



THE  
WOOD  
VETERINARY  
GROUP

# FARM NEWSLETTER

## AUGUST 2022

### Grazing Young stock - Coccidiosis

During the summer months many of you will be grazing cows with calves at foot, finishing cattle as well as rearing replacement heifers. With lots of young calves on the ground now, we almost certainly see a rise in the number of scour outbreaks. Cocci is the most common cause of scour around weaning and turnout so now is the perfect time to review the topic. **We have seen some incredibly high counts in samples over the past few weeks so please be vigilant:**

- **What?:** Coccidia are single-celled parasites (not bacteria) that infect calves via the faecal-oral route causing diarrhoea, weight loss and poor coats

- **Age:** Under 2 years old (most common age affected is 3/4 weeks to 6 months)

- **How?:** Spread between calves in the environment by shedding lots of egg stages (oocysts) in faeces that survive for long periods despite heat, cold and many disinfectants. Calf pens are the perfect environment for spreading infection so it is not just grazing animals that are at risk

- **Why?:** Damage the wall of the large intestine creating watery diarrhoea often resulting in straining with mucus and blood seen in the diarrhoea – long term damage occurs where that section of gut fails to repair and cannot absorb nutrients and fluid properly going forwards

- Severe cases show depression, loss of appetite, weight loss and dehydration however...

- 95% of cases are not diagnosed and so the main loss with cocci is poor **growth or lack of weight gains**

- **Diagnosis:** Colour of scour is not diagnostic. Collect individual or pooled muck samples and submit them to the lab to count cocci and worm egg numbers – if samples get warm enroute to the lab, the eggs can hatch giving false readings so deliver them fresh or keep them in the fridge until delivered

- **Treat:** Separate animals with diarrhoea and once diagnosed on a sample, treat the group with a coccidiosis treatment – speak to us about timing and type of product – fluid therapy can be useful in severe cases to treat severe dehydration and ultimately deaths

- **Prevention of cases requires excellent hygiene and management:**

1. Reduce stocking density
2. Regularly moving feed and water troughs - clean out water buckets frequently
3. Reduce faecal contamination of feed and water troughs - raise or cover
4. Increasing the bedding to reduce contamination/frequently rotate animals in paddocks
5. Avoid mixing different ages of calves
6. Clean and disinfect all buildings between groups of calves. Always use a disinfectant that claims effectiveness against coccidial oocysts. Clean pens out promptly so they are empty for as long as possible
7. When all else fails, preventative medication can be used but this does not fix poor management



## New Forest Eye Disease (NFD)

A major cattle disease caused by flies is New Forest Eye Disease. Also known as Infectious Bovine Keratoconjunctivitis, it is a bacterial infection of the outer layer of the cornea. It is caused by *Moraxella bovis* and is spread by flies but also by direct contact between animals. It produces a painful and aggressive ulcer on the surface of the eye. **The infection produces:**



- Excessive tear production causing staining of the side of the face. This attracts yet more flies
- Partial or full closing of the eye due to pain. They will seek out shade to get out of the bright sunlight which exacerbates the pain
- A white or cloudy spot on the surface of the eye or in severe cases a hole on the eye surface
- Apparent blindness or unwillingness to move unless in a group of cattle

Treatment is straightforward and very effective if done in the early stages of the disease:

- Topical ophthalmic ointments - usually 2 treatments 48 hours apart (Orbenin/Opticlox ointment)
- NSAID injection (anti-inflammatory product such as Metacam or Ketofen dependent on milk withdrawal requirement) to reduce pain and tear production and speed up healing
- Antibiotic injections can be used depending on the severity but speak to us about each case

The healing process looks a lot worse before it looks better. A normal cornea is clear and has no blood vessels in it, so for healing to occur blood capillaries must grow in from the edge of the cornea and this makes the surface of the eye look angry and bright red with a red ring around the eye (see picture). Eventually these vessels start to regress and form a ring around a central white scar. The following signs indicate the eye is healing: Tear production reduces or ceases, eye opens fully, a red ring present

If treatment is delayed, then the eye may never fully heal and leave the animal with varying degrees of visual impairment or complete blindness. If the surface of the eye ruptures then it will need the eye to be removed as it can lead to fatal meningitis due to the short connection between the eye and the brain. Any rapid swelling/craters also need to be seen as they can be from injuries or cancerous growths not just NFD.

## Two New Faces

### Ellie Rowe

Our new Vet Tech is Ellie Rowe. Ellie used to work at a block calving herd milking Jersey cross cows. She is local to the area having originally studied at Hartpury. She is taking over the disbudding, calf and herd vaccine programmes as well as mobility scoring and the rest of the fabulous Vet Tech service. Please give her a warm welcome to the team and speak to her about any VetTech jobs you are interested in starting – She has the same VetTech number which is 07513 127475.

### Laura Busch

We are delighted to welcome this year's new graduate vet, Laura to the farm team.

Laura qualified from the University of Nottingham this summer and joins us at the start of August. Laura has already met a few of you already and is looking forward to getting out on farm having moved down from where she grew up in Leicestershire to join the farm team here in Gloucestershire.



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