

Well the wet weather has seems to have set in and people are in a quandary with the fields still being full of grass, but its too wet under foot. Some have also been struggling to get the maize in.

We seem to be having a run of uterine torsions in the practice, some of which are a simple untwist, some a roll of the cow and others having to be a caesarean section. Certain farms seem to be getting runs of them which has led to theories of dry cows getting 'jostled' when going up to the feed face. Any other ideas much appreciated; but no the farmers haven't been rolling their cows down hills!

A note for dairies with TB tests coming up that Johnes testing should not be done until 60 days after the TB test or you will get inaccurate results with a higher level of false positives. Milk recorders normally pick this up, but it has slipped through a couple of times and makes for scary Johnes results!

I have dealt with a few BVD breakdowns over the last few months which has caused problems with calf health in these circumstances. If you vaccinate please make sure that you are following protocols correctly, and that goes for IBR vaccines too. For those herds coming up to breeding please ensure all heifers are fully vaccinated BEFORE being served.

Claire



Beware of Woolly Lumps—Caseous Lymphadenitis (*Sarah*)

CLA is caused by the bacterium *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis*. This is an infectious bacterial disease and survives in environment for many weeks, and therefore be spread on both shared equipment and by buying in stock. Shearing – due to the skin nicks and scrapes, and sharing of equipment and mixing rams – their fighting wounds are two big risk factors for spreading the disease.

The bacteria causes abscessation of the superficial lymph nodes particularly the parotid (base of the ear), submandibular (below the jaw), popliteal (hindleg), precrucal (hindleg), and prescapular (foreleg) lymph nodes. When these sites are infected it is referred to as the cutaneous or superficial form of CLA. Clinical signs may only be noticed if the enlarged glands compress the airways, or the abscesses burst. It can spread to the lymph nodes within the chest and internal organs including lungs, spleen, kidneys and liver, causing the more serious 'visceral' or internal form of CLA.

The prevalence of infection increases with age and in sheep kept under intensive management conditions, and is mainly seen in pedigree flocks however it is now becoming more widespread in commercial flocks. Treatment is often unsuccessful as the bacteria 'hides out within cells' and forms a fibrous capsule surrounding the lesions. Lancing the abscesses only results in contamination of the environment thus increasing the potential for disease spread. So think about this before you interfere! Abscesses frequently recur after drainage and lavage with antiseptics, and response to antibiotics is very poor. Affected animals should be culled as soon as possible.

Disease prevention centres on good biosecurity measures. The use of shared shearing equipment, and other handling facilities such as mobile plunge dippers and feeders as vectors for disease, must be carefully considered. However, disease risks are highest from purchased animals which must be inspected before purchase. Ideally the stock would be quarantined for at least two months, and thoroughly inspected for signs of lesions. There are some blood tests available, but their use is limited in practice. Remember its buyer beware – as for all infectious diseases – ask questions about a flocks history and examine your purchases and **QUARANTINE** them!!



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Did you know? (Sarah)

Sheepish Eyes

Sheep have excellent peripheral vision. Their large, rectangular pupils allow them to see almost 360 degrees. In fact, they can see pretty much behind themselves without turning their heads! What a brilliant excuse for my failed attempts to capture my woolly patients in the future!



Calf pneumonia (Claire)

The average losses in every calf with pneumonia are £82 / suckler calf and £43 /dairy calf². The main costs in the event of a pneumonia outbreak are not only related to actual treatment costs, but also to reduced levels of performance, increased mortality and higher labour requirements. Research has also shown that where an animal suffers from pneumonia, this animal took between 22 days and 2 months longer to finish when compared with an animal that did not suffer the disease³. Good respiratory health is critical on growth rates and ensuring that animals achieve their lifetime potential. The long term losses associated with pneumonia in young pre-weaned calves cannot be recovered even in spite of compensatory feeding. These losses in dairy heifer calves are associated with significantly reduced lactation yields in later life, along with prolonged finishing times and lowered carcass quality in beef cattle. Therefore, whether suckled or reared, calves that don't grow effectively in early weeks are unlikely to ever catch up.

There are many vaccines on the market to help combat pneumonia. One that is relatively new to the market is HIPRABOVIS[®] SOMNI/Lkt. This offers protection against Pasteurella pneumonia bacteria known as *Mannheimia haemolytica* A1 leukotoxoid and *Histophilus somni* (can cause calves that appear sleepy). These bacteria are known to cause severe and fatal pneumonia, and in doing so compromise animal welfare. There is also increasing awareness of *Histophilus somni* as a cause of infertility in breeding heifers/cows. HIPRABOVIS[®] SOMNI/Lkt is the only licensed vaccine in Europe offering combined protection against these two bacteria and which can lead to a reduction up to 80% in antibiotic treatments needed⁴.



It must be noted that vaccination alone will not solve your pneumonia problem. Environment, management practices, colostrum management etc all need to be addressed when conducting a pneumonia investigation. If coughing calves are a problem on your farm then please let one us know and we can chat through the strategies to help you overcome it.

Pain relief for Cows and sheep (Megan)

Calves

Just a reminder that disbudding and castrating calves by any method IS a painful procedure and pain relief must be provided. The law states that only a vet can castrate a calf which is more than 2 months old and local anaesthetic must be used for this and also for disbudding calves. Disbudding by any method causes pain in the short AND long term, local anaesthetics will help with the immediate pain relief but what about the longer standing pain which the calves experience? We would very much encourage the use of NSAIDs (anti-inflammatories) such as Metacam to help with the chronic pain that these calves experience which will cause behavioural changes in these animals.

We would encourage the use of polled breeds to reduce the need for disbudding; sexed semen so that fewer animals need castrating wherever possible. The British Veterinary Association encourage the use of local anaesthetic and NSAIDs for all castration and disbudding.

Sheep

Sheep must be castrated at less than 7 days old by a trained person. For animals who have a case of mastitis, are severely lame, have a temperature or have interventions at lambing we would encourage a dose of pain relief e.g. Metacam. Although no pain relief is licensed in sheep we are able to prescribe it via the cascade and very much encourage its use upon welfare grounds.



Picture from FWI