FriarsMoor Livestock Health

Newsletter
October 2023

REVISIT YOUR PNEUMONIA CHECKLIST!

By Lucy Hepworth BVSc MRCVS

If pneumonia remains an issue in calves on your farm, take a step back and revisit the many factors that impact immunity and challenge to the airways and lungs of the young calf.

Passive immunity

Colostrum confers protection against pneumonia pathogens for the first few weeks of life. Colostrum is paramount for immunity to scour pathogens, which can weaken the resilience of the calf to pneumonia. Trace element status at birth together with vitamins absorbed from colostrum will have an impact on calf health in the early weeks.

Environment

Fresh air will kill respiratory pathogens 10-20 times more quickly than 50% fresh air. To assess provision of fresh air, start by sitting next to the calves and see if you can smell ammonia. Smoke bombs are an excellent tool to check the speed of air exchange in calf housing.

A calf shed needs to be ventilated without calves being in draughts. If calves are in draughts, it will chill the calves and consequently divert energy which would have been used for immunity or growth into keeping warm. A wind gauge at calf level can easily be used to check air speed.

Calves under a month old are particularly vulnerable to cold stress. In a draught free environment, when ambient temperatures fall below 9^{0}C, they need additional feed to keep warm to grow at the same rate with an optimal immune system. Look at how well your calves are bedded up. For an optimum nesting score of 3, the calves' legs are generally not visible above the straw bed.

Respiratory pathogens don't survive well when relative humidity (RH) is under 75%. Inexpensive RH and temperature monitors can be installed in the calf house (ask us for more details).

Nutrition

Approximately 30% of the feed we give a calf is used to support the developing immune system. It seems logical to optimise this by feeding high levels of a good quality milk powder for the first 6 weeks of life.

Concentrate feed quality is important. The starch level in starter feeds is variable but an important driver of rumen development. Equally, take note of what cereals are included. Post weaning, make sure that sufficient concentrates are fed with forage to meet the needs of the growing animal.

Chopped straw is ideal for the developing rumen, acting as a 'toothpick' to clean the rumen papillae. Access to clean water is paramount to maximise concentrate and forage intakes.

Weaning over a 3-week period is recommended to make sure that calves are taking in a minimum of 2kg/head/day for 3 days ahead of weaning.

Stress

Disbudding and castration need to be timed well away from vaccination and weaning. Group changes should be kept to a minimum. Ideally, calves are not moved to new accommodation until a week after weaning. Stress has a negative impact on the immune system.

Concurrent disease should be minimised to allow an effective immune response to pneumonia. Scour caused by cryptosporidium, rotavirus or suboptimal nutrition is worth investigating and correcting. Ask your vet about subclinical coccidiosis if this hasn't already been checked in your calves.

Acquired immunity

Vaccine	Calves can start from:	Dosing schedule:	Immunity from:	Covers	Duration
Bovalto Intranasal	10 days old	Single dose	10 days after dose	PI3 and RSV virus	3 months
Bovalto Respi 3	2 weeks old	2 doses 3 weeks apart	3 weeks after 2nd dose	PI3, RSV virus and bacterial cover	6 months

Whilst these are our most used vaccines in youngstock, IBR cover can be warranted, especially in older cattle. Last year we also used some of the relatively new Mycoplasma vaccine with success. Farm vaccine protocols are decided on the basis on history and diagnostics on closed units, whilst predicting common pathogens for farms buying in stock.

Our vet techs run a weekly vaccine round ensuring that calves are vaccinated once they are eligible, without any dosage wastage or saving labour. Ring the practice if you are interested.

As a beef or a dairy farm, you may be eligible for animal health and welfare pathway funding which could be used to do a pneumonia

checklist on farm. Check for eligibility by visiting https://apply-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-review.defra.gov.uk/apply/start

Wynnstay's Tomi Jones talking to Friars Moor Youngstock Group about the efficiency of ventilation in a calf house.

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE PATHWAY

Follow the QR code to access your funding

- £436 for a sheep
- £522 for a beef cattle
- £372 for a dairy cattle

You will need your rural payments customer reference number.

Those already claimed have used the money for:

- Establishing infectious disease status
- Youngstock group membership benefits
- Mastitis analysis and investigation
- Parasite mapping and FWEC resistance testing
- Trace mineral testing
- Health and performance monitoring

You can also go to https://apply-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-review.defra.gov.uk/apply/start

NEW BUILD UPDATE

You will now be able to see our new temporary entranceway to allow vehicles to access the site! All the grass has also been cut down to prepare for work to begin. Follow our social medias including our youtube channel for regular updates!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

13 OCT

YOUNGSTOCK DISCUSSION GROUP

Feeding the weaned dairy heifer: fundamentals and new developments. Join us for an on-farm discussion with Isabelle England, Ruminant Nutritionist at Trouw Nutrition GB Friday 13th October, 11-2pm. Venue - TBC. Lunch is provided. Any dietary requirements – let us know. Please send details of concentrates currently being fed pre and post weaning to Lucy ahead of the meeting. Please wear clean wellies. Non youngstock group members are very welcome - £10 per person. Kindly sponsored by Trevor Birchall Agriculture.

18 OCT

MASTERING MEDICINES

The course will include identifying the condition you are treating, the best medicine to administer, the dose rate, route of administration and the withdrawal periods and storage and disposal. Wednesday 18th October @ Stalbridge COMMUNITY Hall – Go into the main Stalbridge Hall and turn right to access the community hall..10:30am-3pm. Cost is £84 inc VAT.

1 NOV

NEW HERDSPERSON COURSE

Our new course will give a complete introduction to all aspects central to the successful running of a dairy herd. The course will consist of seven modules each focusing on a new topic: farm walk, lameness and mobility scoring, calving, youngstock, common conditions, mastitis and nutrition and sustainability. Every Wednesday from 11:00-13:30 from 01/11/2023 until 13/12/2023 Locations: TBC. Cost is £420 (Limited spaces available)

TBC

CALF REARING LEVEL 2

This course is for those with experience of rearing calves who are looking to advance their knowledge to improve their rearing success. Winter, date and time to be confirmed. Cost is £100 inc VAT per person per course, with 25% discount for youngstock group members - Refreshments included.

TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST FOR ANY OF OUR LISTED OR FUTURE COURSES PLEASE CONTACT THE FARM OFFICE ON 01258 472314 OR EMAIL US AT FARMOFFICE@ FRIARSMOORLIVESTOCKHEALTH.CO.UK AND WE WILL ADD YOU TO OUR INTEREST LISTS.