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## Newsletter March 2017

### Care of the newborn Calf: Part 1

Diseases of the calf (in particular pneumonia and scour) are a frequent feature in the FarmVets SouthWest monthly newsletters. Whether these animals are destined to become your future herd or you plan on selling them, the care of these animals at this vulnerable stage of life should not be overlooked. **What should you be doing to make sure your calves get off to the best possible start and help prevent a multitude of problems further down the line?**

Arguably the single most important step to a healthy calf is ensuring it receives **sufficient quality and quantity of colostrum within the first 6 hours of life** in order to maximise gut absorption of maternal antibodies. **A 40kg calf should receive a minimum of 4L before that 6 hour window closes.** You may want to consider tubing these calves to ensure this volume is being consumed.



**Unsure if your colostrum is good enough?** You may want to consider a colostrometer? At just £15 + VAT a colostrum hydrometer measures the density of the colostrum, which correlates to the levels of antibody (IgG). **You may even want to consider blood sampling a group of calves** within their first week of life to assess the total protein of the serum. A total protein count below 5.5g/dL will indicate failure of passive transfer and prompt a review of your colostrum protocols.

Remember to maintain a supply of good quality, frozen colostrum (from a Johne's free cow) to ensure no calf goes without. Typically, cows in their second lactation will have a much higher IgG level than heifers so these should be selected for your colostrum stores.



### Are we missing something?

We at FarmVets SouthWest like to keep our monthly newsletter articles seasonally on topic and relevant. However, we are always open to suggestions from our clients. If you have any ideas on what you might like to see in future newsletters, contact your nearest FVSW office or comment on our Facebook page and we will do our best to feature your article of choice.....



**Tesco/Sainsbury Contracts**



Are you on a Tesco or Sainsbury's (or any other) contract?  
Are you confused about the changes - especially those regarding antibiotics?  
Please ring the office to organise a **free one-to-one consult** and FarmVets SouthWest will help you through the minefield.

## Dealing with a broken leg

**Broken limbs are not uncommon in cattle and sheep.** Whilst breaks are seen in all ages they are more likely in younger animals (< 1 year) where the bone is still developing. Unfortunately not all broken legs will be repairable. It's important for the welfare of the animal to know when to draw the line and veterinary examination may be required to confirm either way.

In new-borns, broken limbs are commonly a result of the mother stepping on them (this is particularly common in lambs). In these animals, corrective treatment can be justified and usually involves **splinting and/or casting the limb**. However open fractures (where the bone penetrates the skin) and fractures involving joints carry a much poorer prognosis.

The **use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatories**, such as Metacam should not be overlooked in these cases as they provide pain relief during the healing process. Unfortunately, long bone fractures in adult cattle are generally not treated, due to the animal's weight and the slow healing process. These animals require euthanasia/emergency slaughter on welfare grounds.



## Every lamb counts - know why they are dying

The **FVSW Flock health planning service is an invaluable tool** to maximise flock profitability and to tackle the growing problem of drench resistance which threatens the sustainability of lamb production across the UK. Now, at the beginning of the season, you are in the best position to maximise the benefits of a health plan.



Abortion outbreaks and incidences of high lamb mortality will need to be investigated. **Perhaps the most useful tool in this investigation is a lamb post mortem** (alongside examining the afterbirth) as this can help us to identify the exact disease process. Having this information allows prompt treatment to **minimise further losses** this year and then prevent the problem occurring next year. All ewes should have been vaccinated with Heptavac-P 4-6 weeks pre lambing.

If the lambs have received sufficient colostrum from their mother they should be protected for the first 6 weeks against clostridia and pasteurilla. In order to provide further protection, lambs should receive a full initial course of Heptavac-P (2 injections 4-6 weeks apart) when the youngest lambs in the batch are over 3 weeks old.

## Order your Huskvac today!

**Over the previous few years we have seen a steady increase in the incidence of lungworm across all herds.** Early clinical signs include pneumonia like symptoms and frequent coughing, BUT a burden on your farm could also significantly impact your growth rates.



Lungworm prevention centres on the development of immunity. Whilst older cattle should have developed a natural immunity through exposure during grazing, first season grazers can only effectively achieve this through vaccination. For sufficient immunity, two doses of the intranasal lungworm vaccine (Huskvac) will be required, four weeks apart. But remember, the second dose must be given two weeks before turnout so now is the time to start considering ordering your Huskvac to minimise the costs of this disease.

**Don't underestimate the impact lungworm can have on your youngstock  
Order your Huskvac today**