

Christmas Party 2023

Merry Christmas! It would be great to see you at our annual Christmas Party, which will be held on Tuesday 12th December, 7:30pm at The Wrexham Rugby Club. Please let us know if you are intending on attending by Friday 8th December.

Christmas opening hours

22nd December - Normal office hours 8.30am-5.30pm

23rd December - Normal Saturday morning office hours 8.30am-1pm

24th/25th/26th December - Emergency service

27th December - Back to normal office hours 8.30am-5.30pm

1st January - Emergency service

Our medicine delivery service every Tuesday and Friday is largely unaffected by the holidays, however, there will be no deliveries on the 26th of December. To manage the increased demand, our delivery service will now be leaving the practice earlier on delivery days, and so please get your orders in before the end of the previous day to help us ensure we have what you need in stock, and to get your order to you. If you are collecting medicine from the practice, please ring before hand to ensure we have sufficient stock to minimise your waiting times.

New TB regulations

From February 2024 there will be new regulations introduced in the Low and Intermediate regions of Wales.

- Pre-movement testing will be reintroduced into the Low TB Area of Wales (LTBA)
- Cattle moving into the Intermediate TB Area from the High TB area of Wales, the High Risk Area of England and from Northern Ireland will need a post-movement test 60-120d after arrival on farm.
- In TB breakdown herds, whole milk fed to calves must be pasteurised

To discuss these changes further, please speak to one of our Vets.

Bluetongue update

Since the newsletter last month, bluetongue cases have been confirmed in the UK. Currently the three cases are isolated to the south-east and all have been within the 10km of one another. We will keep you informed of the latest developments.

EU Animal Health Regulations

Changes to EU regulations EU Animal Health Regulations require farms producing animals for export to the EU to have regular veterinary visits.

A temporary measure allowed farmers to self-declare, but from 13 December 2023 UK producers sending animals to market or to slaughter must be able to demonstrate that a veterinary visit has taken place in the past 12 months.

At least some portion of most carcasses is exported which means that most farm businesses will need to ensure compliance. If you are a member of Red Tractor or FAWL farm assurance schemes then you will already meet the requirements and no further action is needed.

If you are not a member of one of these farm assurance schemes then please contact the office on 01978 311444 to arrange a visit for the completion of a declaration form.





Post-weaning calves



Calf management is instrumental to produce quality replacement for the future. Often there is a big emphasis on calf health pre-weaning, but this can be neglected post-weaning. The first few weeks after weaning are one of the most stressful periods, as they adjust to a big diet shift. Good performance and health during this time can set the stage for an efficient and profitable cow for the future.

Weaning should be done gradually by reducing milk over a period of ideally 3 weeks. This will increase concentrate intakes, avoid a growth check after weaning and minimise weaning distress. Reducing milk can be done by reducing the volume of milk fed per feed and reducing the number of feeds per day. Calves should be eating at least 2kg of concentrates before weaning and continued to be offered ad lib after weaning with a combination of chopped straw in a feeder rack and not just off bedding.

Stress at weaning affects a calf's immune system for at least two weeks after weaning. This can make calves more susceptible to disease, particularly pneumonia, and can reduce growth rates. To reduce stress, make no changes to housing, feed, water or social groups for two weeks after weaning. Also avoid stressful procedures around weaning, such as vaccination, disbudding and castration.

One of the biggest causes of production losses post-weaning is coccidiosis. This is the main cause of diarrhoea in older calves and young growing stock. Coccidiosis is caused by the parasite species *Eimeria* which localises itself in the small intestines, cecum and colon. Bovine coccidiosis occurs mostly indoors from contaminated environments, particularly when conditions are moist and warm.



Most infected calves show no clinical signs. The animal appears healthy but have some oocytes (eggs) in the faeces. Subclinical infection results in decreased growth that may not be regained – this is the most common coccidial side-effect, and there are no other clinical signs. However, it has the potential to cause diarrhoea, with the calf becoming dull with a poor coat and significantly reduced growth rate. These clinical signs are usually seen 16-23 days after infection but can be within a few days depending on the coccidial species. Due to the damage caused to the small intestines, decreased weight gain can remain for at least the first grazing season and might be seen as poor performing youngstock.



Diagnosis is based on clinical signs and looking for the presence of oocytes in faeces. This can be done at the practice for quick turn around times. When it comes to the treatment of coccidiosis we have several options, mostly dependent on management practices on the farm. Treatment is available in oral drench, lick buckets or in feed medication. Speak to one of the team about which option would be most beneficial on your farm. Coccidiosis is difficult to reliably control because oocytes numbers rapidly increase in suitable conditions. However, it is usually a management problem from over-crowding and a contaminated environment. Some ammonia-based disinfectants kill the oocytes but can only be used in areas vacated by animals. For many farms, coccidiosis is only controllable through medication.



Another big production loss at this stage in the calves' lives is pneumonia. Pneumonia can present itself in various forms but ultimately will lead to reduced growth rate and even death. As always, prevention is better than cure and careful preparation and planning is instrumental to this. Pneumonia is influenced heavily by the environment, ensuring air-flow and not overcrowding are the basis of these management options. Vaccination can also play an integral part in the calf's defence. These vary in duration of action, onset time and the pathogens they protect against. To ensure the best option on your farm, testing is recommended prior to implementing a vaccine protocol to ensure we are protecting the calves against the correct pathogens.



To discuss calf health, please contact the office on 0198 311444 and speak to one of our vets.

