

# Hale Veterinary Group

## Farm Newsletter

December 2014



The colder weather is beginning to set in, and with plenty of rainfall recently there are certainly plenty of opportunities for pathogens to thrive, particularly in calves. Keeping buildings warm enough for calves is just as important as adequate ventilation, and many calves will unfortunately spend a lot of energy this winter just on keeping warm, when they could be using it to put on weight, and prevent disease.

Our farm partner Donal has recently been in hospital for a hip operation, but we are happy to say that everything went well, and he is now at home recuperating, catching up on the latest sporting events, and getting his head around social media!

We would like to wish all our clients a happy Christmas, and all the best for 2015!

**CALF PNEUMONIA** can have a huge effect on calves, and can impact on the animals' productivity when they reach adulthood. Time spent improving calf housing now will result in far less time being spent treating sick animals in the future, and will likely improve growth rates and calf condition as well. Digital thermometers with "max/min" temperature modes are very cheap to purchase online, and can aid in monitoring quite how cold calf sheds might get overnight.

There are a variety of diseases that can cause calf pneumonia, including many viruses and bacteria. The disease can quickly spread between animals, so as soon as an issue is found; action must be taken as soon as possible in order to limit losses. Anti inflammatory drugs, alongside antibiotics form the mainstay of treatment (although preventing them becoming diseased in the first place is even better!) and it is essential that the right calves get the right treatment. Any coughing calves should be treated with an appropriate product, and ALL calves in contact should have their temperatures taken. Any with a high temperature or coughing (or both!) should be treated, and if more than 30% of the group are affected, then the whole group should be treated. If you are having trouble then speaking to your regular vet is the best option.

Please speak to one of our farm team to create a tailored plan to suit your farm, as there are many variables involved in pneumonia

Speak to one of our farm team to develop a pneumonia control plan in more detail, and to make sure calves are receiving the correct treatment.

If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please email: [farmlab@halevethospital.co.uk](mailto:farmlab@halevethospital.co.uk)

**BVD** can have one of the largest impacts on calf pneumonia (as well as scours), and can have devastating consequences for calf health. Most farms in the area have a BVD control programme in place, with several farms recently pursuing (and achieving) a BVD eradication programme. Many farmers choose to vaccinate for BVD, but it is important to remember that vaccination does not mean you are disease free, and whilst the vaccine will reduce the impact of the disease, eliminating it from the farm is often a far better option.

BVD massively impacts on the calf's immune system, and hugely increases the chance of becoming infected with a pneumonia or scour infection. If you have had trouble with pneumonia or scour in the past, it is highly possible there is BVD at play somewhere, and a large portion of farms in the UK have a BVD problem.

There are a number of ways to limit or eradicate the losses due to BVD on farm, and it is best to discuss with one of our farm team the best approach for you. Ear tags which test for the BVD virus are now available, and can be used in place of a standard ear tag to ensure that every calf born is BVD free. BVD is one of the most expensive diseases to have lurking on the farm, and those who have eradicated it have reported fantastic calf growth and condition already, with almost no pneumonia or scour treatments since eradication!

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