

Treatment

- A rumen trocar is likely to be needed to manage the recurrent symptoms.
 - Alternatively, a surgical rumen fistula can be performed.
 - Managing pneumonia incidence
- Thoracic Ultrasound Scanning (TUS) can be used as a tool to identify those calves at risk and aid with early detection of pneumonia.

If you have any concerns about bloat in calves, please contact one of the team, who will be happy to help address the cause and advise the best treatment.

Cara Hatfield

Pneumonia Vaccination

Autumnal weather and animals coming back into housing are two of the biggest contributing factors in developing pneumonia in calves. Now is the time to act to limit the challenge on your farm. Please talk to the farm vet team about which pneumonia vaccination and protocol will be most suited for your system. Once you have decided which vaccines will be best for you please give us a call so we can get them ordered for you.



We can mostly look back on the summer of 2022 as a good one for the weather in the North West, having had a good chance to replenish those silage clamps and build up a good stock for the housing season and forthcoming winter. As you all know, the rest of the country has not been so fortunate. A good dose of vitamin D, helped along by the sunshine, does wonders for our souls too and happy farmers = happy animals! By now, most cattle will be inside and it's a good chance to check lame animals for any stone damage which may have occurred when they were outside - 10 minutes popping a stone out now and trimming out the grot is infinitely more rewarding than a protracted course of medicines that is more likely to result in failure in the end. This is for both parties involved, remember happy animals = happy farmers!

Most tups will also be bought, with many in use already. If you've any doubt as to whether they're working or not, then get us to check them out, that's if you haven't had them semen tested already.

The same procedure applies to bulls as well, with breeding time being now for those of you that want to calve in July onwards. We have had a few bulls recently that were not up to scratch in terms of their sperm numbers and movement. These were picked up after there were suspicions that too many cows were coming over, and in good time so that it was not too late to do anything about it. If you are not able to confidently know that your cows are holding and showing no repeat heats then it is really good practice to have the bull checked out before he is released into the cows. Indeed it is good practice to do this anyway and nationally it is becoming more common to have a pre-breeding check, or even a pre-sale check for those that are selling breeding bulls at auction.

Good luck to all those serving cows and we look forward to loads of PD positives soon!



The Current Trials and Tribulations of Sheep Vaccines

As some sheep farmers will be aware, there is a noticeable lack of certain vaccines that have been used successfully in the control of commonly encountered diseases. Toxoplasmosis and Footrot, and vaccines against abortion and lameness aid the fight against two diseases that cause significant losses in the industry. The breakdown in supply of the vaccines licensed for the use of controlling them is inconvenient to say the least. In the absence of these products we therefore have to revisit the principles of good biosecurity and other methods of control.

The Five point Plan

The Five (currently four) Point Plan has been highly successful on farms that have implanted it as the strategies work together to control and reduce lameness.



- Cull repeat offenders – adopt a ‘three strikes and your out policy’. This will help you to select sheep that have better natural genetics
- Promptly identify, quarantine and appropriately treat lame individuals – This will decrease the disease challenge to your flock by quickly removing the source of infection and effectively getting rid of it.
- Quarantine any newly purchased animals for a minimum of four weeks to make sure they are not harbouring disease that could then be introduced to your flock.

To discuss any lameness issues you are having, good foot bathing procedures or lameness control in more detail contact a member of the Farm team.

Toxoplasma Abortion

To understand how best to prevent toxoplasma abortion in the absence of a vaccine, it's important to think about the lifecycle of the parasite. Cats become infected by eating an animal, usually birds or rodents that are themselves infected and contains tissue cysts. The cat begins to produce oocysts and pass them in their faeces, but only for a period of about 8 days - after this time they generally do not excrete oocysts again. Unfortunately, the oocysts can survive for months on pasture, grain, hay or water. If this is consumed by an in lamb ewe it can trigger an infection of the developing foetus and cause abortion and weak neonatal lambs.

The primary control measure is therefore centred on preventing this contact between sheep and cat faeces. Feedstuffs and bedding materials should be secure, and not accessible to cats. Whilst some farms do not have cats at all, many do for the purpose of vermin control or as pets. In these cases it is prudent to neuter cats to prevent litters of kittens, as it is mainly young cats that are susceptible to toxoplasma infection and they cause large levels of contamination.

Bethany Collins

Ruminal Bloat in Calves

Ruminal bloat is seen when there is an enlargement of the rumen causing a distention of the left side of the abdomen. Occasionally, if severe the distention can be observed on both sides of the abdomen. Bloat can be both acute or chronic. In very young calves, the part of the stomach that can bloat is the abomasum, which is responsible for milk digestion. Whether acute or chronic, bloat can become life threatening by interfering with calf's ability to breath and should always be treated promptly.



Causes of Bloat

Frothy Bloat

Usually caused by ingestion of lush pastures containing legumes or clover and is typically found in grazing cattle, however this can occur in young calves if they have developed peritonitis. Due to the production of small bubbles and a froth within the rumen with this type of bloat, it can not be treated with a stomach tube alone.

Treatment

- Move cattle from the pasture.
- Drench/stomach tube with an ‘anti-foaming agent’ such as vegetable oil or silicone/piloxaene drench.
- A rumen trocar may be required in some cases.

Free Gas Bloat

This is the accumulation of gas within the rumen and is associated with any obstruction that means the calf cannot eructate. In calves, issues with the oesophageal groove (the structure that allows milk to go directly into the abomasum) and subsequent fermentation of milk within the rumen leads to ruminal bloat. This often occurs 30 minutes after a milk feed, particularly if bucket fed, and calves are usually otherwise healthy

Treatment

- Stomach tube to relieve the gas
- A rumen trocar may be required in some cases.
- Ensure good feeding practices
 - Avoid feeding excessive amounts of milk in one feed.
 - Avoid feeding cold milk/ milk replacer.
 - Ensure there is good colostrum intake.
 - Ensure there is access to water.
 - Establish a consistent feeding strategy.



Chronic Bloat in Calves

This is often seen as a sporadic problem in weaned calves and has been linked to cases of pneumonia, where enlarged lymph nodes in the thorax interfere with the vagus nerve, which acts on the calf stomachs. Calves that have been treated inappropriately with oral antibiotics for infections or diarrhoea, have an abnormal rumen microflora which can lead to chronic cases of free - gas bloat.

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