



Newsletter March 2020

Calf scours– Eliot Hedley

With the colder months well and truly here, dealing with our calves are perhaps the most delicate task on farm. Pneumonia has been covered in a recent newsletter so here we will focus on calf scours.

Cause: There are multiple “bugs” that cause scours in your calves, here are the common ones:

Viral – Rotavirus & Coronavirus.

Parasitic – Crypto or Cocci.

Bacterial – E.coli, Clostridia & Salmonella.

Here at FVSW we are able to test faecal samples to aid in determining which pathogen/s your calves are infected with.

Prevention: Viral and E.coli scours can be vaccinated against, the dams receive the vaccine and the antibodies are passed on to the calves when they have their first feed off the mother. This leads on to the number one prevention of calf scours... COLOSTRUM.

It is important all calves receive at least 10% of their bodyweight of colostrum in 6 hours and another 5% within 12. There are many ways to determine colostrum quality and efficiency so best start talking to us about any colostrum management improvements that can be tailored to your farm.

Cleanliness is also a big factor in controlling scours. Putting fit, healthy calves into a pen that hasn't been disinfected from older calves will inevitably cause spread of the above pathogens. It is important to keep similarly aged calves together in disinfected pens which are regularly bedded.



Calf scours continued.... treatment

Treatment: Contrary to belief, antibiotics are not always the key to treating calf scours. The cause of death is usually DEHYDRATION - the average 40kg calf requires a minimum of 2L of fluids a day for maintenance, with additional fluids needed equivalent to the volume of diarrhoea, which can easily exceed 2L a day. Then any dehydration needs to be accounted for which can be up to a further 4L of fluids needing to be replenished – as we can see 2 milk feeds a day will not keep up with the fluid demands. We recommend adding at least one 2L electrolyte drench between the two milk feeds for as long as the diarrhoea persists. Generally, calves will gain immunity to the pathogen given time, so long as they are kept hydrated.

Antibiotics are sometimes required, such as in cases of Salmonella, this is why it is important to keep in touch with your vet to help determine what pathogens are causing the scours and to then select the most suitable approach, whether it be vaccination, colostrum management, antibiotic therapy or one of many others!

Upcoming Courses and Meetings

- *2pm Wednesday 1st April Venue: TBC*– Small Flock Health Club Meeting- ‘**Managing Worms in Sheep**’ Free to FHC Members and £30 to Non-members.
- *2pm Wednesday 29th April Venue: TBC*– Large Flock Health Club Meeting- ‘**Lamb Carcass Grading–Maximising your income**’ Free to FHC Members and £30 to Non-members.
- *2pm Wednesday 27th May @ Sedgemoor Auction Centre*– **Medicines Course**- £40 per farm

If you would like to register your interest for any of the meetings please call your nearest branch today.



Annual TB Tests

Bookings for annual TB tests are coming in thick and fast, Easter is always a very busy time for our vets and this year we will be short staffed. Please book early and do not leave until the last minute to avoid disappointment.



Your local farm veterinary service

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