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## OCTOBER 2011

### FARM NEWSLETTER

#### **CATTLE**

##### **DIFFICULT CALVINGS!**

Autumn calvings have begun in earnest now and we have had several call-outs and caesarians. Key points to remember are:

1) Have a feel if only 1 leg, a tail or only a head is presenting or if no progress has been made 30 minutes after the amnion has appeared or 2 hours after labour has begun.

2) Identify how the calf is coming and try to correct it if abnormal. Be careful not to tear the uterus or the cow will get Peritonitis and die. If in doubt give us a call – we can give epidurals to relax the uterus giving more room to manoeuvre or failing this perform a caesarian.

3) Stay clean at all times.

4) Use lots of lube – this can make all the difference!

5) When using the jack only apply full pressure with one hand as this is the safe limit before the cow will suffer boney or nervous damage, and also the calf's organs will be damaged. Use the force applied gradually and arch the jack downwards to stretch the birth canal.

6) Finally a natural calving is a long process so don't rush or the cow is more likely to tear, speed is more of an issue if the calf is coming backwards as the umbilical cord will be compressed once the legs are out, stopping the blood supply before the calf can breath.

7) Check afterwards for twins or tears and make sure the cow cleanses.

8) Caesarian sections get the best results if performed early and with minimal intervention beforehand so if in doubt call us – calves are valuable at the moment!

##### **AUTUMN STAGGERS**

Although there may not be a flush of grass the stresses of weaning, suckling large calves and the fluctuant temperature can trigger staggers, so make sure magnesium supplements in the water or feed are

available and continue two weeks post housing.

##### **CATTLE HOUSING - PNEUMONIA**

With autumn fast approaching cattle will start to be housed shortly and this means considering vaccinating to protect against respiratory diseases. The stress of moving and mixing with other calves as well as being enclosed in dustier conditions means there is a high risk of pneumonia.

Vaccination over 12 weeks old with two doses of **Risposal 4** at three weeks apart is an excellent way of protecting the calves and reducing losses as well as preventing reduced bodyweight gain. Ideally, calves should be fully vaccinated at least two weeks before housing. This vaccine protects animals against all the four major pneumonia viruses, BVD, IBR, PI3 and RSV, for at least 6 months. It is well worth doing when you consider the cost of an ill calf is on average £80 - £120.

Calves younger than 12 weeks can be vaccinated intranasally. A single dose is required and provides protection against RSV and PI3 for 9 weeks, after which Risposal 4 can be used. The benefits of this vaccine are that protection is gained very rapidly as the vaccine creates a local immune response.

Other things to consider are management and husbandry factors which need to be carefully balanced – for example good ventilation is absolutely essential but strong drafts want to be minimised. It is also important to get the stocking density right - too high encourages bacteria to breed, too low and the temperature will be too cold and limit growth (3m<sup>2</sup> if over 200kg, 1.5m<sup>2</sup> if under 150kg). We also recommend worming cattle pre-housing to ensure cattle are worm-free, remember the pour-on Ivermectins last for at least 28 days.

## LUNGWORM

Another cause of respiratory disease you may see at this time of year is lungworm. This will mostly target animals under 1 year old but is increasingly being seen in adults also (especially if wormer use is high). Signs you will see are: increased respiratory rate, frothing at the mouth and coughing (particularly after exercise); high temperatures; lethargy; weight loss and milk drop.

These signs will usually be seen in more than just one animal so if only one is affected it is worth considering other causes such as fog fever.

The two ways to control lungworm are by vaccine or by worming. If you are controlling lungworm using a regular worming programme, make sure that you dose at the correct intervals and do not

leave a window now in which the cattle are not protected.

Similarly, if you have bolused the cattle, make sure that they are housed before the protection from the bolus runs out, to prevent infection in these naive animals. If you have suffered from a lungworm problem this year, calves should be vaccinated with **Huskvac** prior to turnout next year.

## NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for dairy farmers will be on the **12<sup>th</sup> October 2011 at 7.30pm** at the Horse and Groom in Milcombe - on new treatment regimes for mastitis.

## SHEEP

### SHEEP PARASITES

Worm levels will also be peaking about now for sheep. If you have scouring sheep or lambs or if you have replacements and ewes going to the tup now is a good time to do a faecal worm egg count – bring in fresh faeces from at least 6 animals (randomly chosen, not just the wormy looking ones).

We can then advise whether they need worming to get them in optimum condition. Another parasite that should be monitored is liver fluke which again will be peaking now.

A good interactive meeting sponsored by Norbrook on the 14th was helpful in pointing

out what to look for and how to treat. Unlike in cows, this disease can kill sheep very quickly. First signs can be as severe as sheep found dead in the field but you are more likely to see anaemic, weak, panting sheep (don't mistake it for pneumonia!) To treat for both of these you could use **Closamectin, Fasimec Duo or Combinex**.

## SHEEP VACCINES

This year there is no vaccine for enzootic abortion in ewes (EAE) due to manufacturing problems. If you do experience an outbreak of abortions the best option is to send several samples of placenta and foetus to the VLA for diagnosis. In the meantime isolate those affected and treat the in contacts with long-acting Tetroxy. Most EAE abortions occur near the end of the last trimester, but they can occur earlier. If you have had outbreaks in the past using Tetroxy prophylactically at 90 -120 days of pregnancy is worth discussing with us. Also remember this is a zoonosis so can cause disease in humans, especially of note is abortion in pregnant women!