



FarmVets

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Calf Pneumonia: Part 2

In last month's article we discussed the role of calf immunity and the pathogens involved with regards to pneumonia. This month we look at the environment, as well as treatment and vaccination.



Conductive Environment

The most important factors within the environment are temperature, moisture, air quality and air speed. Calves are very vulnerable to low temperatures. New born calves have a thermal neutral zone of 10-26°C. Below this temperature they use energy to keep warm instead of using that energy to grow, and undergo physiological stress, reducing their immune system. Deep straw is an important way of keeping calves warm – the lower critical temperature on a dry straw bed is 10°C vs. 17°C on bare concrete. Excessive moisture in the environment encourages survival, growth and spread of bugs and increases the lower critical temperature. Moisture levels can be decreased by using deep straw bedding and sloped floors (1:20) to facilitate drainage. It is important to provide fresh air but prevent draughts, as these will increase the lower critical temperature. The most important determinant of air quality though is providing enough space per calf – a minimum of 2.8m². A good way of ensuring adequate air changes but preventing draughts is to use positive ventilation. This is a continuous fan with tube delivery, providing 4 air changes per hour. The average cost of this system for a 30m x 11m shed with 1 fan is £1300 to install and £300/yr for electricity. Published data demonstrates a 50-75% reduction in pneumonia on farms which have installed this system.

Treatment

Once pneumonia has struck, rapid effective treatment needs to be given. The aims of this are to provide pain relief and therefore increase feed intake; reduce/prevent relapses; minimise impact – short and long term; and minimise spread within group. This will be done with a combination of antibiotic and anti-inflammatories. It is worth considering investigating pneumonia outbreaks in an effort to determine the exact bugs on the farm causing the problem. This will give us information as to the best antibiotic to be using, but will also allow us to implement specific vaccination policies on your farm.

Vaccination

Several vaccines are available on the market to **REDUCE** pneumonia, and the choice of which to use will be determined by the nature of your farm enterprise, the age of at risk calves, and the diseases on your farm. It is important to note that vaccines will not necessarily completely prevent disease, but they will make the disease less severe and affected animals will recover much faster. Remember, all vaccines need to be given in advance of an outbreak so planning is key!

Preventing Pregnant Ewe Nutrition Mistakes

FarmVets SouthWest offers a variety of services to help you get the nutrition of your late pregnant ewes right. This is vital, not only to prevent problems such as twin lamb disease, but also because it has a major impact on colostrum and milk production.

Twin lamb disease occurs due to insufficient energy intake, and is most commonly seen in the last few weeks of pregnancy.

Blood testing a subsection of ewes 3-4 weeks before lambing can highlight energy shortfalls before disease is seen. (A wider range of blood tests, to look at protein and mineral levels is also possible).



The best diet in the world won't help if the ewes can't reach it! 45-60 cm of feed space per ewe is required for discontinuous feeding, 20 cm for ad lib feeding. Sheep should always have access to clean, fresh water, with at least 5 cm trough space per ewe. We are happy to **discuss, inspect and review** your sheep ration and housing with you. Finally, make sure you have the correct supplies for dealing with twin lamb disease and hypocalcaemia as cases can occur even in the best managed flocks; stock up on Calciject 6 and Ketosaid today.

Vaccine Reminders

Rotavec ® Corona

Remember to vaccinate your cows 3-12 weeks before calving with Rotavec ®Corona. Combined with good colostrum management, this is an excellent way of protecting your calves against some common causes of calf scour, therefore limiting the impact it can have within your herd.



Heptavac-P Plus

Vaccinating your ewes with Heptavac-P PLUS is a cost effective way of limiting losses caused by clostridial diseases and pasteurellosis. Annual booster injections should be given 4-6 weeks pre-lambing to ensure antibody protection for newborn lambs through colostrums intake.



LEPTO DEAL - The Spring offer for Leptovoid-H has now begun

Essential Kit for a Successful Lambing

"Failing to prepare is preparing to fail" – having the appropriate kit for lambing season is vital to maximise the number of live lambs born, and minimise losses. Have you stocked up on the following?

- **Lube** – and lots of it!!!
- **Thermometer** – identify hypothermia in lambs early
- **Gloves** – hygiene is important
- **Metacam** – all ewes with protected/assisted labour
- **Calcium/dextrose** – CMD 6 for hypocalcaemia/twin lamb disease
- **Ketosaid** – for ewes with twin lamb disease
- A first line antibiotic for hard lambings (3 days penicillin or long-acting oxytetracycline e.g. Engemycin DD)
- **Terramycin spray**
- **Lambing ropes** - can aid any difficult lambings

