

AUTUMN FARM NEWS

September 2024



In this issue:

- Events and Reminders
- Farm grants currently available
- Disease forecast
- How are your heifers doing?
- Suckler herd colostrum management
- Making the most of tugging
- An interesting case *Haemonchus contortus* in a commercial flock
- Knowing normal helping our smallholders spot problems early

Greetings

As we head into autumn having barely experienced a good summers day we try to remain positive and hope for a late arrival of some finer weather. For all that came to the Farmers hog roast we hope you enjoyed it and went home pleasantly full and we look forward to seeing you all at county show again! As many are thinking about breeding sales we would like to remind you all regarding the importance of quarantine treatments—please don't be caught out and bring nasties on to farm. Prevention (as always) is better than cure. Please get in touch with us and we will advise you on the best quarantine drenches, treatments and procedure to keep your flock safe.

Events and Reminders

Medicines and Milksure courses

Dates and times tbc - contact the practice to register interest

Farm grants currently available

Animal health and welfare—between £215 and £923 per review depending on livestock type Can apply at any time of year, every 10 months.

Calf housing for health and welfare—Between £15,000 and £500,000 Closing date 30 April 2025



Don't forget we can process faecal samples and get you results on the same day and provide tailored advice on sustainable worming practices for your farm

Disease forecast

As the weather continues to be unpredictable and housing is around the corner **pneumonia** is likely to be a concern. With stock suddenly much closer together, pathogens spread easily. Now is the time to consider preventative vaccination programmes to reduce losses this back end. In naive or young stock, **lungworm** infection causing husk is also something to be vigilant against. **Worms** in both sheep and cattle are likely to be variable between farms depending on the level of pasture contamination and stocking levels. However, with this wet weather any worm eggs that are passed onto pasture will be able to hatch and the larvae can migrate up the leaf to be eaten. Monitoring for growth rates and conducting Faecal egg counts regularly are the best methods for monitoring worm burdens and knowing when to dose. We are starting to see evidence of **fluke** infection in lambs from marshland grazing so be on the look out for it on your farm. Unfortunatley, after having such a mild winter and wet spring and summer it is likely to rear its ugly head. Be careful not mistake **Haemonchus** for fluke infection as they can look similar.

HEALTHY HEIFERS

How are your heifers doing?

Cara Hatfield

How are your heifers doing?

Heifer rearing is an investment that takes time to see a return, at the second largest annual expense for dairy farmers. This group is also often the second or third largest contributor to milk production, it's therefore important to monitor their performance to ensure they repay the investment with higher milk production and a longer productive life. As the current average dairy cow only completes 3 or 4 lactations, half her time on farm is as a non-productive heifer. Therefore, the outcome and cost effectiveness of heifer rearing practices deserve careful attention for optimising their health, growth and productivity.

Dairy Heifer Targets:

Management Tool	Farm Targets
Colostrum Management	3L or 10% of Body weight within 2-6 hours of birth.
Average Daily Live Weight Gain	0.8-1kg
Weaning	6-8 weeks, approx. 80kg
Puberty	6-12 months, approx. 200-250kg
Mating	13-15 months, approx. 420kg
Age at First Calving	22-24 months of age
Disease Incidence	<3% for Both Pneumonia and Scour Investigations required if over 5%.

How and why of monitoring heifer health

Monitoring Colostrum Management:

Providing enough, good quality colostrum, within the ideal timeframe will reduce calf disease and mortality. Monitoring passive transfer of the IgG within the calves, can help assess the colostrum management on farm, at least 80% of the calves tested should be classed a 'good'. Checking for passive transfer can be performed through a number of methods, however the most commonly used methods in practice are:



Immunoturbidimetry: This has become the gold standard but is restricted to laboratory use.

Total protein measurement: can be done in practice and requires blood sampling calves in the first week of life (after 24hrs old).

Immunochromatography: A new rapid on-farm test, created by Bimeda®, which utilises whole blood taken with a stylet and can be used up-to 42 days of age.

Growth Rate

Monitoring growth rate in youngstock allows you to see how well they are performing and also indirectly monitors their efficiency of feed conversion. Growth is most efficient in the first two months of life, so ensuring calves achieve high growth rates whilst on milk is key to meeting targets. Ideally, calves should be monitored from birth, and again key points including weaning, 6 months of age, and at breeding. This helps to address any potential management issues that could be impacting growth and identify those animals that aren't performing. Tools to monitor growth rate include:

Daily Live Weight Gain: This relies on having a birth weight, which can be taken with either a weigh band, or electronic scales, the latter being more accurate. After a period of time, the weight measurement is repeated, and the average daily weight gain is achieved.

Height: Height can be measured using a height stick, placed across the withers or rump, whilst the animal is standing on a flat surface, this is particularly useful to assess the growth of bulling heifers at the time of service, which should be at 13-15 months, to reach the target of age at first calving

For example:

$$DLWG =$$

$$\frac{\text{Latest recording} - \text{Earliest weight Recording}}{\text{Number of Days Between weights}}$$

Dairy Calf Weighing 40kg at birth, and at a month of age weighs 64.8kg gives an average DLWG of 0.8kg which is the minimum recommended growth rate.



Disease Monitoring

As well as monitoring growth, it is important to monitor the incidence of disease problems on the farm. Keep a record of calves showing signs of ill health, cases of disease and losses. Calves use their feed to maintain their normal body functions, then to keep themselves warm and fight disease, and finally, energy left over can be used for growth. A sick, cold calf has the same maintenance requirement but needs almost all of its remaining energy to keep warm and fight disease. These calves grow very slowly and inefficiently. UK farms experience a high incidence of scours and respiratory disease before weaning. It can be easy to miss calves with mild diseases. Even mild disease takes energy away from growth and can limit the animals' lifetime potential.



*Energy expenditure by a warm, health calf- ideal

*Energy expenditure by a sick, cold calf- inefficient

RESPIRATORY

SIGNS OF GOOD HEALTH AND VIGOUR

- Bright • Playful • Curious
- Keen to drink milk



- Clear eyes and nose
- No cough

Normal temperature
(38–39°C or 100–102°F)

LOOK FOR EARLY SIGNS OF DISEASE

- Quiet • Slow to stand
- Still drinking milk



- Discharge from eyes and nose
- Cough on movement

High temperature
(>39.5°C or 103°F)

LATE SIGNS OF DISEASE

- Dull • Reluctant to stand unaided
- Off milk



- Severe discharge with pus
- Frequent coughing/wheezing

High temperature
(>39.5°C or 103°F)

SCOURS



- Clean hindquarters
- Well formed faeces

Normal temperature
(38–39°C or 100–102°F)



- Dirty hindquarters
- Loose faeces

Variable temperature



- Wet hindquarters • Hair loss
- Dehydrated • Watery faeces

Variable temperature

ACT NOW

Implement the treatment plan agreed with your vet

Information supplied by Merial

Pneumonia

There are a number of viral and bacterial pathogens that cause pneumonia and identification of pathogens on your farm can be achieved through various testing methods.

Treatment will be most effective if it is given as early as possible, so it is important that animals with pneumonia are rapidly identified and treated correctly. Pneumonia can cause irreversible lung damage, meaning that even if an animal recovers, its lifetime performance will suffer, and it will be more susceptible to future disease challenges.



What to do when pneumonia strikes

- Take temperatures of poorly and in contact calves—this may highlight some of these early cases. A temperature above 39.4°C indicates an infection is present.
- Look out for dullness, a loss of appetite, coughing, nasal or eye discharge and laboured breathing.

Monitoring pneumonia

Pneumonia scoring on farm regularly can help early identification and efficient treatment of sick calves.

Thoracic Ultrasound Scanning (TSU) can help identify those animals with respiratory lesions that may have gone unnoticed and can give a farmers a better understanding of how much subclinical pneumonia is affecting their calves. FeverTags® are electronic calf tags which utilises software to monitor a calf's temperatures every 15 minutes. If a rise in temperature is identified over a prolonged period of time, the LED light will begin to flash. The temperature of the calf should be checked with rectal thermometer and any required treatment given. This can be a useful tool for quick and easy identification of suspect pneumonia cases.

Scour

Calf scour (diarrhoea) is the most common disease in young calves, accounting for about 50% of all calf deaths. The disease can be easily recognised, and it is important that treatment is administered rapidly to maximise the chance of survival. The most common non-infectious cause of diarrhoea is nutritional scours, which can be caused by inconsistent feeding, lower-quality calf milk replacer products or inappropriate concentration. For all causes of scour, treatment is focused on rehydration and prevention of acidosis that occurs due to fluid loss from the calf's digestive tract. It is essential that treatment is started as soon as scour is observed. Prevention is about reducing the exposure level of the calf and maximising immune function by;

Keeping Pens Clean—Hygiene is paramount in the prevention and control of

Ensuring adequate passive transfer of immunity from colostrum.

Vaccinating dams prior to calving can help reduce the prevalence of scours in calves by ensuring there are specific antibodies present in the colostrum.



On farm tests faecal tests can be used to identify some infectious causes of calf scour (Rotavirus, Coronavirus, E. coli and Cryptosporidium) and can give you a result within 10 minutes and are readily

SUCKLER HERDS AND COLOSTRUM

What's the story?

Bethany Collins

Many suckler herds will have begun or are heading into their autumn calving block and so we begin again to think about the wonder that is colostrum. Colostrum is vital to any calf at any time of year but it could be argued that it is even more so to autumn born calves as they tend to be housed whilst they are in their first few months of life—a time when they are most vulnerable to infection. One of the benefits of spring calving is that cows with newborn calves can be quickly turned out should outbreaks of scour or pneumonia occur which helps to limit disease spread but this is often not as easy with autumn calvers as ground conditions worsen. With these challenges in mind, it should be our aim to set these calves up with the best start in life and adequate colostrum intake is central to health, performance and welfare not to mention vital to



What is colostrum and why is it important?

Colostrum is formed in late pregnancy and is the first milk produced after calving. It is a rich source of energy, protein, fat, vitamins and minerals, immunoglobulins and growth factors and many other non-nutrient biologically active compounds. Within the veterinary literature there is strong evidence that colostrum is vital for the growth and development of the neonatal calf and has long lasting implications for the calf's health as it develops into an adult and joins the adult herd. Immunoglobulins (antibodies) are passed from the dam to the calf through the colostrum and help to protect the calf from infections whilst the calf's own immune system is still developing and it is vulnerable. Although difficult, the economic impact of poor colostrum intake has been quantified by some studies and includes the cost of disease both in terms of time and money spent treating disease and the poor growth rates experienced as a result.



Failure to ingest sufficient colostrum at birth can negatively impact calf health and performance. Calf performance ultimately impacts sales of weaned calves or stores can make or break a beef enterprise.

3 Qs of colostrum

Quantity

5% of bodyweight e.g. 2-3L per feed. Feeding via teat feeder is best but a stomach tube should be used if the calf will not suck

Quality

Beef colostrum tends to be of good quality—heifers and cows calving early may have poorer quality colostrum. Use first milking as this has the highest levels of antibodies and nutrients

Quickly

Calves should stand and suckle within 2 hours of calving—if not the dam should be restrained and the calf assisted.

The calf will need a second feed 6 to 8 hours later if it is unable to suckle unassisted



Sometimes calves are born with a poor suck reflex. This can be due to acidosis or being a 'dummy' calf. Quickly identifying these calves can help to ensure they go on to be healthy calves—Treatments can include an injection of bicarb into the vein or a technique known as the Madigan squeeze.

What can affect a beef calf's colostrum intake?

Despite what many may believe, poor dam nutrition in late pregnancy does not appear to affect colostrum antibody concentration of colostrum and it is unknown if it affects the colostrum yield. Of course, good dam nutrition is still vital for other things such as achieving optimum body condition score at calving (2.5-3) which can help avoid problems with dystocia seen in fat and thin cows and subsequent fertility problems, so it should not be ignored. Studies have shown that factors that delay the time between calving and the calf first suckling (including dam parity, udder and teat anatomy and dystocia) do have a negative impact on passive transfer of immunity to the calf. Not surprisingly teats that more outward pointing are easier for the calf to nurse from and are associated with improved colostrum status of beef calves.

How can we ensure beef calves receive enough colostrum?

Many times advice regarding colostrum management is taken directly from dairy resources but research has shown that there is differences and often the advice isn't as easily applied in the suckler herd. Research has demonstrated that for calves that are quick to stand and suckle without assistance will take approximately 20-26 minutes to suck 4.1% of their birthweight or around 1.6kg of colostrum and by 12 hours old they will have consumed a further 1.2kg of colostrum to total 7.4% of their bodyweight.

For calves that experience a difficult birth, do not stand within 2 hours of birth or who's dams have teats that point down or inward the risk of failure of passive transfer is significantly increased and these guys would benefit from assistance. From a practical perspective, feeding the beef-suckler calf 5% of birth weight in colostrum using a tube feeder within 1hr of calving with subsequent suckling of the dam or a second feed 6 to 8 hours helps to ensure successful passive transfer equivalent to a well managed suckling situation with a vigorous calf.

TUPPING TIME

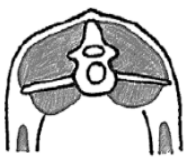

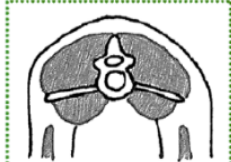
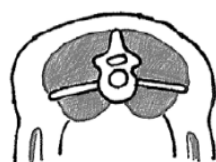

Getting the most out of it

Kathryn Stott

With a lot of focus on lambing time, scanning percentages and weaning numbers, it can be easy to forget that a lot of it starts now with preparing the animals for mating. Having the ewes and tups in the best condition possible for mating allows for more fertile ewes, higher scanning percentages, and ewes with stronger lambs and higher milk yield.

Body condition

One of the key parameters vets often use to assess the overall health of a ewe is their body condition. Weight alone is a difficult metric to assess an animal you must factor in variables such as breed, stature and age to determine if it is an appropriate weight. Body condition allows us to assess the condition of the animal simply using our hands, and it tells us directly about the fat and muscling coverage over the skeleton. Unlike cattle, due to the sheep's fleece, you cannot visually assess the condition, and a lot of farmers do get an unwelcome surprise at clipping time when they can visually see the poor condition of their ewes. The image adjacent shows the different fat coverage for the different body condition's 1-5, and what you should be able to feel.

BCS1	BCS2	BCS3	BCS4	BCS5
Emaciated	Thin	Ideal	Fat	Obsese
				
The spinous and transverse processes are sharp and prominent. Loin muscle is shallow with no fat cover. Ribs are clearly visible	Spinous processes are sharp and prominent. Muscles are full but have little fat cover. The ends of the transverse processes are smooth and slightly rounded. Some ribs can be seen. There is a small amount of fat cover. Ribs are still felt.	Spinous processes are smooth and round. Muscles are full with moderate fat cover. The transverse processes can be felt by applying firm pressure. Ribs are barely seen; an even layer of fat covers them. Spaces between ribs are felt using pressure. the loin.	Pressure is needed to find the spinous processes. Muscles are full and fat cover is thick. The transverse processes cannot be felt. Ribs are not seen.	The spine and transverse processes cannot be felt but a dimple can be seen over the spine. The muscles are very full with dense fat cover. Ribs are not visible and are covered with excessive fat.



Bad back teeth can make chewing forage effectively difficult, leading to a poor BCS

There can be a lot of different causes for poor body condition in the ewe, the most obvious being inadequate nutrition, but it can also reflect the disease status in the flock. Anything that can cause pain will reduce appetite, so diseases such as lameness, pneumonia and mastitis can all influence body condition.

Older sheep are often more likely to be seen with poor body condition due to conditions affecting their teeth, causing them to be unable to eat or chew correctly.

There are also diseases that whilst the animal may eat normally, they are unable to keep the weight on. These diseases include intestinal parasites, fluke, MV and Johnes disease.

It is difficult to change a ewe's body condition once she is pregnant, the best time to try if body condition is not optimal is over the dry period after weaning, and then this can be assessed pre-mating to ensure that the best ewes are being put forward to the tup. Nutrition and body condition are directly related to fertility. Ewes that have poor nutrition or are under-conditioned will not cycle normally and are less fertile. Increasing the plane of nutrition 2-3 weeks before mating is known as "flushing". Flushing is believed to increase ovulation rate during mating, causing an increase in the number of ewes carrying more than one lamb. Studies have shown that flushing a ewe with a very high or very low body condition has no effect on scanning, so for this to work a ewe needs to be of a BCS between 2 and 4.



Throughout pregnancy BCS should be maintained as much as possible. The ewe will have the highest demand for nutrition during months 4 and 5, as this is when the lambs will grow the most, as well as udder development and lactation beginning. Targets for ewes during late pregnancy are 2.5 for hill breeds, 3.0 for upland and >3 for lowland. Do not try to reduce nutrition for over conditioned ewes as this can result in metabolic disorders such as twin lamb disease. Thin ewes are at high risk for these metabolic disorders, and although there are some concerns about having a large lamb, thin ewes should be separated to allow for higher feed intake to allow for the final stages of lamb growth and milk production.

Lambing with a low body condition reduces the colostrum quality and milk production of the ewe and has been shown to negatively affect maternal behaviour in the ewe. Lambing BCS targets are 2.0 for hill, 2.5 for upland and 3.0 for lowland ewes. This is why it is crucial to ensure the ewes go into pregnancy with a good body condition as condition too high or low can have detrimental effects on both the ewes and lambs, but changing the nutrition to try to fix it during pregnancy can result in more problems.

Ewe Mortality and Culling

Average ewe mortality in the UK is 3-8%. There are a number of different causes for this, and everyone will have the odd ewe die every now and again but when it is more than the odd one it is always good to know why. Knowing what is causing the problems can help prevent anything worse happening in the future. For a vet to perform a postmortem examination on an animal we need the carcass to be as fresh as possible. A lot of changes that happen postmortem to the body can be hard to distinguish from disease. A vet can have a general look at an animal to see if there is anything obvious occurring, but to confirm the cause we often have to send samples off to the lab to confirm a diagnosis.

Culling ewes ensures that only ewes that are fit and health are retained for the next breeding year. The most common causes of culling are:

- body condition score
- Poor milk yield (has done lambs poorly)
- Poor fertility (barren, prolapses or bad lambing)
- Broken mouth or overshot//undershot jaw
- Age
- Udder problems or conformation

Tups

Rams can lose up to 15% of their body weight during the mating period, therefore a body condition of 3.5-4.0 is recommended at tugging time to ensure they have enough reserves. A small amount of concentrate may be needed 6 weeks before tugging time if they are slightly under conditioned to help increase energy and allow for testicular growth and semen production.

Over-fat rams have a reduced libido. The increased fat deposits around the scrotum also increase the temperature in the testicles, reducing semen quality. Pre-tugging checks should be carried out 6-8 weeks before tugging. This should include body condition in addition to, feet, teeth, testicles and general health. If you want to be more confident in your tups ability to work, we can do a more detailed assessment including looking at the semen quality. About 20% of tups have sub-optimal fertility, meaning they may only get some ewes in lamb, or occasionally none at all. Even if a tup has worked previously without problems, any changes to health or weight in the last 12 months may mean that the fertility is not as good as it was last year.

Whilst there are always spanners thrown in the works later down the line, having healthy ewes tugged by healthy rams, you can try to avoid heartache further down the line and get the best returns possible.

INTERESTING CASES

Haemonchus—the worm your sheep really don't want

Bethany Collins

Three older ewes were brought in from the field due to looking off colour in July. They had a typical 'flukey' appearance with the ewes showing the classic 'bottle jaw' appearance. The most severely affected ewe was humanely euthanized due to her poor prognosis and we conducted a post mortem examination on farm. She had very pale membranes and the carcass overall was extremely pale suggesting the ewe was anemic and the abdomen was full of clear fluid – a condition known as ascites. The ewes' liver showed some scarring from previous fluke infection but no current fluke problem. The abomasum (stomach) was opened up and lots of visible worms could be seen swimming in the stomach contents. These worms were identified as *Haemonchus contortus*, or the barber's pole worm. A sample was taken to conduct a faecal egg count to quantify the burden and the result was high! Over 64,000 high! This is due to the fact that female worms produce an astonishing 5,000 -15,000 eggs per day. With adult worms able to drink 0.05ml of blood per day, burdens of 5000 worms can mean a sheep losing 250ml of blood daily. At this rate an adult ewe's entire blood volume can be consumed within 17 days!



Barber pole worms are circled



Historically *Haemonchus* has only been considered a problem in the South East of England and until recent years we have been fortunate up in Cumbria to have avoided seeing this nematode nemesis but it seems this luck is running out. The frequency of reports and the geographical range of the barber's pole worm is on the increase and this will be in part due to favourable weather conditions and sheep movements.

Haemonchosis (the syndrome caused by *Haemonchus* infection) can occur in both adults and lambs. In **acute infections** caused by large numbers of larvae being consumed within a short period of time, animals become weak and are likely to collapse and they often appear to be breathing hard due to the severe anaemia associated with the blood sucking worm. Sudden death is also a common occurrence. Unlike many other worm species – diarrhoea is not often seen and sheep may be slightly constipated. In **sub-acute infections** 'bottle-jaw' results from low protein and is often mistaken for fluke infection. **Chronic infections** are usually less dramatic but still lead to a failure to thrive, weight loss and poor BCS, 'bottle-jaw' and weakness due to anaemia.

When haemonchosis is found on farm, extra monitoring and management is required within the worm control strategy to try and minimise its impact on production and mortality rates. It's thought that adult sheep do not develop a strong immunity to haemonchosis and that ingestion of large numbers of larvae quickly overwhelm the animal's ability to respond. There is also evidence that the parasite is adapting to our climate and management systems by changing its overwintering strategy from surviving within the host as inhibited larvae over winter to one where eggs survive on pasture overwinter and larvae develop fully once ingested the next season.

Treatment

Haemonchus can be treated with most broad-spectrum wormers (white, yellow, clear and orange) as well as narrow-spectrum products that contain closantel (e.g. Flukiver™, Solantel™) and nitroxynil. However, haemonchus has a talent for developing resistance to all the major drug classes and is the most extensively studied trichostrongylid nematode with respect to anthelmintic resistance. The factors that make it particularly adept at developing resistance to wormers include its ability to produce large numbers of eggs and its quick lifecycle in optimum conditions. This means that blanket dosing of all animals within a group is not a sustainable strategy and instead animals must be treated based on risk. The FAMACHA system was developed in South Africa for rapid assessment of the colour of the conjunctival membranes to provide an indicator of the relative anaemia of the animal. Essentially, the pale animals require treatment

Control and management

QUARANTINE

Quarantine treatments are always your first line of defence in preventing problems. Quarantining and treating in-coming sheep will remove susceptible parasites

Anthelmintic treatment – no scab treatment					
	Gold	Silver		Bronze	
4-AD (orange)					
5-SI (purple)					
Mox (oral drench)					
Flukicide treatment					
Clostantel	On arrival		+6 weeks		
Nitroxynil	On arrival		+7 weeks		
Triclabendazole + closantel/nitroxynil	On arrival - TBZ		+ 7 weeks - Clostantel/nitroxynil		

Monitoring Faecal Egg Counts

The first sign that there may be a problem can be an unexpectedly high FEC in ewes or lambs. Monitoring and mapping areas of infection. On farms that are affecting, careful monitoring and mapping of areas where infection levels are high can aid the development of avoidance strategies to reduce exposure

Monitoring stock

Monitoring body condition and using the FAMACHA scoring system to help identify animals that require treatment is the mainstay of control where the parasite is established. Flocks with EID and auto weighing equipment can also monitor for weight change in ewes on a regular basis as this can give an early warnings of an impending challenging.

Vaccination

Barbervax is a commercially available vaccine licensed in parts of Australia and South Africa where it has been used successfully. It includes high levels of antibodies to 'hidden' gut antigens of haemonchus which results in gradual weakening of the adult worms, a reduction of egg shedding and eventual death of the worms. This helps to limit the impact on performance on lambs and sheep. Sheep require three priming doses followed by boosters every six weeks to six months depending on the level of challenge.

KNOWING NORMAL

Helping our smallholders to spot problems quickly

Charlotte Havercroft

Monitoring Livestock Health: Understanding Vital Signs and Preventing Pneumonia

As we approach the winter months, smallholders must remain vigilant in monitoring the health of their livestock. One of the key aspects of maintaining a healthy herd or flock understands the normal vital signs of your animals. Regularly checking temperature and respiration rates can help detect early signs of illness, including pneumonia.

Normal Vital Signs for Common Livestock

Animal	Normal Temperature (°C)	Normal Respiration Rate (Breaths per Minute)
Cows	38.0 - 39.3	26 - 50
Goats	38.3 - 39.9	15 - 30
Sheep	38.3 - 39.9	16 - 34
Alpacas	37.5 - 38.9	10 - 30
Llamas	37.5 - 38.9	10 - 30
Pigs	38.7 - 39.8	15 - 30
Chickens	40.5 - 42.0	15 - 30



Recognizing the Signs of Pneumonia

Pneumonia, an infection of the lungs, can affect all types of livestock, and its risk increases significantly during the colder months. Early detection and prompt treatment are crucial in preventing severe outcomes. Here are some common signs of pneumonia to watch for:

Increased Respiratory Rate: One of the first signs of pneumonia is an increase in breathing rate, which can be accompanied by labored breathing or difficulty in catching breath.

Fever: Elevated body temperature is a hallmark of infection. If your animal's temperature is above the normal range indicated in the table, it could be a sign of pneumonia or another infection.

Coughing: Persistent coughing, particularly in a group of animals, can be an early indicator of respiratory infection. It may sound moist or dry, depending on the stage of the disease.

Lethargy and Depression: Animals with pneumonia often appear depressed, with decreased appetite, reluctance to move, and general lethargy.

Nasal Discharge: Clear nasal discharge may progress to a thicker, discolored mucus, often a sign that the infection is worsening.

Isolation from the Herd or Flock: Sick animals may separate themselves from the group, appearing disinterested in usual activities.

Risk Factors for Pneumonia in Winter

Several factors contribute to the increased risk of pneumonia during winter. Cold temperatures can suppress the immune system, making animals more susceptible to infections. Ensure adequate shelter to protect livestock from extreme cold and wind. Poor Ventilation can definitely contribute to pneumonia in our herds and flocks. While shelter is important, good ventilation is crucial to prevent the build up of moisture and ammonia in barns, which can irritate the respiratory tract and predispose animals to pneumonia. Overcrowded conditions can increase the spread of respiratory pathogens. Ensure animals have enough space to avoid close contact and reduce stress. Rapid changes in temperature, such as cold nights following warmer days, can stress animals and increase the risk of pneumonia.

Stressful events such as weaning and transportation can increase the chances of an animal suffering from pneumonia; Young or recently weaned animals are particularly vulnerable to pneumonia due to stress and exposure to new pathogens.