

NEW BORN AND COLD WEATHER

You don't need us to tell you that this bitterly cold weather doesn't do the newly borns any good at all. (Although it does do a lot of good for reducing parasite burden on the pasture and reducing pneumonia pathogens (bacterial and viral).

Some easy tips for making sure the cold doesn't beat your youngsters:

- **Minimize drafts:** make sure you create areas in the shed where the youngsters can be completely out of the draft. I know we bang on and on about ensuring good airflow through the shed, but at these temperatures the new born calves need to be able to shelter from them. This could be done with a couple of straw bales made into an L shape in the appropriate direction.
- **Bed up the sheds:** Make sure there is enough clean dry straw in there for them to nestle down into.
- **Young stock must be dry:** Do what you can to stop rain and snow blowing in from the sides. Nothing will chill a calf or lamb faster than being damp.
- **Rugs:** it's always worthwhile having a calf rug in the cupboard, along with a heat lamp for that one that ended up on the wrong side of the barrier.
- **Food:** Remember if you are bottle feeding or tubing any young animal the feed must be warm. This way the feed acts as free heating and energy all in one.
- **Stress:** When there is a chance young stock could get cold, avoid stressful procedures like moving them, disbudding and castration.
- **Warming cold newborns:** They must have sufficient energy supplies to cope with the increase in the metabolic rate that occurs as you warm them up. If they don't they will die. This is when you need to consider tubing with glucose solutions or intra-abdominal glucose injections if there is no suck reflex. If you are unsure of how or when to do this- give us a call (there is also a guide on How-To on our Facebook Page).

FARMING GRANTS FOR 2018

You may have seen on Facebook, we have been updating you on the Farming Grants available this year. The deadlines are fast approaching! The Countryside Productivity Small Grant Scheme (£3000-£12000) which can be used for equipment- deadline is 14th March 2018 (think weigh scales, mobile crush, straw spreaders). The Countryside Stewardship Grant (up to £10000) which can be used for repairing or planting hedgerows (great for providing shelter for young stock in unpredictable spring weather) deadline is 30th April 2018. All applications can be done online.

---THE UPDATE---

Changes to our Email

Don't worry emails you send to the old address will still reach us! Emails for the office or general attention can be sent to:

thame@norcalvets.co.uk or

wantage@norcalvets.co.uk. The

fulltime vets now have their own accounts- ask them for details.

There will be confirmed details to follow on the up and coming meeting for this year, topics will include:

- Preparing for the 2018 Game Season
- Grassland Management
- Beef- Breeding for the future



CALF SCOURS

Causes

As the spring calving season commences calf scour is a common cause of loss in calves in the first 1 month of life, at our autumn benchmarking meeting farmers estimated 3% of calves suffered with scour (likely an underestimate!). There are numerous infectious causes of scour;

- Bacterial: E.coli, Salmonella
- Viruses: Rotavirus and Coronavirus
- Protozoal: Coccidiosis and Cryptosporidium

Diagnosis

We have a calf side test kit which allows us to differentiate between the main causes of scour plus we can check samples back at the practice for coccidiosis



Treatment

Regardless of the cause → **FLUIDS FLUIDS FLUIDS**. As a general rule calves do not die of scour, they die of dehydration therefore successful treatment of a calf with scour requires keeping them warm and hydrated. (Now where is that rug and heat lamp that we discussed...?)

1-2 Litres of electrolytes should be offered to drink by bottle 3 times a day in addition to milk feeds or should be stomach tubed if the calf is not able or willing to suck.

Further treatment beyond fluids should be guided by diagnostics mentioned above as both cryptosporidium and coccidiosis have specific treatments. A calf <48 hours old should certainly be seen by a vet as IV fluids and antibiotics will be required. Mild scour in older calves may simply be managed by hydration alone.



Prevention

- Ensure calves receive adequate colostrum – we can take bloods from some groups of calves to monitor this in the first 2-7 days of life
- Ensure calving pens are clean and appropriately stocked, this means well bedded, but also that the shed gets a thorough disinfection when mucked out. Infection pressure is always higher at the end of the calving period.
- Vaccinating dams with Rotavec-Corona in the 3-12 week period prior to calving can provide the calf with immunity against Rota and Corona virus – two common causes of calf scour

REMEMBER: calf scours will affect growth rate for ages after the bout has passed, and can cause major losses long term whether you sell your calves as stores or fatten them yourself. Even if the scours in your herd has been mild, and you have successfully managed it yourself- do mention it to one of us the next time we are out. It's definitely worth trying to stop it happening in the first place if we can.

PLANNING AHEAD

Next month we will be thinking about the up and coming Parasite Forecast (likely to be influenced by the very cold weather which is on its way in), and Semen Testing Bulls.

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