of emergency

slaughter and must suffer no deterioration in its health due to the accident.

Transportation

Furthermore, the carcass must be transported to the slaughterhouse hygienically and without delay. If more than 2 hours will elapse between slaughter and arrival at the slaughterhouse, the carcass must be carried in a refrigerated container.

Clean livestock

Slaughterhouse operators must ensure that animals accepted for slaughter are clean. Animals whose dirty condition may adversely affect hygienic dressing should not be sent to the slaughterhouse. Therefore, the conditions in which injured animals are kept ahead of emergency slaughter should be as clean as possible.

Pain relief

If you are unfortunate and have a situation occur with your livestock that meets these criteria, and it is not possible to get a vet to attend at the earliest opportunity you should give your animal pain relief. The most suitable product to use in these situations is Ketoprofen (Ketapofen or Ketofen). If this product is administered intravenously, it has a 1-day meat withdrawal. This will allow an animal to receive a degree of pain relief and not necessarily exclude them from emergency slaughter.

Medicines residues

The statutory withdrawal periods for any veterinary medicine administered must be observed for all animals slaughtered for human consumption. All types of medicines must be considered. The keeper of the animal is required to provide Food Chain Information, including a declaration that all withdrawal periods have been respected.

As a practice we will not entertain the presentation and expectation of certification for emergency slaughter of animals that do not comply with these criteria.

Please speak to the office before arranging for a slaughter man to avoid disappointment.

HEREFORD: 01432 351471 • BROMYARD: 01885 488440 • LEDBURY: 01531 806129

Vets: Dominic Alexander • Will Allman • Mike Bellamy • Hazel Birch-Ellis • Ellie Collins • Andrew Cooke • Joel Galloway • Nick Gibbon • James Hipperson • Louise Lafin • Hannah Mitchell • Matthew Pugh • Caroline Rank • Harry Walby • Charlotte Watkins • Sarah Watson

TB Testers: Jacek (Jack) Andrychiewicz • Petre Balanescu • Lin Irving • Ovidiu Mircea-Oltean • Emma Parkinson • Tudor Patcas • Diego Sainz Garcia • Mark Wrathall

Support staff: Jasmine Chapman • Megan Corrick • Sadie Davies • Michelle Harris • Lucy Hughes • Sybil Legge • Laura Langford • Alice Mainwaring • Ros O'Sullivan • Sophie Powell • Andrea Smith • Pam Strange • Vicky Tully • Katherine Whistance • Millie Whitlock • Evelyn Williams

CLEARING UP THE FOG AROUND FOG FEVER

Fog fever is a disease which causes a sudden onset respiratory signs in cattle after a diet change to lush, fast-growing pasture from a dry, low protein diet. It's also known as Acute Bovine Pulmonary Oedema and Emphysema (ABPOE). It has nothing to do with the weather and rarely causes a fever but was named after the old English term for lush growing pasture 'foggage'. The type of forage typically consists of grass-clover mix, alfalfa and several other less common forages such as turnip tops.

What to look out for?

Cattle are normally affected 2 weeks after pasture change, typically around autumn time and it will cause a sudden increase in respiratory effort. Due to this, their respiratory rate will change from 10-30 breaths per minute, to 35-80 breaths a minute. Other signs include open-mouthed breathing, frothing, anxiety, coughing and an altered posture with head and neck extended and elevated. They may have a change in rectal temperature due to the increased respiratory effort but it's usually normal at 37-38 degrees C.

Why does lush pasture cause this?

It all comes back to the rumen, as most things do in cattle. The rumen has a population of bacteria (microbiome) which helps digest many of the plant materials us as humans can't. The microbiome alters over a period of time according to what the cow is eating. The sudden change in diet means that there are fewer of the bacteria for the digestion of the new feed, so a protein called tryptophan builds up. It is converted to a chemical in the rumen called 3-methylindole which passes into the blood stream. From there it travels to the lungs and causes damage to the primary cells which cover the surface of the lungs. These cells are vital for oxygen exchange.

What to do if you see a cow struggling to breathe?

Call us immediately! Even if it is just for some phone advice. There are other causes of acute respiratory distress in cattle so it is often best to get us out to assess your animal. It is important not to cause any stress to these animals as this will increase their breathing rate further and make the problem worse. Fog fever is difficult to treat and often involves supportive management, so prevention is always better than cure!

How to prevent fog fever?

The key to prevention is to make a diet change from dry, low protein feed to lush grass feed over an extended period of time (7-14 days). This can be done by:

- Restricting access to lush grass for 2-3 hours per day to start and slowly building up over 10-14 days
- Delay grazing until after a hard frost
- Use it before it becomes lush



THE PRINCE'S
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Rural Hub
Herefordshire
Helping Rural Businesses Thrive

Farm for the Future

Do you want to better understand the policy changes that will affect the future of your farm business?

Herefordshire Rural Hub is delivering the Farm for the Future programme in Herefordshire from August 2021.

Sign up to a FREE programme of support to help you prepare your farm business for the upcoming changes, and receive the following, plus additional events and resources:

Business Workshop: Understand and prepare your farm business for the changes to agricultural policies, including the removal of BPS.

Environment Workshop: Discover environmental opportunities within the ELM schemes that may suit and benefit your farm business.

One-to-One Support: Discuss future opportunities or challenges with your local coordinator to help you plan for the future.



Am I eligible?

Any owner-occupied or tenant farm currently in receipt of BPS in England can take part.

How much will it cost?

The programme is free and you can either attend in person or virtually.

How can I sign up?

For more information and to express interest call **Herefordshire Rural Hub** on 07454 733846 / 01432 268428 or email farming2020@herefordshireruralhub.co.uk or visit www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk/farmforthefuture



The Prince's Countryside Fund is a registered charity in England and Wales (1136077) and Scotland (SC048055) and a registered company (07240350). Registered office: The Prince's Countryside Fund, Floor 6, 105 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QT

Emergencies and Out of Hours

In the unfortunate event that your animal requires veterinary attention out-of-hours please dial the usual office number where you will be given the telephone number of the on-duty vet.

It may be useful to keep a pen and paper handy to take this number down.

On the rare occasion that the duty vet is out of reception your call will be forwarded to a helpful member of our answering service who will ensure someone attends the emergency as soon as possible.

The answering team at Kernow can be contacted directly on 01432 381 440, if for any reason you are unable to reach the duty vet.

£ DON'T FORGET YOUR DISCOUNT £

Remember there is 10% discount available on eligible products when you pay on collection if your account is up to date. Please speak to a member of reception for more details.

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