



THE  
WOOD  
VETERINARY  
GROUP

# FARM NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2020



As the autumn weather looks here to stay after a last flush of grass in early September, thoughts are turning to housing preparation. With a shortage of forages, especially a shortage of straw for both feed and bedding, most farms will be looking to keep cattle grazing for as long as possible into the winter months. However, as always, the weather will dictate when cattle ultimately have to come inside. As such, it always pays to be prepared with sheds cleaned and readied for housing and those odd jobs we meant to do last winter finished now instead of when sheds are occupied. One job that is usefully done ahead of housing is preparing a plan for herd vaccinations. We can at least establish herd immunity in our livestock whilst we await a vaccination against Covid-19 for ourselves.

## **Vaccinations**

Housing offers an ideal opportunity to vaccinate cattle without adding in an extra handling event or stress whilst utilising the same labour. It is also a great time to boost immunity ahead of the high risk period caused by increasing stocking density and mixing age groups at housing. All vaccines have a lag phase between the injection of the vaccine and full immunity being established and these differ between each vaccine type. There are different vaccines available with a range of properties and so it is important to decide which regime is best for your farm.

## **IBR**

**Bovilis IBR marker Live** – Single vaccination intranasally or intramuscularly

- The vaccine gives 6 month cover against Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis – a disease that still has devastating effects on adult cattle and young stock alike. (It also has a licence to be given 12 monthly once a cow has had the first two doses given 6 months apart – not always easy to keep track of though)
- Use the vaccine in the autumn period before housing and weather conditions which are more likely to produce disease
- Give vaccine intranasally under 3 months of age or older cattle in the face of an outbreak – slows spread of disease through a herd
- Give vaccine in the muscle for animals over 3 months old

## **BVD**

1) **Bovela** – Single dose starter course

This vaccine contains two strains of BVD, one of which is European – very useful if you import cattle.

- 12 months cover from a single injection
- Heifers must be vaccinated three weeks before full cover is required i.e. 3 weeks or more prior to first service

2) **Bovilis BVD** – Three dose starter course

It should be given before the start of breeding to ensure the pregnancy is protected. Given that most herds calve all year round the best advice is: -

- Youngstock should be fully vaccinated at least 4 weeks before being bred. Two injections 4-6 weeks apart as the full starter course followed by a 6 month booster – 12 month boosters from then on.
- Boost the adult herd with a single injection annually – one year max. after their starter course

Don't forget our Vet Tech service is available to help administer vaccinations on farm

## Calf Pneumonia Vaccines

In last month's newsletter we encouraged farms to sample their 12 week old calves for pneumonia pathogens before we see lots of cases heading into winter. Were delighted that several farms sampled and re-sampled to check what bugs are around. Once we have established the main pneumonia pathogens on your farm, we can establish the best course of action to reduce illness via management changes and vaccination if appropriate, as well as making any changes in the farm treatment regimes.

Vaccination can be used to:

- Reduce the severity of cases
- Reduce the amount of virus or bacteria shed by a sick calf
- Therefore, reduce the number of new cases

To pick the most economic and effective vaccine for your farm we need to establish the age of calves affected and the causal agent/s – not necessarily the cheapest or easiest vaccine to give. The table gives an idea of the available cover but speak to us about the right vaccine selection as they are all given at different ages and have different speed to protection. Farms with *Mycoplasma bovis* issues can also now protect calves using an imported vaccine in discussion with their vet. Even with vaccination, every effort still needs to be made to improve the environment otherwise vaccination will have a limited benefit on your farm.

### Environmental factors to focus on:

- Poor Immunity
  - Colostrum volume – 4 litres
  - Timing – 1<sup>st</sup> feed within 6 hrs after birth
  - Hygiene – spotless harvesting into clean containers
  - Quality is vital for calves to fight off infection until their own immune system develops. It is vital to measure intake for each calf and where possible measure quality (22% specific gravity and above is good for feeding and crucially freezing spare)
- Mixing calves from different sources and ages increases pathogen spread – keep calves in one air space with no more than a 2 week age range
  - Hygiene – clean feeding apparatus at every feed and deep clean pen between groups
  - Sick calves need to be isolated to slow spread – remove calves at first sign of disease to separate pen
  - Poorly designed buildings – exposure to drafts, no ventilation, overstocking, extremes of temperature and shared air space between ages. Moisture in sheds increases infection pressure – emptying water buckets into or near bedding is all too common and wastes straw – a precious resource this year!
  - Inadequate nutrition – low milk intake (immunity relies on energy and protein) – 3 litres twice a day by 10 days old
  - Other diseases – calves with scour are 3 times more likely to get pneumonia
  - Castration and Dehorning stress
  - Access to water – calves should have access to water from birth to ensure good hydration

Vaccine	Pastu -rella	IBR	RSV	PI <sub>3</sub>	BVD
<b>Rispoval Intranasal</b>	-	-	+	+	-
<b>Bovalto Respi Intranasal</b>	-	-	+	+	-
<b>Bovipast RSP</b>	+	-	+	+	-
<b>Rispoval 4</b>	-	+	+	+	+
<b>Bovilis IBR Live</b>	-	+	-	-	-
<b>Rispoval Pasturella</b>	+	-	-	-	-
<b>Bovalto Pastobov</b>	+	-	-	-	-



Speak to a vet about getting to grips with calf health and management – some simple changes may save your time, stress, and calf sickness