

Robson & Prescott

Newsletter November

2023



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PNEUMONIA – DISEASE AND VACCINATION

Pneumonia is on the rise as we bring our animals in for housing over the winter. It is essential that we do what we can to minimise their risk of being susceptible to pathogens as well as providing them with suitable and effective protection through vaccinations.

COLOSTRUM – ITS IMPORTANCE AND WHY

Calves and lambs that do not receive appropriate volumes and quality of colostrum will always be on the back foot. By making sure your newborns are getting the best start possible – you provide them with the best opportunity to thrive. Daily weight gain, age to get in calf and general immunity all rely on colostrum intake and passive transfer of immunity from dam to newborn

PREGNANCY DIAGNOSIS – WHY NOW AND TARGETS TO AIM FOR

Overwinter is a good time to scan cows for your upcoming calving season/block. Not only does this help us to plan for the upcoming months, it can let us know what adjustments can be made for bulls/rams next year/breeding period.

Pneumonia-

Housing and pneumonia season is upon us. There are a variety of viruses and bacteria that cause pneumonia in calves - all are more likely to cause disease in the presence of stagnant airflow, crowded sheds and unfortunately given this autumn, wet weather. Trying to keep calf sheds free from drafts and the bedding dry will reduce the chance of disease developing in both vaccinated and unvaccinated calves. We have a variety of vaccines to prevent disease. Our most commonly used ones are:

Intranasal RSP Live – Single dose given up the nose. Provides protection for BRVS (Bovine rhinosyncitial virus) and Pi3 virus within 1 week of administration. Immunity lasts for 12 weeks

Bovipast RSP – Two subcutaneous injections given 4 weeks apart. Provides protection from BRSV and Pi3 Viruses as well as Mannheimia bacteria from 2 weeks after the second injections. Immunity should last the duration of housing.

IBR Marker Live – Can be given intranasally or by intramuscular injection. Provides protection from IBR virus from 4 days when given intranasally or 14 days after given by injection. Provides protection for 3 months when given to calves under 3 months of age and 6 months when given to calves over 3 months of age

If you are finding pneumonia in your calves this year, please get in contact with us. There is often funding available to investigate the cause. We are also happy to help with developing protocols for you to help best protect your calves.

Having a thermometer on farm can be very useful for catching cases early and determining those in your herd that are worst off and require further treatment.

Pregnancy Diagnosis-

Whilst inflation in animal feed costs are easing, housing costs are still likely to be high this year. To avoid unnecessarily carrying barren animals overwinter please consider pregnancy scanning your cattle at the start of housing. With our pregnancy scanner we can reliably diagnose pregnancy in cattle from 8 weeks of age.

- In cattle we are aiming for >95% of bulled cattle pregnant.
- In sheep we would like a scanning % of >200% for lowland ewes and 175% for upland ewes. Investigation of barren rates should occur if >4% are scanned barren.
- If your scanning percentage is not as high as you would like or are looking for ways to improve, please give us a call.

Colostrum-

We know lambing seems a long way off but unfortunately it will be here before we know it. Colostrum is one of the most important factors in ensuring lamb health. Good quality ewe colostrum is always the best options for your lambs but if that is not available then artificial colostrum will need to be provided. We will be stocking “quick start pure 20” colostrum as usual.

Newborn lambs and calves are susceptible to infections and are born with little to no immune system. They are protected in their first few days of life through their dam’s colostrum – if they either do not get the colostrum or it is of a poor quality the newborn will have a failure of passive transfer – meaning they have no protection from infections.

For both your lambs and calves – getting a good volume of good quality colostrum will give them the best opportunity to grow well and remain healthy. For calves it is essential they receive **4L** of colostrum in the **first 4 hours of life**.

For lambs they require **50ml/kg** of colostrum in the **first two hours of life** and 200ml/kg in the first 24 hours. E.g. a 4kg lamb will need 800ml of colostrum in the first 24 hours.

Assessing your colostrum-

If you have concerns over the quality of your colostrum or want to make sure what you have is suitable for your lambs, you can bring in a sample of colostrum to us to assess.

We use a brix refractometer to assess the level of protein and quality and can determine if the colostrum is suitable for use.

If you are interested, we can look at sorting a refractometer for you to use on farm – call and chat with one of our vets if this appeals to you.

Hygiene-

It is very important that strict hygiene is maintained when handling and collecting colostrum. If lambs or calves are suckling from dirty teats it is an ideal opportunity for bacteria to enter the body. This also applies stomach tubing or bottle feeding – they must be sterilised and cleaned between animals. Bacteria grow rapidly in stored colostrum especially when above 4°C, it is imperative that any colostrum not being used imminently is stored in the fridge.

We will also be having Nimrod's "redstart" paste in stock again. It is not a replacement for colostrum but can be useful in stimulating slow lambs and calves.

**As always, we can be contacted at the surgery on
01670 512276 or on the Farm mobile 07921 401901.**