



Newsletter February 2018

Injection Site Abscess

Typically, the cow presented will have a large swollen hind limb and sometimes it will be two or three times wider than normal. These abscesses are not obvious initially as they often form deep down between the large limb muscle layers and can take a long time to cause the cow any visible discomfort. By the time there are signs of discomfort, these abscesses can be enormous, holding litres of pus.

One such abscess which was measured when it was drained, contained 14 litres of pus, and some have even been considerably larger. They can be quite impressive to burst and drain in front of an unsuspecting audience!

However, the idea is in fact to prevent these situations from occurring in the first place. In virtually all cases, the bacterial introduction responsible for the abscess can be traced back to an injection or vaccination administered a few months previously.

It is often just “bad luck” in cases, but this sort of condition is more common when old and dirty needles are re-used for injections, or injections are performed carelessly. Obviously procedures on farm will never be completely sterile, but it is easy to make a few small changes to the way we do things, and thus reduce the risks of specific outcomes.

Here are a few guidelines which should be explained and emphasised to whomever is responsible for injecting cows on your farm:

- Don't inject through dirty or muck covered hair
- Remember to use a fresh needle when giving an injection for treatment
- Never use the same needles on different batches or groups of animals
- If injecting a large number of animals (e.g. vaccination), needles will start to become blunt after 5-10 injections - consider changing whenever possible, even if they appear clean and sharp to the naked eye
- Never leave a needle inside a bottle - this will provide an entry point for dust and bacterial contaminants to get in and spoil the product
- Don't take it for granted that everyone on your farm is aware of these guidelines!



MilkSure

We will be running our next “MilkSure” course in February. Arla, Muller, and especially Dairy Crest, are some of the milk buyers who are keen for their suppliers to complete the “Milksure” course.



The MilkSure initiative is designed to safeguard the production of milk which is free of veterinary medicine residues. This afternoon course covers all the technical and practical aspects necessary to safeguard residue free milk. To register interest, please contact any of our offices.

Lambing Season - Be Prepared!

Lambing is upon us, so here are a few reminders to keep you ahead of the game

Clostridial/Pastuerella Vaccination:

It is good practice to vaccinate all ewes prior to lambing (e.g. Heptavac P Plus). If you haven't ever had a Pasteurella or clostridial outbreak in a group of lambs, this is not a reason to be complacent. Don't forget to vaccinate! For most of you, this will be a one-off annual booster vaccine approximately 4 weeks prior to lambing, to protect the ewes and provide good colostral transfer to the lambs to protect them in the first week of life.



If you've never vaccinated your ewes before, they'll require an earlier vaccination schedule, with a booster closer to lambing. Speak to any of the vets for further information.

Deworming ewes: Worm egg output by ewes increases markedly at the time of lambing due to various factors. To mitigate the transmission of these eggs to the environment, and ultimately to the newborn lambs, it is important to deworm your ewes soon after lambing.

Lambing Kit:

- Treat navels with 10% Iodine Solution
- Lambing ropes/snare (extremely important to keep clean and disinfect regularly)
- Always use a generous amount of lubricant gel when assisting
- Lamb feeding tubes and rubber rings
- Any ewe that is assisted at lambing, or retains its' afterbirth, can be treated with an antibiotic such as Pen+Strep for 3-5 days, however we advise you speak to one of the vets to discuss.



Lamb Mortality: The vast majority of lamb deaths occur in the first 48 hours post-lambing. It pays to be alert and vigilant around this time, looking for any signs of weak lambs. If lambs don't drink enough, they will get hypoglycaemic (low blood sugar) and become cold very quickly. If this happens, they need to be fed and then warmed up, in that order.

Abortions: Don't "wait and see" - please get aborted material (foetus and afterbirth) tested immediately to see if any infectious agents can be isolated (e.g. Chlamydia/Toxoplasma). By the time you realise there is a problem in your flock, it's often too late for us as your vets to make a difference if you don't send the first cases away for testing. The first few cases are always important opportunities for us to collection information. Always isolate aborting sheep and clean and disinfect lambing pens thoroughly. Please phone any of the offices for advice if abortions occur.



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