

Calf Pneumonia

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As we look ahead to winter housing it seems appropriate to consider the common issue of calf pneumonia. This important disease can cause an average loss of **£80** per suckler calf in an outbreak. However, the obvious costs of drugs, vet visits and loss of calves is only the tip of the iceberg. Calf pneumonia leads to a reduction in growth rate and feed conversion efficiency leading to increased times to finishing, increased feeding cost and reduced carcass quality. Even in cases that recover, abscesses can form in the lungs and disease can reoccur as an adult when the body is under stress, often around calving time.

Primary pathogens, usually viruses but also *Mycoplasma bovis*, initiate disease and the resulting damage allow opportunistic bacteria to set up secondary infections. The defences of the respiratory tract can also be compromised by dehydration, dust and ammonia making them less effective in removing viruses and bacteria.

Calves are better able to fight disease when they are less stressed. **Stress** can be caused by a variety of factors including poor colostrum intake, inadequate trace element status, social stress from mixing different management groups and high stocking rates. Environmental factors such as wet bedding, draughts at animal level and dusty air from poor ventilation can all make animals more likely to develop disease and make existing disease worse.



Effective control of calf pneumonia is a complex issue and involves many factors. The interaction of these factors means that control of any one factor in isolation won't effectively tackle the disease, they must be tackled together.

The primary pathogens involved can vary from farm to farm and diagnostic tests e.g. blood samples or nasal swabs may be useful to determine which pathogens are causing the problem on your farm and guide treatment or preventative vaccination options. Vaccination increases the calves' immunity and reduces the disease challenge as vaccination reduces the amount of virus the calves breathe out, hence reducing viral levels within the shed.

There are many vaccination programmes available, and now is the time to sort out a suitable plan. To find the most suitable one for your farm please speak to one of the farm vets.



The most effective approach will combine good husbandry and disease prevention, together with careful monitoring of your herd for signs of disease. While the investment in housing, vaccination and good management practices may seem an unwelcome extra expense for a tight farming budget, the economic gains from healthy cattle always outweigh the costs.



Sheep abortion vaccines

As we look ahead to tugging time, a reminder to those flocks that regularly vaccinate your replacements against enzootic abortion and/or toxoplasmosis to order the vaccines in good time.

Our advice is to vaccinate the replacements no later than 4 weeks before mating.

Please phone your normal Galedin Vets branch to order in these vaccines as soon as you know your requirements for this season. Thank-you

BVD eradication

Colin G. McGillivray, BVMS, MRCVS

The mandatory Scottish Government BVD eradication scheme started in 2010. The good news is that in this time, the number of BVD-not-negative breeding herds in Scotland has fallen from around 40% to 10%.

Later this year, the Government will publish 'The Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (Scotland) Order 2019', introducing **phase 5** control measures. The main drive of phase 5 is to protect negative herds, and to adopt a more stringent approach towards herds that are not negative. Among measures to be introduced in phase 5 are:

- compulsory BVD investigation for all herds not negative for 15 months or more. All animals in the herd will need to have an individual BVD-virus-negative test status - and, subsequently, all calves born must continue to be screened for a minimum of 12 months (as part of phase 4 measures, any animals moving off a not-negative herd are already required to have an individual BVD-virus-negative test status, unless going straight for slaughter),
- the ScotEID website will be adding a 'PI' locator list, documenting the CPH number of herds with PI (persistently-infected) animals present,
- all PI animals will be required to be housed separately from animals which are negative or have unknown status (this will be enforced by APHA inspectors),
- not-negative herds will not be able to bring in cattle (with limited exception under licence).

Mandatory annual screening will continue for Scottish breeding herds. In most cases, this constitutes taking blood samples from 5 calves per separately managed group (they must be 9 to 18 months old, homebred and BVD-unvaccinated). The vast majority of Scottish herds the practice looks after, happily now have a negative status. However, breakdowns have occurred, and even one calf testing antibody-positive in a check test is enough to put a herd in the not-negative category. This will necessitate further testing and can cause particular problems if store cattle are due to leave the farm, as they can then only do so with individual BVD-virus-negative test results. If possible, therefore, it is worth getting annual screening tests done well in advance of store cattle sales to allow sufficient time for further testing should the screen be positive.

Tapeworm in Sheep

Robbie Norquay BVMS MRCVS



Tapeworms are a group of parasites which rarely cause problems in living animals but can form cysts which lead to liver or carcase condemnations at slaughter. Dogs are the main host of these parasites but sheep can be infected by ingesting tapeworm eggs from pasture or feed contaminated with dog faeces. From here the tapeworms can form cysts in various parts of the sheep's body - the most common area for this is the liver. This will result in condemnation of the liver at slaughter. Depending on the slaughterhouse, this information is usually provided in the slaughter report if lambs are sold fat. If this is a problem you have encountered, there are several easy steps you can take to reduce problems in the future:

- Remove fallen stock from fields as quickly as possible - dogs become infected with tapeworm by feeding on carcasses infected with tapeworm so the cycle can be interrupted by removing all fallen stock before dogs can reach them
- Treat all farm dogs with a wormer which treats tapeworm - many worming products for dogs contain a drug which kills tapeworm in the dog. Ask one of the Galedin team to ensure you get the correct product
- Reduce dog faeces contamination - encourage dog walkers to remove all dog faeces from regular walking routes across grazing land.



Contacts:

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