



**Daleside**  
Veterinary Group

# FARM NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2019

## Christmas Party

**ANNUAL FARMERS CHRISTMAS PARTY**

Twitter: @DalesideFarmVet  
Facebook: @DalesideFarm

Please RSVP to [lauren@dalesidevets.co.uk](mailto:lauren@dalesidevets.co.uk) or contact the practice by calling 01978 311444

**LOCATION**  
Holt Lodge Hotel,  
LL13 9SW

**DATE**  
12th December 2019

**TIME**  
7:30pm

*Beer and Supper provided*

**Daleside**  
Veterinary Group

## Sheep Meeting

Our next sheep meeting in January will be looking at ways to reduce disease build up around lambing time. Please contact Lauren in the office for further details.

## Farming Connect Clinics - Beef and Sheep

If you are registered with Farming Connect you can qualify for a grant worth up to £250 for lab testing for a range of things from infectious disease, worm egg counts, fluke testing, pneumonia diagnostics and fertility testing.

The grant is only available until the end of January and there is a limited number of allocated funds. Please speak to a member of the team today about how we can help you best utilise these funds on your farm.

## Lambing assistant needed:

One of our clients based between Wrexham and Whitchurch is looking for a lambing assistant from February, ideally with some experience of lambing. They can set working hours to fit around family or other work commitments. If anyone is interested, speak to Guy for more details.



## CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR OFFICE HOURS

Christmas Eve 8.30am – 2.00pm

Christmas Day Closed

Boxing Day Closed

31st December 8.30am – 2.00pm

1st January Closed

If you require veterinary assistance outside office hours please contact the duty vet on 01978 311 444



# Calf Pneumonia

Pneumonia is the term used to describe inflammation of the lung tissue and airways, thereby reducing the ability of the animal to breathe adequately.

Whilst the infectious causes are viral and bacterial, the term bovine respiratory disease complex illustrates that the disease is multi-factorial.

Causal factors include:

- Poor colostrum intake
- Stocking density: mixed ages in same airspace
- Environment: damp, draughts, stale air
- Stress: dehorning, castration, group movements
- Buying-in policy: mixed sources, unknown health status
- Inadequate nutrition
- Infection: viruses (IBR, RSV, Pi3 +/- BVD); bacteria (*Mycoplasma bovis*, *Pasteurella*, *Mannheimia* and *Haemophilus*)

Pneumonia is estimated to cost the UK cattle industry £80 million annually. The immediate expense of treatment is tangible, but the impact on food intakes, food conversion efficiency and live weight gain are often overlooked. Outwardly healthy in-contact animals will also be affected: for every animal showing symptoms it is likely that double will have diseased lungs.

A dairy heifer calf affected by pneumonia is likely to suffer a two-week delay to first service and 2–4% reduction in yield in her first lactation. In beef animals, carcase quality will be reduced. In reality, the loss of future performance is the biggest cost of pneumonia.

## Symptoms

Sick calves show a combination of coughing, nasal discharge and increased breathing rate/effort, will appear depressed and be slow to feed. Severely affected animals may die despite treatment. A raised temperature ( $>39.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  /  $103^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) is an early sign of infection and should be acted on quickly, as early treatment is likely to be more successful.



## Treatment

Sick animals should be treated with an appropriate antibiotic (speak to your vet): whilst many causes of pneumonia are viral, secondary bacterial infections are commonplace. An anti-inflammatory will reduce lung inflammation and restore growth rates more quickly. It is worth also considering treating all animals in contact – pneumonia is infectious, and whole-group treatments often result in lower overall antibiotic use, as well as better live weight gains.

## Investigation

This should start by understanding general farm management.

Colostrum management should be assessed by testing baby calves for IgG (immunity) levels, especially if cases are seen in calves  $<1$  month old. Infectious agents can be identified, either by 'lung washes' of very early cases, or blood tests at the end of the housing period. Housing should also be assessed. Three essential considerations to help reduce challenge from any diseases, not least pneumonia:

1. **Too much moisture** favours bacterial/viral growth and hence disease. It also absorbs energy, so what you feed will be keeping stock warm rather than fuelling weight gain. Young animals will also be more disease-prone.



2. **Lack of fresh air** increases survival time of airborne bugs, further increasing the risk of disease. Noxious gases may build up.

3. **Excessive air speed** (draughts) – particularly at calf level – is associated with energy losses, reduced growth rates and increased risk of disease. Too little results in lack of fresh air.

## Vaccination

Many pneumonia vaccines are available. Selection should take into account the likely diseases involved, how early the vaccine can be administered, how quickly and for what duration protection is required. They should be administered several weeks before the main risk period. Vaccines are valuable in controlling pneumonia but are not a substitute for good management.

**We now offer a new service to help you keep track of calf pneumonia vaccination schedules.**

**There are 3 options:**

1. A monthly delivery of the vaccine doses you will require each month. We will contact you to confirm the number of doses needed before the delivery. This is a free service.

2. Using BCMS data, we identify all the calves eligible for vaccination on your farm, deliver the appropriate number of doses together with a list of which calves to vaccinate. This is a free service.

3. Using BCMS data, we identify all the calves eligible for vaccination and visit your farm every 2 weeks to vaccinate those calves.

This service costs just £2 per calf plus cost of vaccine. Please contact the office on 01978 311444 for further details.



## Calf Pneumonia

### *Key points*

- Pneumonia is a 'perfect storm' of bacteria/ viruses, immunity and the environment.
- Treatment costs of affected calves are the tip of the iceberg.
- Prevention is vastly better than cure – lung damage will affect productivity for life.
- Early treatment is more successful and should include antibiotic and anti-inflammatories.
- The solution is not held within a bottle of antibiotic – please involve your vet and look at the bigger picture.





## Healthy Calves Make Healthy Heifers!

Many clients are realising the benefits of monitoring their calves and intervening when problems are spotted early using our Daleside Calf Club. Focusing on youngstock husbandry reduces mortality and improves the health and profitability of the adult herd. Better grown, healthier calves reduce rearing costs and improve herd performance.

Membership of Daleside Calf Club provides a specialist youngstock management package tailored to the farm with regular monitoring and ongoing evaluation.

## Members receive:

- Annual vet assessment of calf management on the farm, with advice on making practical cost effective improvements
- fortnightly visits to weigh calves and assess their colostrum intake status, as well as administering pneumonia vaccine to eligible calves
- monthly report on calf development, highlighting issues before they become real problems
- Quarterly group meetings and discussions on calf health topics



FARM  
t. 01978 311 444

WREXHAM  
t. 01978 311 881

PENYFFORDD  
t. 01244 543 211

SHOTTON  
t. 01244 830 065

Daleside Vets,  
Main Road, Rhosrobin,  
Wrexham, LL11 4RL  
t. 01978 311 444

