

## CALF SCOUR- WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Calf scour is the most common cause of death in calves less than one month old and tackling an outbreak on farm is labour intensive and expensive. Scours causes dehydration in calves and therefore must be treated quickly and correctly. However this is not so simple as there are various reasons that cause these scours in young calves. Causes of scour include Viruses (Rotavirus, Coronavirus), Parasites (Cryptosporidium, Coccidiosis), Bacteria (E-coli, salmonella) and nutritional. Mixed infections are common. In various research projects Rotavirus and Cryptosporidium are found to be the most common diagnoses. Our Vet Holly Tench BVM BVS MRCVS looks into how Severn Edge Farm Vets can help your herd this winter.

Many of the pathogens causing scours are present on all farms and problems with disease only occur when the disease **CHALLENGE** is greater than the levels of the calves' **IMMUNITY**. This is why disease often occurs more commonly in winter when challenge increases due to reduced cleanliness of housing. Therefore whilst we can look at treatment and vaccines, the housing environment is vital in the success of managing and preventing calf scours.

### HOUSING:

With recent wintery weather many are facing challenges with wet, cold conditions along with straw bedding shortages likely across parts of the country. Both of these factors increase the risk of scour as hygiene is reduced. Housing hygiene is key in preventing calf scour. Wet, dirty and insufficient bedding will allow bacteria, parasites and viruses to thrive. Ensuring calf sheds and pens are well bedded with good amounts of dry straw is crucial to maintain clean and dry calf areas and reduce the risk of infections. Straw might be relatively expensive and with stocks looking tight (a predicted late turnout may well be putting pressure on straw stocks) it is still cost effective to ensure calving cows and young calves are well bedded compared with calf losses.

### CALF SIDE TESTING & SNAP TESTS:

At the first sign of scouring calves its key to identify the pathogen that is causing the issue. Therefore ensuring correct and effective treatment can be given. At Severn Edge we have Calf Side Scour Snap Tests available to purchase which will give you an idea of what the problem may be.

These easy to use test kits can test for Rotavirus, Ecoli F5 (K99), Coronavirus and Cryptosporidium in less than 10 minutes. By having this insight we are able to offer a treatment plan that targets the cause of the scour. Snap Tests are available to purchase in packs of 5 OR one of our Vet Tech team can come out complete a test for you.



### VACCINES:

The new cryptosporidium vaccine, **Bovilis Cryptium**, offers a solution. It is used in pregnant heifers and cows. When used alongside **Fencovis** they help to protect calves against the major culprits of scour; rotavirus, E.coli, coronavirus and now cryptosporidium. This vaccine is not only for farmers experiencing calf deaths, there is a benefit even for the milder cases too. Calves destined for beef will grow better, those who don't scour can put on 34 kg more weight than calves who do. In addition, scouring calves are 17 times more likely to develop pneumonia weeks later, further delaying their growth and research has shown this delays heifers getting into calf. Prevention of scour saves money, antibiotic and anti-inflammatory usage and time in the both the short and long term. The vaccine works by the dam passing on antibodies generated onto their calves via colostrum, therefore, good colostrum management is pivotal to the success of this vaccine. The four key points of colostrum are quantity, quality, cleanliness and quickly. As always please contact us for any advise about your herd, 01746 713 911.



### Follow the 1, 2, 3 Rule of Colostrum Management



Colostrum from the 1st milking



Feed the calf within 2 hours of birth



Feed at least 3L of colostrum (Or 10% of body weight)

Colostrum quality decreases every hour after calving and the ability of the calf to absorb antibodies from colostrum also decreases over this time.

**BOVILIS Cryptium**  
- Route: Subcutaneous (SC)  
- Dose: 2ml



## RAM MOT'S & TUP TESTING

We all understand the importance of good ewe nutrition and preparation in the run up to tupping but don't forget about the boys! Around 20% are rams are sub-fertile which can have a costly impact at scanning. Performing a ram MOT is simple - just remember the 5 T's:

**TEETH:** Check for a broken mouth, over/undershot jaws and good occlusion of the teeth with the dental pad. Check for any signs of drooling or dropping of food from the mouth

**TOES:** Any signs of lameness should always be treated as soon as possible but double check rams are moving around well – check for any signs of stiffness and tip them to examine all feet. Remember there is no need for routine foot trimming and it can actually have a negative impact!

**TESTICLES:** They should be freely mobile and roughly the same size; check for any lumps or heat and any signs of scrotal mange. They should feel firm – like a flexed bicep in the run up to the breeding season

**TONE:** Aim for a BCS 3.5-4 – too fat and they will be lazier and inclined to spend more time lying however they will lose condition as they work so they should not be too thin

Finally consider any necessary **TREATMENT** (e.g. vaccinations, lameness treatments) and ensure these are carried out promptly so that rams are fully operational at go time

We can also carry out a complete fertility exam on your tups including collection and examination of a semen sample giving you an answer at the time. This is not just for pedigrees or suspect/problem rams with a few pairs of hands we can examine large numbers of tups on farm economically and check out the whole team to make sure they are up to scratch. For more than 5 tups on a farm we can offer a discounted rate. Please call the surgery and ask to speak to Susan or Chris to find out more and discuss options for your flock.

## H5N5 BIRD FLU- UPDATE

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N5 has been found in pheasants in Worcestershire earlier this week. The birds were released in July and so have been classed as wild by APHA and will appear on their wild bird findings accordingly. As the birds are wild there are no disease control zones in place, and we will retain our country freedom status for trade purposes. However, from our perspective this development is significant after several months of "peacetime". This is the first time H5N5 has been found in game birds and mortality is reported to be very high. This highlights the need for stringent biosecurity on your site.

The affected shoot is many miles from any other recent findings of H5N5 in wild birds (the nearest in recent weeks being Lincolnshire) and just goes to show that nowhere is safe. Anyone with birds on site, such as overwintered breeding stock, should be especially careful. If you are concerned please contact the team at Severn Edge Farm

## REGISTER YOUR BIRDS

Like microchipping for pet dogs (and cats if you live in England), new rules make it a legal requirement for everyone in Great Britain who keeps birds to register with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

Keepers must register before 1 October 2024 in England. Simply head to APHA and complete a poultry registration form, which can be returned by email or post. Alternatively, you can call APHA on 03000 200 301 and apply over the phone.

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

As the weather has been so awful we will wait to organise meetings as we are very aware that you are all very busy. Once the winter starts to set in please keep your eyes peeled for any upcoming meetings

### Flock Club- RENEWALS

Susan and Holly will be in touch in the coming weeks with our current members. The Flock Club renewals are upon us, if you are interested in joining please speak to Susan or Holly today or ask for one of the flyers.

There are a number of great benefits and allows a farmer led discussion group to improve Flock performance and health.



## TB CORNER

On 30th August 2024, DEFRA announced a refresh of the bovine TB eradication strategy to drive down bTB rates and save cattle and farmers' livelihoods. For the first time in over a decade, DEFRA will introduce a comprehensive new eradication package, working with farmers, vets, scientists and conservationists to rapidly strengthen and deploy a range of disease control measures. This is a positive step and we actively encourage you to be involved where you can.

Together with the launch of a survey to update estimates of badger abundance, a new national wildlife surveillance programme will provide an up-to-date understanding of disease in badgers & other wildlife. The next stage of field trials for the development of a cattle vaccine will commence in the coming months. DEFRA aims to deliver an effective cattle TB vaccination strategy within the next few years to accelerate progress towards officially TB-free (OTF) status for England.

