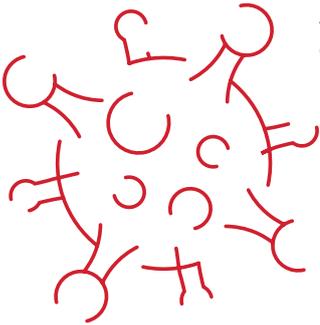


COVID update



As everyone is aware, the Coronavirus outbreak is rapidly changing. We are putting a huge amount of time and effort into planning contingencies to ensure we can continue to provide you with the

best possible service in these troubling times while maintaining the safety of our practice team.

To minimise the time you will need to spend at the surgery, and to reduce direct contact with the team, we ask that if you need any veterinary medicines please can you contact us by phone before 12pm. This enables us to prepare your order ready for you to collect it later that afternoon from the secure collection box outside the practice.

Pneumonia

Winter is coming, and that means pneumonia season for a lot of producers. However, pneumonia in calves should not just be accepted as a normal part of winter and there are various things we can do to reduce the risk, which not only mean better calf welfare but also less money being spent on treatments and poor performance.

So, how do you spot if a calf has pneumonia? Clinical signs can be subtle to start. It can sometimes be hard to spot the sick calf until

the problem is severe. Other conditions such as lungworm and IBR can cause similar clinical signs, so it is important to diagnose the causative agent. Generally, a cough will develop, calves will become quiet, perhaps have heavy breathing and then become dull, lie down more, develop nasal and ocular discharge, develop a temperature, go off their food and this can lead to death. We would recommend assessing calves once a day for signs of disease. This is really important in order to spot signs early.

Vaccination can be used to maximise resistance to pneumonia. The full course must be given before the risk period for vaccination to work. A clear protocol should be in place; define the high-risk period, think about timings for the first and second dose and also think about timings for boosters. Please contact the practice today if you are thinking about pneumonia vaccination, we offer a vaccine service or we can even set up reminders as to which calves need to be vaccinated and when. Vaccination is not a magic bullet; calf nutrition and the environment have to be right as well. However, vaccination can be an important part of pneumonia control. There are currently Farming Connect Clinics available (subject to COVID regulation rules at the time)



which can be used for determining the cause of pneumonia on your farm.

The correct vaccination regime can then be put in place based on the bugs you have on your farm. Please speak to a member of the team today if you would like to make use of the funding. Don't miss out.

Pneumonia risk isn't the only obstacle facing calves in the winter. Lower temperatures results in extra energy being used up to keep warm, often enough calves struggle to maintain their current weight let alone grow. Many dairy calves are not fed enough in early life even in the summer let alone in the winter and are chronically undernourished. Mix pneumonia risk into the equation and winter can become a real struggle for calf rearers. Monitoring calf weights and health is vital in the first few months of life. We have a dedicated service at the practice called 'calf club' which helps you to do this. Monthly reports on both growth and health and regular meetings for members means that calves receive focussed attention, problems can be spotted early and solutions implemented before issues grow. Please speak to a member of the team today who will be more than happy to discuss the calf club with you. Remember that your heifer calves are your new dairy replacements. All too often, calves get forgotten but they are your future; invest in them!

The importance of colostrum cannot be stressed enough for general calf health. Antibodies in colostrum protect the calf until it can protect itself, these antibodies include those which fight pneumonia bugs. Testing calves to see if colostrum intake on your farm is right couldn't be simpler. We simply need to come a take some blood samples from calves aged 24 hours- 6 days old. It doesn't take us long to look at the sample back at the practice to determine if your calves are receiving enough colostrum. Poor colostrum intake could be due to simply not enough of a volume getting into calves quickly enough or could be due to poor colostrum quality in the first place. It is easy for you to monitor colostrum quality on farm. All it takes is a cheap simple bit of equipment; please ask a member of the farm team who will be more than happy to give you some advice.

For those cows who do not produce enough colostrum or for those who produce poor quality

colostrum, it is important to have a store of good quality colostrum; either in the form of frozen colostrum or in the form of freeze dried powdered colostrum. Beware of powdered colostrum; there are plenty on the market but many do not contain any antibodies at all. We have sachets of excellent quality, disease free, powdered colostrum rich in antibodies available to purchase at the practice. For those 2am calvings or for those cows which do not produce enough, good quality colostrum, it couldn't be easier to mix up one of these sachets to provide the calf with that vital first feed.

If you are worried about the upcoming winter season and the health of your calves, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the farm team who will be more than happy to give you some advice!



Action johne's

For our Dairy clients it's that time of year again! Action Johne's seeks to manage and reduce the incidence of Johne's disease on our farms. Remember to return your completed and signed declarations to your milk purchaser, contact the office in good time to get this arranged.

