



THE
WOOD
VETERINARY
GROUP

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Following on from last month, housing is imminent and already happening for some farms as the torrential wet weather has affected the nutritional value of grazing and made most pastures high risk for severe poaching. Now the temperatures are also dropping, it is time to review calf management and feeding as we head towards winter. When the weather gets colder changes in management are essential but there are changes that can be made now to increase calf health:

Colostrum

With decades of research into colostrum and passive transfer success on farm, one big part of the success is to measure outcomes especially when we make changes or suspect that calf health is in decline. Over the years, we have used a Total protein test in calves between 1 and 5 days old with a cut off level of >5.2 being adequate. However, as more calves are being recorded for disease probability as well as survival we have now adjusted the targets or goals that we aim for with passive transfer of immunity in calves. This change is to reflect not only calf survival but likelihood of not getting any disease prior to 60 days old which strongly correlates to heifers entering the herd and making it to 5th lactation. It is worthwhile testing calves at regular intervals throughout the year, but especially at the beginning of block calving groups and if changes are made to any aspects of colostrum management on farm. If we find results that are below optimum then it is a really useful tool to review the whole process of calves being born right through to 24hrs to see what areas need tightening up – speak to your vet about taking a new batch of samples to see how they measure up.

Excellent	>6.2
Good	5.8 – 6.1
Adequate	5.1-5.7
Poor	<5.1



Vaccinations for Ringworm

Ringworm is a fungal infection of the skin and hair that is also transmissible to people. Not only does it look unsightly especially to prospective buyers or inspectors, but it often leads to secondary skin infections, markedly lowering growth rates. Badly affected calves may need culling for welfare reasons. The lesions start as a circular lesion of hair loss with a grey plaque developing but can spread to large areas primarily on the head and neck. Housing and winter is a frequent time that we see outbreaks:

How is it spread?:

- Young calves are very susceptible and it is commonly manifested by about 2 months old. This is perpetuated by poor colostrum transfer at birth
- Fungal spores survive for many months in the environment and can be transferred from wood, straw, metal, clothing and of course animal to animal. As such daily activities of feeding and drinking cause high risk of transfer. This means that group reared calves are amongst the highest risk group to catch the infection. Spores survive in dark sheds for over a year.
- Other diseases such as BVD and underfeeding calves also increases likelihood of disease through immune suppression.

UV light does help but it is often too late and we cannot rely on an English winter for sunshine. Lesions are mostly self-limiting, but it can take 1 to 4 weeks between infection and the first lesion, hence the unknown spread of infection.



How to avoid Ringworm outbreaks?

- All equipment and buildings need to be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected with effective chemicals between batches of calves – 4% Chlorine in the disinfectant has shown efficacy.
- Gloves should be worn to handle calves that have lesions and changed between calves not only to stop you spreading it but also to stop you catching it yourself.
- Keep infected calves separate until lesions have healed to stop whole groups becoming infected.

Treatment

Imaverol fungicidal wash can be used to treat clinical cases but requires application in a 1 to 50 parts dilution in warm water every 3 days for at least 3 to 4 times to soak the lesion and penetrate to kill the fungus. This reduces the spread of infection and should speed up the resolution of the lesion.

The Ringworm vaccine is a fantastic vaccine that can be used to both reduce the severity and number of cases seen in calves. We have several clients using the vaccine in young calves where certain sheds were repeatedly infecting calves and these cohorts have overtaken older animals in growth performance.

The vaccine regime is IM injections in the rump:

- 2 injections 5-14 days apart – Can start from 1 day old
- 2ml dose in calves that are under 3 months old
- 4ml dose in older animals over 3 months old
- An additional booster can be given 2 to 4 weeks later in infected animals

Speak to us about implementing this vaccination regime in your calves



Vaccinations for Pneumonia

All calves are at risk of Pneumonia over the autumn and winter due to increased stocking density, poorer ventilation and cold or foggy weather that has other impacts on the immune system. When it comes to prevention we need to focus on making the environment as good as possible but also maximise immunity against known calf pathogens.

- Avoid shared air space of calves with more than a 2 week age gap
- Ensure regular air changes but without drafts under 5ft in height
- Offer half height rooves over an area of each pen to provide good thermal regulation for calves
- Keep pens dry through adequate fall of flooring and washing buckets and feeders well away from pens

Vaccination against pneumonia pathogens is a vital part of the control strategy and must be based on farm pathogens, age of calves and risk periods. There are masses of vaccines available covering one or multiple pathogens including RSV, PI3, BVD, IBR, Pasturella and Mycoplasma so speak to us about how to find the best fit for your calves.

Exciting New Service – FREEZE BRANDING

We are delighted to announce that we have launched out Freeze Branding Service for cattle. Ellie our Vet Tech has 2 complete sets of both Heifer and Cow size brands available. We can brand small or large groups of animals. When booking in your freeze branding let us know the list of numbers so we can chill down all the right numbers for you. I think you'll agree they look fantastic and clear so book in your branding today.



Wood Vets Farm Team



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