



Mastering Medicines Monday 6th March 2023

10am

Kendal Surgery



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PRACTICE NEWS

KENDAL ○ KIRKBY LONSDALE ○ ULVERSTON

March 2023

As I write, a rare sunny day is upon us, with a nice dry spell forecast as we roll into March. A dry lambing would go down well, or better than it did last year. We saw a dramatic reduction in the use of watery-mouth preventative antibiotics. In part this was due to reduced availability and the discontinuing of manufacture of previous mainstay products. Mainly though, this was due to the awareness amongst farmers and shepherds that hygiene at lambing time is



next to godliness- massively helped along by dry and cool weather to reduce the growth chances of the troublesome cause of watery-mouth, namely *E. coli*. This year's extra conundrum is the reduced availability of strong iodine (usually 10%) as a navel dressing for lambs. There are work arounds, but please discuss these with a farm vet, as not all apparent options are equal and some of them may not work very well at all. As a fundamental treatment at birth that can impact on the whole economic output of the lamb, it's worth taking a short amount of time to make sure that you're on the right track.

A near identical philosophy can be applied to cattle at calving too, with the number of sucklers due to calve in the next couple of months set to rise, and the price of beef animals as stores of larger being quite buoyant at present (apart from the dairy-bred calf prices which are scandalously low when you see what margins get to on them further down the line). Over the last year or two we have seen an increase in rotavirus diarrhoea, despite there now being several vaccines which are licensed for its prevention. Controlling rotavirus in a dairy herd is a bit more complicated, so we'll stick to suckler calves here. The vaccine induces an antibody response in the cow which means that her colostrum is rich with antibodies against rotavirus. As the calf gets a good dose of colostrum as soon as it's born, then this sets it up well to fend off any challenge, or suffer reduced and less debilitating symptoms if the infection challenge is high. The vaccine needs to be given at the right time of pregnancy (that might be *now!*) and into a healthy cow that then goes on to suckle the calf with a good amount of colostrum. If you get scours in your calves that are a bit of a mystery, then a bit of investigation can translate to a more satisfying job and a bit more brass further down the line.

Richard Knight

Ben Harvey

CALF SCOUR

Neonatal Calf Diarrhoea, commonly called Calf Scour, is the most common cause of death in calves under 7 days. In the UK and Ireland up to 15% of calves are affected by scour, with around 3% of all calves born dying from the condition.

Scour is a multifactorial disease, meaning that there are many aspects of the calf's environment and management which affect the level of scour on any farm. There are several infectious causes.

Cryptosporidium parvum

'Crypto', as it is widely known, is the most common infectious cause. While we usually think of infections as caused by bacteria or viruses, crypto is neither. It is a single-celled parasite called a **Protozoa**. This has implications in which medicines are effective in its control – *not many*.

The source of infection for calves is faeces, either from the adult cow, who may carry the parasite in her gut, or contaminated housing from previous calves. Calves are usually infected during the first week of life and scour follows an incubation period of 3 – 5 days. This means calves with Crypto will usually be seen to **start scouring at about 1 week of age**.

Research shows that up to 90% of calves will have been exposed to Crypto by the time they are weaned, therefore it is almost guaranteed to be present on your farm.

There are no medicines which 'cure' Crypto infections. **Halofuginone** and **Paromycin** reduce parasite multiplication inside the calf and so hopefully reduce duration of the scour and environmental contamination. However they do have side effects and need to be used with care.

There are no vaccines against Crypto.

In a healthy well-fed calf, Crypto is unlikely to be fatal - in fact the signs may be quite mild. If, however, the calf's immune system is under pressure for any reason, such as poor colostrum intake, cold environment, or an excessive pathogen challenge, then the resulting disease will be much more severe, and deaths will ensue.

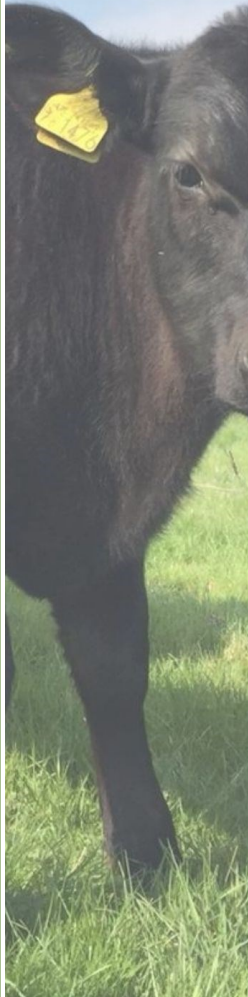
E.Coli (Enterotoxigenic, or E.T.E.C.)

E.coli is the **only common bacterial cause** of neonatal calf diarrhoea (Salmonella can cause diarrhoea in the young calf but requires specific management due to the potential severity of the infection and the risk to people)

There are many different types of E. coli. The one which causes scour is called E. coli K99. Once attached to the intestinal surface this bacteria release a toxin which causes leakage of fluid into the gut resulting in diarrhoea, dehydration and acidosis.

Yet again, the scour can be mild or severe, depending on all the usual factors. The **severely affected calves are usually less than 48 hours old**. Only about **5% of diagnosed cases** of scour are due to E.T.E.C.

On farms where scour is proving more difficult to manage we should consider the use of a bovine concentrated lactoserum (**Locatim**). A 60 ml oral dose contains a protective quota of antibodies specifically against the causes of calf scour. When given to a new-born calf immediately after birth it boosts the immune protection. The normal cow's colostrum feed is given afterwards as it is not a replacer. This will protect the new-born calves in the face of an outbreak while the control measures are actioned.

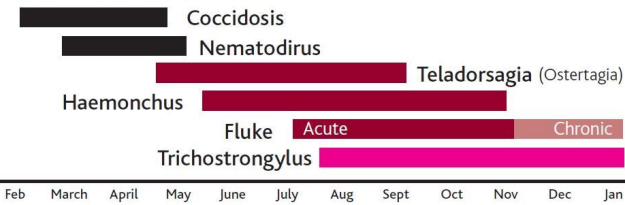


Sheep News

Scouring lambs

Well, spring is supposed to be here and there are lambs everywhere. Having got them safely through their first few weeks of life, it is really disheartening to see them with scour. But what causes scour in young growing lambs and what can you do about it? As you can see from the diagram below, early on in the season coccidia or even cryptosporidia are more likely to be causing scour than nematodiarus so it is important to get an accurate diagnosis as the treatment for each disease is very different.

When parasites threaten



Coccidiosis and cryptosporid-ia are spread quickly if lambs are feeding around contaminated troughs so if possible move troughs frequently and keep them free of faecal contamination. Both parasites are fairly resistant and can survive for long periods on

the ground and in buildings. It is a bit too early in the season to be able to predict when nematodiarus larvae are likely to peak this year but keep an eye on the NADIS forecast later this month on the SCOPs website.

Sheep Scab



We are seeing more of the dreaded sheep scab this spring and treating sheep around lambing time is a real headache. Diagnosis can be a challenge as it is sometimes hard to find mites even on the scabbiest sheep. The scab lesions are caused by an allergic reaction to the mites' saliva and sheep very in their response to this allergen which eans even sheep who look OK may wekk be infested. There is now a blood test available in our armoury which is proving helpful. Dipping sheep is the best way to treat the mite – showering is not as effective as making sure the dip is at the right concentration and that it reaches into the sheep's ears where mites can lurk is virtually impossible. It is possible to use clear wormers to

control the disease but you have to be sure EVERY sheep is injected correctly and for some products it is vital that sheep are put onto a 'clean' pasture which hasn't had sheep on it for at least 17 days. There is also the risk that using a wormer in every sheep at this time of year will hasten gut worm resistance to the this class of anthelmintics. If you are concerned about itching in your sheep – give us a call

Judith Lee