



Welcome to the spring edition of our newsletter

Our team has certainly hit the ground running in 2022, there has been little chance for partying like Boris! The vet team have already seen a flurry of calvings and lambings. Meanwhile the vet techs have been busy TB testing, foot trimming, vaccinating and calf disbudding. All in all, spring is definitely in the air!

Anyone with a keen eye on the farming press will have done well to miss AHDB's recent #ColostrumsGold campaign. It aims to reduce antibiotic use on farms by ensuring good colostrum intake. There is a strong link between good intake at birth and better health with good natural immunity. This means less disease, and less need for antibiotics. When thinking about the control and prevention of watery mouth in lambs, colostrum is 100% liquid gold. Check out Milly's article on page 2 for more info.

Despite the inevitable spring rush being upon us, we hope you have time to make a brew and enjoy reading the rest of our newsletter. There are features on IBR pneumonia, up coming training courses and seasonal vet supplies.

All the best from Neil Eastham, on behalf of the
Bishopton Farm Team



Our Northallerton surgery is now closed daily between 1.30pm and 2pm. If you wish to pick up meds within this half hour window please request your order is placed in the secure box at the rear of the surgery when ordering.

Watery Mouth - Spectam shortage shouldn't be a concern

Watery Mouth is caused by two main factors:

Poor immunity due to inadequate colostrum intake.

Watery Mouth is typically seen in lambs between 6 and 48 hours old, this is because older lambs have a more acidic stomach pH which allows them to eliminate it. A lack of sufficient antibodies from colostrum means the lambs have no immunity to fight off infection enabling the bacteria to colonise and produce toxins.

Unclean environment resulting in ingestion of E. coli.

E. coli is found in all muck and therefore lambing sheds quickly become highly contaminated. Damp, unclean pens create an ideal place for E. coli to contaminate the udder of sheep which consequently enters lamb's mouths.

Prevention is Priority

- Ensure ewes have the energy to produce good quality colostrum in late gestation
 - Use forage analysis to aid nutritional decisions. This is usually free through feed merchants or can be sent off via the practice.
 - Carry out pre-lambing metabolic blood tests (3-4 weeks pre-lambing) to check nutritional status. This allows us to look for negative energy balance and assess protein status which would consequently affect colostrum quality.
 - Ensure adequate feed space to maximise dry matter intake: 45-50cm per ewe for concentrates and 15-25cm per ewe for ad-lib forage.
 - Check colostrum quality – a reading of >26% on a Brix Refractometer (cheap on amazon) indicates sufficient antibodies in colostrum.
- Monitor intake of colostrum
 - Lambs should receive 50 ml/kg of colostrum as soon as possible after birth and within 4-6 hours. In 24 hours, a newborn lamb must receive the equivalent of 200 ml/kg body weight in colostrum.
 - Where ewe colostrum is unavailable use a good quality alternative such as XLVets powder.
 - Avoid rubber ringing lambs in the first 24 hours as this will reduce colostrum intake.
- Practice good hygiene
 - Daggging out ewes before they enter the lambing shed will reduce infection risk when the lamb is searching for the teat.
 - Wiping udders with paper towel/ wet wipes before allowing lambs to suck.
 - Washing hands before assisting lambs to suck. Carry alcohol gel in your pockets for convenience.
 - Clean out pens between lambs; realistically on busy commercial farms ensure beds are as clean and dry as possible to limit E. coli replication in beds.
 - Ensure cleanliness of colostrum and feeding tubes to reduce bacterial load entering lambs.
 - Allocate separate, marked feeding tubes and bottles for sick lambs.





Help during an outbreak:

- Do not feed colostrum or milk whilst unwell as they cannot digest it, return to normal milk feeding once recovered.
- Prevent starvation and dehydration by feeding glucose/electrolyte solutions three times a day by stomach tube.
- Keep the lamb warm and return to the ewe ASAP.
- Contact us - we can provide advice and antibiotic alternatives for use during an outbreak.

If you have any concerns about the shortage of the antibiotic Spectam or would like to discuss your individual requirements please don't hesitate to talk to your flock vet or give us a call .

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Written by Milly Eaton
MRCVS BVSc.



Protect against Clostridial and Pasteurella diseases



If you're struggling for time or could use an extra pair of hands, our Vet Tech Amy is available to administer the vaccines to your flock.

Clostridial diseases remain a serious threat to unvaccinated sheep; little or no symptoms are present and death usually occurs within hours. Pasteurellosis is the most common cause of sudden death in lambs aged 4 - 10 months. Luckily your lambs can be protected using an established vaccination programme.

Breeding ewes require a primary course of two injections given four to six weeks apart, followed by an annual booster four to six weeks before lambing. Immunity will be transferred to the lamb provided they have had adequate colostrum. However passive immunity runs out after a few weeks so it is important that lambs should therefore be vaccinated themselves from three weeks of age and a second dose should be given four to six weeks later.

Consider a 4-in-1 vaccination (e.g. Ovivac P Plus) at this time in lambs destined for stores and a 7 or 8-in-1 (e.g. Heptavac P Plus) in lambs for breeding.



We have Heptavac P and Ovivac P available in various pack sizes in stock now. Pick up from any branch or request FOC delivery.

Speak to Philip Bowes for more info: 0 7711 894816



IBR Pneumonia

This winter has seen several nasty outbreaks of pneumonia associated with IBR. Being a virus it doesn't respond to antibiotics and so the course of any outbreak is usually protracted with the damage done often greater than promptly detected bacterial pneumonia outbreaks.

IBR is the most obvious clinical disease associated with infection by Bovine Herpesvirus 1 (BoHV-1). IBR is a disease of the upper respiratory tract which varies in severity, depending on the strain of virus involved and other factors which may influence the immune status of the animal. In severe cases, damage to the upper airways may lead to pneumonia and sometimes death. BoHV-1 infection has also been associated with infertility and abortion.

Most animals infected with BoHV-1, assuming they recover, remain latently infected for life. The latent virus can be reactivated at any time, usually precipitated by stress, to spread and cause more disease. Managing stress is important in controlling IBR so the timing of stressful periods such as housing and weaning are worth reviewing to see if ways can be found to offset the risks. Concurrent exposure to BVD virus can also be a trigger and is associated with some of the worst outbreaks.

Vaccination can play a useful role in the control and prevention of IBR. Many different vaccines, both live and dead, are available to protect against disease and the choice of which to use should be made carefully following discussion with your vet. The use of 'marker' vaccines allows laboratory testing to be used to distinguish antibodies raised as a consequence of vaccination from those raised following challenge by the disease.

It is important to recognise that vaccination with a marker vaccine will not prevent antibodies being formed against field-strain virus if a challenge occurs. Herds free of BoHV-1 infection and those trying to remain free of infection must pay attention to biosecurity, particularly when animals are introduced onto the farm.

Farm boundaries must be secure to prevent nose-to-nose contact with neighbouring animals of unknown health status.



Testing has improved in recent years meaning that during an outbreak a result can be produced much sooner than historically. Testing after an outbreak can also be a useful exercise – particularly in suckler herds who are trying to run a closed system. Subsidised testing is available that will allow you to definitively rule out viruses such as IBR and BVD in a batch of animals affected by pneumonia this year. This can provide valuable information about control strategies for next year. So if pneumonia has been an issue this winter please consider testing some animals for IBR and other preventable viral causes of pneumonia prior to turnout so that you can take an informed view ahead of next autumn.

Written by Phil Alcock BVetMed
CertCHP DipRN MRCVS





Colostrum - The original liquid gold

February saw the AHDB's campaign #ColostrumIsGold highlight the key role colostrum plays in farm animal performance through improved health while reducing antibiotic use. It is important that this ethos is maintained throughout the year and we don't forget how important colostrum is. Colostrum is vital to the newborn as it contains antibodies to provide immunity, and it is also rich in essential nutrients to provide energy for growth. Strengthening the newborn's immunity through colostrum reduces the need for antibiotics in the future.

QUANTITY

As a rule of thumb, the newborn calf needs:

- 10% of the animal's bodyweight ideally within the first two hours of birth, but no later than within the first six hours.
- A second feed of similar size within 12 hours of birth.

The newborn lamb should receive:

- 50 ml/kg of colostrum as soon as possible within 4–6 hours.
- In 24 hours, the equivalent of 200 ml/kg body weight in colostrum.



QUALITY

- Ensuring adequate cow and ewe nutrition and body condition underpins colostrum quality. Getting your forage analysed will help determine what supplementation is required.



- Good-quality colostrum contains at least 50 g/L of IgG. Any colostrum containing <20 g/L of IgG should not be used. It is important to feed high-quality colostrum that has been measured using a Brix refractometer or colostrometer.
- It is not possible to determine the quality of colostrum by looking at it, it must be tested.

QUICKLY

- Colostrum quality declines after six hours.
- The efficiency of antibody absorption in the newborn's stomach declines rapidly from over 40% at birth to less than 5% by 20 hours.



Vaccinations

Make sure your vaccination programmes are up to date. Leptospirosis is an important pre-turnout consideration as it can commonly be transmitted through open water courses.

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) and Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR) vaccinations should also be up to date particularly if your stock boundaries are not secure from neighbouring livestock. Heifers should be vaccinated against BVD pre-service to protect the fetus against infection as it can pass through the placenta to infect the unborn calf, potentially causing abortion or deformity.

Fluke precaution

In liver fluke infected herds, minimising the contamination of pasture by animals post turnout is an important step in minimising pasture infestation levels. If post housing treatments have been effective then there should not be any adult flukes in the liver, but it is useful to check some faecal samples for the presence of fluke eggs so a treatment pre turnout can be given if necessary. If your cattle have been housed for at least 10 weeks then most flukicides should cover more mature stages of fluke, however, if your cattle have not been housed for at least 10 weeks it is worth discussing with your vet to consider which flukicide is most appropriate.

Lungworm

Every year we see clinical cases of lungworm in youngstock and adults that haven't developed a good immunity. Risk level will differ from farm to farm, but if you are at high risk, vaccinating prior to turnout for calves over 8 weeks and adults remains the best way to provide this immunity and minimise the risk of lungworm outbreaks affecting first season grazing animals this year and in subsequent years. It is important that the vaccine course (2 doses, 4 weeks apart) is completed a minimum of two weeks prior to turnout and it is critical you don't administer any other wormer treatments during this time and up to two weeks after the last dose.

Worming protocol

There isn't a one size fits all approach to worm control, every farm and herd will have different requirements. Therefore, it is important to discuss with one of the farm vets or our qualified SQP Philip Bowes, what the most appropriate worm control strategy is for you this summer.

Body condition score your cattle

Body condition score (BCS) should be the starting point of any health checklist. It is not uncommon for cows to be under condition coming out of the winter and it may be worth having your forage analysed if you haven't done it already. You can then feed accordingly and introduce trace element boluses or mineral licks if required. BCS is important for fertility in your breeding stock too. Your bull should have a BCS of 3-3.5 before breeding season and your cows need to be at the correct BCS 6 weeks prior to bulling to ensure they are cycling properly.

Foot health

Pre turnout is an optimum opportunity to trim overgrown feet and treat lameness. Lameness can contribute to lower conception rates due to reluctance to move and stress. We have two qualified foot trimmers, Ed and Dom, who have a wealth of experience. Using our hydraulic squeeze crushes which provide a safe, modern system, they can ensure the whole experience is as quick and low-stress as possible for the cow.



Join our new Calf Club!

We are very excited to invite our dairy farms to join our new Calf Club. The aim of this scheme is to provide useful data on critical control points of your heifer rearing enterprises and to allow you to see how you compare against other local farms through benchmarking.

Growth rate measurements and blood samples to assess total protein will be collected by our Vet Tech team during a monthly visit. Following this visit you will receive a monthly report. Studies have shown that in the UK, half of heifers fail to receive adequate antibodies from colostrum so understanding how well your farm is performing and identifying routes to improve could be a real benefit to calf health.



The growth of heifers in early life is hugely important to ensure they reach target weights for bulling and to calve down by your target age, but also to ensure they thrive in the herd - every additional kg of body weight at calving leads to approximately 15kg of extra milk in the first lactation, so an extra 70kg equates to an extra 1000kg milk! There is also increasing evidence to show that growth rate in early life has long lasting impacts on future performance with pre-weaning metabolic status 'unlocking genetic potential' of heifers and impacting their future productivity. Monitoring growth at this stage is a great way to assess how well your heifers are doing and to help identify areas to improve.

Hi-Mag Buckets are now available to help with the prevention of staggers and boost vitamin and mineral intake.



All available on our weekly FOC delivery service or for collection at branch. Speak to our qualified SQP Philip Bowes on 07711 894816 for more information.

The second part of the calf club will involve a quarterly meeting, which will be hosted on farm where feasible. We believe that bringing together farmers with a shared interest in calf health is a great way to share ideas and see things that work on a practical and technical level.

We are looking for farmers who are passionate about calf health, who are keen to share ideas and see the value of regular monitoring of their calves performance.

If you would like to find out more please speak to Katie, one of the Vet Tech team or your herd vet.

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