



WELCOME TO farm 2015 news



OCTOBER 2015



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Vaccination

If it's worth doing, it's worth doing well!

Liz Cresswell BVM BVS MRCVS



Vaccination can be a key component of herd health, but there are many factors that often aren't discussed when we talk about vaccine protocols. It is important to think not just about which vaccines you're using, but also about how they're being stored and administered.

In order for vaccines to be effective they must be maintained at the correct temperature; usually fridge temperature (2-8°C). Going outside of this temperature range will break the 'cold chain' and potentially inactivate the vaccine and not provide disease protection to animals. This should be a consideration right up until the vaccine is drawn up and injected into the animal, so it's not just about storage beforehand, but also using cool bags etc. to control the temperature of the bottles on the day of vaccination.

It is crucial that vaccines are administered at the correct time in order to provide maximum protection to the animals' immune systems (see graph below). The top cause of incorrect vaccine use is not administering primary courses within the recommended timeframe - this varies between vaccines but most vaccines require an initial course of two doses, 3-6 weeks apart, and then boosters every 6-12 months thereafter. Vaccinating outside the recommended time period means that the animals may have suboptimal protection against disease.

It is also important to use the correct route of administration for vaccines, as there has been some evidence to suggest that people often confuse subcutaneous with intramuscular injection. It is always worthwhile checking the datasheet before a vaccination session, as different vaccines have different instructions and these may change periodically.

Needle hygiene is important to prevent the spread of existing disease between animals, and also to reduce the risk of introducing infection and causing abscesses

which impact on welfare and meat quality. Vaccinator guns can be used which sterilise the needle between each animal. Needles should always be sharp and clean, and syringes always clean.

Often vaccines do not guarantee to prevent animals picking up disease, but they do reduce the clinical signs and shedding. Vaccination alone definitely does not guarantee that your farm will remain disease-free, and should be used as just one tool as part of a whole farm disease control and monitoring strategy.

In summary, if spending time and money on vaccines, it's worthwhile ensuring that they get into the animal correctly to provide the maximum protection possible to control disease in your herd. If you are unsure about vaccine usage then all the instructions can be found on the datasheet, or if you're still not sure then do check with a vet. AHDB have some useful summaries on their website, including a video about vaccination techniques - see <http://dairy.ahdb.org.uk/technical-information/animal-health-welfare/vaccination>.

Do you want to take control of your cow's fertility and learn new skills?

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Colostrum Management for the best possible start

Bobby Hyde Resident

Some of the most dramatic losses in a herd can be due to pre-weaning deaths, and ensuring calves receive the best possible start in life is one of the most important areas to focus on.

Difficulties in early life for a calf can result in long term issues which can affect them for their entire life, and preventing disease in the early stages provides huge benefits later on. Colostrum provides a calf with protection from diseases in early life (mainly due to the colostrum antibody 'IgG'), and without proper colostrum management the calf will be open to a huge range of diseases.

Quantity

We all know that modern calves are getting bigger, and as a result need much larger volumes of colostrum than they used to. The old rule of '6 pints in 6 hours' would be too little for many animals, and calves in general require at least 10-12% of their body weight in colostrum as soon as possible after birth. A 40-50kg calf would therefore require 4-6 litres of colostrum (7-10 pints!), split into separate feeds as necessary.

Quality

Colostrum must also be of excellent quality, something that can vary hugely between cows. Measuring colostrum quality is very easy, and requires a cheap instrument known as a colostrometer. Using this device, the colostrum can be checked to ensure it has a high level of IgG and will therefore be able to pass on

maximal immunity to the calf. Different cows are definitely not equal as far as colostrum is concerned, with huge variations in quality due to the breed, size, and age of the cow in question. The volume of colostrum produced can also affect the quality, with high producing cows providing a more diluted product, with less IgG per litre, than lower-producing animals. Whilst calves might be receiving a large volume of colostrum, if it is of poor quality they will not be getting the immunity they need from it, so by testing colostrum sources regularly it is possible to manage the colostrum effectively to ensure all calves receive the correct amount of IgG.

Timing

Assuming the quality and quantity of colostrum given is correct, it is also essential to ensure the timing of feeds is correct. After the first 6 hours of life there is an enormous decrease in the amount of IgG the calf can absorb from the colostrum, so it really is a race against time to ensure a feed of colostrum is given as soon as possible after birth.

Cleanliness

It is extremely easy to contaminate colostrum with bacteria, and the biggest risk time is during collection from the cow. Bacteria in colostrum actually reduce the amount of IgG a calf can absorb, thereby decreasing the level of immunity the calf can acquire. Bacteria can also be harmful themselves, and contaminated colostrum could be exposing vulnerable calves to nasty bacterial diseases such as Salmonella, E.coli and Johne's disease.

Milking as soon as possible after calving is good practice, and careful attention should be devoted to ensuring udder preparation is

performed correctly, as well as having spotlessly clean collection equipment. Bacteria grow well in colostrum, so unless being fed immediately, it should be frozen or refrigerated within one hour of collection, and kept spotlessly clean until use! Pasteurising colostrum can help reduce bacterial levels, which both improves immune transfer and helps to eliminate bacteria that can cause serious diseases.


Pooling colostrum is not uncommon, but carries a variety of serious risks, including the very efficient spread of diseases around calves. If one cow's colostrum is full of bacteria, pooling would probably be the perfect way to spread that disease to the maximum number of calves! Pooling can also dilute excellent colostrum from one cow, thereby missing out on the opportunity for using some first rate colostrum by mixing with poorer quality colostrum.

There are many important areas to calf management, but if you are having problems with disease in your calves, colostrum management could be at the root of the problems. Regular monitoring of colostrum management procedures can help ensure that all calves get the best possible start in life, and go on to be healthy, productive members of the herd. Calves themselves can also be blood sampled to see how well colostrum antibody has been transferred. Sampling a batch of calves can highlight areas of concern with colostrum management, and can be performed as a regular monitoring process. To further discuss colostrum management have a chat with your regular vet, and develop a colostrum management plan that will ensure the future of the herd is getting the best possible start in life.

Meet the Team: Sue Walker

Sue has worked full time as Practice Manager at Markeaton for seven years. In her spare time she enjoys walking in the countryside with her two black Labradors Max and Tara.

Sue also enjoys having lessons on her friend's Dales ponies and taking them out for hacks where a glass of gin and tonic is always welcome at the end. She has made damson gin for the first time this year, and we are all looking forward to sampling some!

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Fundraising lecture for the R.A.B.I.
Cash cow or sacred cow? The milk production debate

Jon Huxley
Professor of Cattle Health and Production
School of Veterinary Medicine and Science

7.30pm, Tuesday 27 October 2015
Scarsdale Vets, Pride Veterinary Centre,
Pride Park, Derby DE24 8HX

For more info and to buy tickets contact the Scarsdale Farm & Equine practice on 01332 294929 - £5 per person including refreshments
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