

Newsletter April 2018 - The Beef Issue

Crypto Scours in Calves

With some of our block calving herds having calved down on mass in the last few months, there are a large number of calves on the ground at the moment. Calf scour can be a nightmare to deal with and if a problem begins it can multiply very rapidly. Testing to identify the virus, parasite, or bacteria involved in the calf scour on your farm is important in how you go about managing the situation.



Most calf scours are caused by viruses and parasites and therefore antibiotics are of little use in treating calves. Calves should be administered oral electrolytes as often as possible (usually two electrolyte feeds in the middle of the day separate from milk feeds is ideal - e.g. milk @ 7am, electrolytes @ 12pm and 4pm and milk @ 8pm). You should always continue to feed milk when calves are scouring!! Cryptosporidium is a parasite that causes diarrhoea in all species of young animals (including humans) so remember to be very vigilant as regards hygiene.

Cryptosporidium is mainly spread by scouring calves and dams that are not showing any clinical signs. It can multiply rapidly in the environment so there are millions of parasites in calf pens where calves are scouring. In addition to oral electrolytes, Halocur can be administered for 7 days as treatment. This will reduce the shedding of parasites into the environment and reduce the scouring (electrolytes are the most important treatment!). Halocur can also be used for prevention if it is administered to calves in the first 7 days of life. When cleaning and disinfecting calf pens it should be noted that only certain disinfectants kill Cryptosporidium. They are: Kenocox, 2-4% Neopridisan, 10% Ox-Virin, 3% Hydrogen Peroxide.

Calving Pen Design

Spring calving is well underway and we seem to be doing more calvings and caesareans than in recent years! Caesareans can be made more routine and successful if the farm has appropriate facilities.

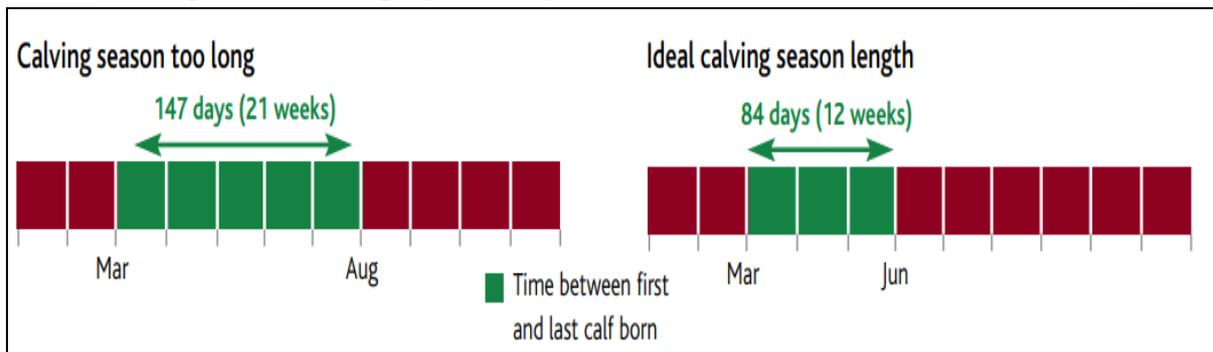


An extra pair of hands (or two) also helps a great deal when the calf arrives. Every calving pen should be clean and have a proper head yoke (which does not narrow at the bottom in case the cow is down when calving). There should be plenty of room behind the yoke for the cow, a calving jack and two people to work in.

A swinging gate which opens to the left hand side of the cow allows excellent surgical access if we need to proceed to a caesarean. In that case a table to keep our sterile equipment off the contaminated floor makes sense, as does good lighting and plenty of clean water. Farms with these facilities have better calf and cow survival rates when it comes to operating. As a bare minimum, having the cow tied by a halter to a permanent fixture saves on wasting time getting the cow under control when the vet arrives. Please have her ready to be examined **before** we arrive.

Calving Intervals

The importance of keeping a calving interval under 12 weeks in beef suckler herds



It is incredibly cost & time efficient to run a breeding herd this way. The benefits are:

- Reduced labour with easier management – only need to hire extra labour for 3 months of the year.
- Shorter open period – need to be back in calf 80 days after calving! Problem cows are easier to spot.
- An even batch of calves – less age mixing in calves = less pneumonia
- Reduced production costs – any cow taking longer than average to get back in calf can be removed from the herd and will stop costing you money to keep.
- Reduced vet and medicine costs – you can amalgamate visits and it makes disease control plans easier.
- All in all more kg of beef /cow produced per year = more money in your pocket!

Fresh Cow Checks

Beef farmers – fresh cow checks aren't just a dairy procedure!

If you have had difficult calvings, or have any cows you are concerned about, we suggest you call us to come and assess her, as early treatment can greatly improve her chance of getting back in calf when she is supposed to!



Diseases such as metritis can cause a cow to become severely ill if left untreated and will impact subsequent fertility. Prompt treatment will give a better outcome and a cow that will live for longer in your herd.

May Bank Holiday Opening Hours



Our offices will be shut on **Monday, May 7th**
Drugs can be collected from our Sedgemoor Office *by appointment only*.



Your local farm veterinary service

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