

JUNE 2022



FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER



Farm

CALF SCOURS

Calf scour is a frustrating and demoralising disease which adds pressure to an already busy calving period. It can be costly, not only from calf losses but also from the impact on growth rate and longevity. At the time of outbreaks, it is always a hunt to find the incriminating bug or bugs and selecting the most appropriate treatment, however the cause of calf scours is ultimately an underlying husbandry or management problem.

This can sound daunting, however there are often cheap and simple measures to reduce the burden of calf scours on farm. The best place to start is by looking at the calving period as this is where most scours originate from.

Cleanliness – the calving environment should be kept as clean as possible. Removal of after birth and keeping an eye on the level of muck in the pens can prevent build-up of pathogens in the environment. Pens should be bedded up at least once a day and more if it is getting wet or soiled.

Disinfectants – at the absolute minimum disinfectant should be used at the end of calving on all surfaces of the calving and rearing sheds. Sheds and housing areas should be cleaned of visible contaminants before the disinfectant is applied as dirt can deactivate the product. There are many different types of disinfectant, and it can be confusing to choose one. Some pathogens require specific disinfectants, cryptosporidium, for example, is resistant to chlorine so we stock Cyclex which is specifically used for destroying cryptosporidium oocysts.

Colostrum – vets love to bang on about colostrum, but it is important to get this right. As we have said previously, it is the three Qs. Please refer to our March Newsletter for more information!

Water - make sure there is always fresh and clean water available. Even very young calves will take sips of water or at least put their noses in the water troughs, so it is important that they remain clean of any muck from the dam. Many of the common causes of scour will stay in water sources for some time after contamination.

Access to forage – make sure that there is always access to straw or hay from a rack above ground level, calves from 3-7

days will start to nibble on it and it is important they are not taking it off the floor which is a major disease transmission risk.

If calving outside - try to alternate the pasture used each year and move calves to a clean pasture as soon as they are born. Tighten your calving period – calves born late in the season are at a higher risk of scours due to the increased burden of bugs in the environment.

Group animals by calf age – tightening calving patterns can take a long time and, in the meantime, the best way to minimise disease risk is to group calves of the same age. This prevents disease passing from older to younger calves.



Treatment

-Isolate immediately and bring a sample in to the vets for us to check which disease we are dealing with.

-Assess hydration status of calf (sunken eyes or skin tenting), and whether willing to suck or not. If you are concerned, please contact us.

-Feed little and often, alternating electrolyte and milk feeds i.e. 4-6 smaller feeds a day, spaced out by a couple of hours. Milk is very important for gut repair so shouldn't be stopped.

-Collapsed calves need immediate veterinary treatment.

-If there is a particular pathogen involved, we may recommend vaccination programmes in the dams e.g. for Rotavirus or Salmonella. However, this is only effective if colostrum intake is adequate.

It can be difficult to get on top of scours once they begin and so prevention is always better than cure. If you're unsure where the problems are in your system please speak to a vet.

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 • Hannah Mitchell • Matthew Pugh • Caroline Rank • Harry Walby • Charlotte Watkins • Sarah Watson

TB Testers: Jacek (Jack) Andrychiewicz • Petre Balanescu • Jennifer Grosvenor-Smith • Lin Irving • Ovidiu Mircea-Oltean • Tudor Patcas
Diego Sainz Garcia • Kate Southall • Mark Wrathall

Support staff: Caroline Amies-Gardner • 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

VACCINE SHORTAGES

We are currently experiencing shortages of several vaccine products. This may mean that your usual vaccinations are unavailable or delayed. Whilst in most cases alternatives are available, it is important to understand how changing product or timings of vaccinations can affect the protection of your animals. If you have any questions regarding vaccine protocols or changing between vaccine products, please give us a call. 'Heptavac – P', which provides protection against 7 clostridial bacteria species and against Pasteurella – a common cause of pneumonia in sheep - is unavailable until late summer. If using the alternative product 'Ovovac-P' for a primary course in this year's lambs, it is important to remember that it does not provide immunity against as many clostridial species as 'Heptavac-P'. Whilst 'Ovovac-P' will provide adequate protection in growing lambs, it is missing essential components required in ewe colostrum to protect very young lambs. Therefore it is vital that ewe lambs being kept for breeding are additionally given a double dose of 'Heptavac-P' 4-6 weeks apart, with the second dose given at least 4 weeks prior to lambing 2023. This will ensure that next season's lambs are adequately protected against fatal clostridial diseases. It is important that vaccines are handled correctly in order to ensure they work! Vaccines contain live, dead or altered versions of the bugs they protect against and are therefore extremely sensitive to changes in temperature, light and oxygen levels. By ensuring you handle your vaccine products according to instruction, you are ensuring that they will work as promised. Injecting damaged vaccinations won't protect your animals, and is a waste of your money. Please speak to a vet if you have any questions.

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.

MASTERING MEDICINES

Most of you who are Red Tractor assured are aware that as of November last year, someone on the farm must have attended a medicine training course. We offer a course called Mastering Medicine which has been developed with XL vets, and no, it's not just us showing you how to inject... The course usually takes place in either our Bromyard or Hereford office, in small groups of 8 – 10 people as we feel that this offers the best training environment. Courses usually run from 2.5-3 hours with a break midway through the session.

The session is broken down into different areas of medicine and discussions around the what, where and why aspects of each group of drugs. The areas we look at are:

1. Vaccinations
2. Antibiotics
3. NSAIDs (anti-inflammatories)
4. Anthelmintics (wormers)
5. Correct storage and administration of medicines

We aim to make these sessions as beneficial to you and your farm as we can. By improving your knowledge, hopefully a more informed choice behind treatments can aid in improving the medicine that you use.

HEALTH REVIEWS

At Belmont, we provide a more in-depth data capture as to better understand the workings of your farm. We believe that a fuller picture of the farm gives us a better opportunity to give you advice that is tailored to your farm.

If done properly, a health review is a great asset to your farm. Preparing for the visit gives you an opportunity to look at your farm and see for yourself what has happened in the last twelve months whilst giving precise data for the vet to check whether things have gone well or require improvement. Box ticking brings no benefit to you or your farm. Remember, data is only as good as the information that you put in therefore guessing figures brings very little benefit to the session.

OUT OF HOURS SERVICE- CONTINUING AS NORMAL

Some of our clients in the Hereford area may have received a letter from Belmont Vets recently stating that their out of hours service will be altered.

Please rest assured that, despite the similar name, we will continue to offer our full 365 days a year out of hours service for our clients. Belmont Farm & Equine Vets is a separate business to Belmont Vets.

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