



CALF TRACKER

We are pleased to announce the launch of our new Calf Tracker scheme. This is a new initiative from XL Vets which will be running in conjunction with our Herd Health Monitor scheme.

The aim of Calf Tracker is to maximise calf health and improve the growth rate from birth to weaning. In order to do this we will be concentrating on **5 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** which we will monitor on your farm for 2 months. Once collected, the data will be benchmarked anonymously against other farms so we can establish where improvements can be made.

CALF TRACKER LAUNCH MEETING

Tuesday 23rd February 2016

2.00pm

At The Farm, Longnor SY5 7QB

With thanks to Tim and Louise Downes

On signing up to the Calf Tracker scheme you will receive a free Calf Tracker starter pack. A vet will visit your farm to examine your calves, record weights, take blood samples for total protein and discuss data recording for scours and pneumonia. The same calves will be monitored over the next 2 months and we will re-visit to record the calf weights. We will then analyse this data and provide advice on where improvements can be made. If you find this to be useful there



Calf Tracker Starter Pack

- Calf Tracker guide
- Calf jacket
- Weigh tape
- Disease monitoring sheet

will be the option to continue monitoring these KPIs as part of the Herd Health Monitor.

We will be holding a launch meeting on Tuesday 23rd February. Please come along to hear more details about the Calf Tracker scheme and to sign up.

If you have any further questions please ask one of the vets

We will be stocking a new Oxytocin product called **Oxytobel**; this can be used exactly as Oxytocin as it contains the same active chemical at the same concentration but has the added advantages that the product comes in 50ml bottles and can be left out of the fridge for up to seven days.



TB Update for December

We carried out 41 tests, with a total number of animals tested coming to 7,965.

Of these animals, 3 were inconclusives and 12 were reactors.

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SHROPSHIRE FARM VETS
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SHROPSHIRE
FARM NEWS

2016 – THE SPRING OF TWIN LAMB DISEASE?

Last autumn's good grazing, along with the mild end to the year, have meant that we have seen a fair number of ewes that are in very high condition as they approach lambing. Ewes in too high a body condition score (BCS) in the run up to and following lambing run the risk of developing Twin Lamb Disease. The ewes' stomachs are squashed by the rapidly growing lambs, and excess fat in their abdomen, which means that they can't eat enough feed to provide all the energy they need. This is why animals scanned as carrying twins and triplets usually require additional concentrate feeding as they approach lambing. Ewes with Twin Lamb Disease appear dull, wobbly and drunk, and the condition can be fatal without prompt treatment.

This season we will be stocking a new product for the treatment of twin lamb disease in its earlier stages called "Ewe-Go". It contains propylene glycol (along with a number of other energy sources) and also calcium. Use of the product in other practices has shown promising results when compared to straight propylene glycol – particularly when used along with anti-inflammatories.

At this stage in the season it is really important to keep an eye on your ewes and not over-feed them if they are already a little over-fit (although crash dieting in the last 6 weeks is also a bad idea). The best thing to do is BCS some or all of your girls and split them according to BCS and expected lambing percentage – you can then feed the different groups according to their needs. It would also be advisable to take some blood samples from a few suspect over-fit ewes to check to see if they are showing any signs of early Twin Lamb Disease. If you have any concerns regarding the condition of your ewes please speak to us at the practice

Nathan

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LAMBING COURSE 2016

Saturday 6th February 2016

and

Saturday 27th February 2016

9am – 4pm

Venue to be confirmed

This year we will once again be running our lambing course. This day long course includes both classroom and practical sessions, with the aim of improving lambing skills, knowledge and confidence. Ideal for beginners or those wanting to stay up to date with current best practice, come along and learn from our vets in a relaxed and friendly environment.

The price is **£110/delegate** — this includes the course, refreshments, course notes, a hot lunch and the option to buy a discounted SFV 'Lambing Kit'

Please phone the practice on:

01743 860920

to book your place

Numbers are limited to a maximum of 10 so book early to avoid disappointment

Scours and Colostrum Management (Part1)

Alistair mentioned in his intro to the last newsletter that the warm humid conditions we currently have were ideal for disease build up – especially when combined with management problems such as high stocking rates, poor air flow and high humidity. We have found this very much to be the case particularly in neo-natal calf scours.

Although this article is primarily about colostrum management, do not under-estimate the importance in disease reduction through having calving boxes, etc that are clean, disinfected, and where possible and allowed to dry before using suitable dry bedding. This is a key element and one within your control.

There are two critical aspects of reducing disease in neonates, **HYGIENE** and **COLOSTRUM**.

The principles of colostrum management apply across all our species, whether it be calves, lambs or piglets. When they are born, animals have no immunity against disease as the placenta acts as a barrier preventing transfer of active immunity. The neonate therefore can only rely on the transfer of passive immunity from the mother through her colostrum.

If I now concentrate on calves, I apologise, but the same principles very much apply across the species.

To this end, the 4 Q's are critical in colostrum management, mainly:

- **QUALITY**
- **QUANTITY**
- **QUICKLY**
- **QUIETLY**

Quality

Here the goal is to reach levels >50g/L IgG in colostrum and there are several factors that can affect these levels:

1. Age of cow. Colostrum from heifers usually contains fewer antibodies as they haven't been exposed to a wide range of pathogens. Indeed in some heifer colostrum the IgG content can be negligible.
2. Vaccination status. Vaccinated dams will transfer more passive immunity than non-vaccinated animals.
3. Breed. Holstein colostrum typically will contain lower antibody levels than say Jerseys.
4. Short dry period. Less than three weeks will reduce the quality of the colostrum.
5. Poor transition diet. Or poor dry ewe/sow diet will effect colostrum quality and the immune status directly of mum, and therefore indirectly on the neonate.
6. Hygiene. High levels of bacteria in colostrum, or if there is a lot of bacterial contamination of the dam's teats, can lead to large numbers of enteric pathogens being ingested and setting up infection.



Quantity

Everyone will be aware of the old adage of "6 pints into the calf in the first six hours" before the calf starts to lose the ability to absorb IgG antibodies. This ability is fast diminishing after 6 hours, poor at 12 hours, and non-existent after 24 hours. Obviously if the calf sucks directly from the mother (this takes 20 minutes) then ideal, otherwise, milk the dam and feed in a bottle, or stomach tube, but time is critical. After this no more antibodies will be absorbed.

Quickly

Re-emphasising the point about the first six hours, but there is still some value in feeding colostrum for at least the first three days of life as there will be a degree of local protection as well as encouraging rapid gut development laying a solid foundation for fast, efficient growth in the future.

Quietly

Research has proven that calves that are stressed when receiving colostrum will not absorb the protective antibodies as well as those that are quiet/calm. This effectively means that a stressed calf needs more colostrum to achieve the same level of immunity compared with a non-stressed calf.

Next month we will talk about colostrum measurement, storage and replacement.

Monitoring disease levels can frequently point you in the direction of looking at your calf management and colostrum management protocols. This has been a feature the **Herd Health Monitor** that we have successfully started on some farms with a view to improving health and production right up to first calving. Please also have a read of the **Calf Tracker** article as this will also collect information relevant to calves. Herd Health Monitor and Calf Tracker can and should work together and in this current farming world, everyone is looking for efficiencies, ie doing things better.

Rod

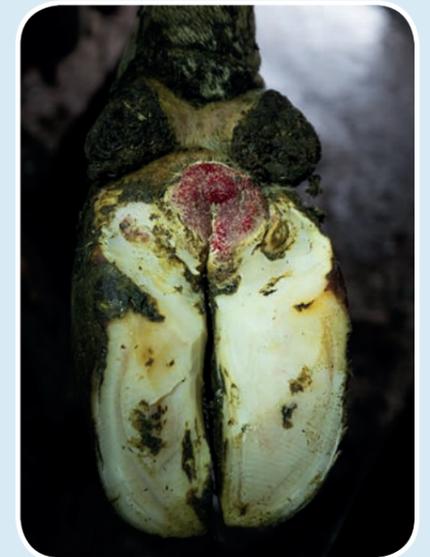
Is your footbath working for you... or for DIGI?

During a visit to one of our farms this week I was reminded again of how important a correct footbath routine is. I was there to do a therapeutic trim on lame cows that had been seen multiple times before and hadn't healed. All of them had primary lesions that were infected by Digital dermatitis as well. This super infection had turned fairly benign sole ulcers and white line diseases in to vet cases. When I questioned the situation it turned out that through circumstances the footbath hadn't been used for the last 6 month.

Digi is highly infectious and spreads through a herd like wild fire and is very painful to the animals if not addressed prompt and effectively. On average it will cost you **£75 per case**.

Treating active Digi (M1) is fairly straight forward. Lift the foot, clean, dry and spray with anti biotic. (Blue spray).

Preventing the spread of Digi is done by a footbath at the correct concentration and frequency. As for foot bath concentration, a questionnaire that we ran for about a year now, revealed that only 1 in 20 of our clients has the right concentration in their footbath. See the table below for recommended footbath concentrations.



Foot bath concentrations

Foot Bath Size in Liters	Copper sulphate @ 8% in kg	Formalyn @ 3% in liters	Copper Sulphate with Sodium bisulphate	
			Copper sulphate @ 4% in kg	Sodium bisulphate @ 0.1% in grams
200	16	6	8	200
250	20	7.5	10	250
300	24	9	12	300
350	28	10.5	14	350
400	32	12	16	400

The frequency of footbath is dependent on the number of Digi cases. This includes the acute cases (M1) and chronic cases (M4). But for starters you can work with a mobility score. You can do this yourself or get us to do this for you. (We now charge a nominal fee of £30/ hour for this) This will help with the decision of how often to footbath. One a solution at the right concentration has been made up it will last 200 passes for a 200 liter footbath. (ie: 1 liter / cow)

We sell copper sulphate and Sodium bisulphate through Shropshire Hoof Care. The latter reduces the amount of copper sulphate needed by 50% which makes for a sizeable saving.

Footbath design is more important than you think. First and foremost it needs to be easy and practical to clean and fill. Ideally the base is at floor level, so cows step over a heel stone to enter and exit. The depth of the solution is minimal **10 cm** (4 inches). Each foot should have a minimum of 2 dunks (However recommendations are 3 dunks/foot). This relates to a footbath length of **3 meters** to 3.5 meters.

If you have any queries regarding footpath protocols or lameness plans ask for Roel or our foot trimmer Simeon who will be more than happy to help.

Roel