

Calf Scour

Scour in young calves may be caused by *E-coli*, rotavirus, coronavirus, salmonella or Cryptosporidia. Where outbreaks of scour occur it is important to get the cause accurately diagnosed as treatment for one may be useless against another. We have seen a lot of inappropriate treatment of scour this year. Snap tests are available at the practice for instant diagnosis and support is at hand.

Some farms have had severe problems with scour. We have investigated a few of these herds and found a variety of underlying causes including poor immunity caused by inadequate colostrum, selenium deficiency, copper & iodine deficiency, over crowding etc.

If you have had a severe outbreak it is worthwhile investigating the cause to prevent it happening again. Contact us immediately. The use of Locatim in the rest of the calves born can be beneficial.

Treatment of scour is based on replacing the fluids lost and killing the bug responsible. Antibiotics have no effect on viruses or Cryptosporidia. Fluid replacement is usually by oral fluids e.g, effydral, glutalyte or vetlyte plus. If the calf is unable to stand unassisted, cold or with sunken eyes then a drip may be necessary to save it. It is important that this happens prior to kidney failure for successful results. Some calves may be wobbly and have "full" abdomens—these calves may be acidotic. These calves require a special type of drip to reverse the acidosis.

It is not advised to withdraw milk from scoury calves. Milk feeds the calf's gut and prevents it from being damaged. Intestine damage is the reason calves do not thrive after scour. In addition calves have little reserves and die of malnutrition quite quickly. Finally be aware that calves can scour for other reasons such as severe navel ill, peritonitis or indeed having a high temperature. Accurate diagnosis is very important for successful outcomes.

Colostrum intake is key

Accurate diagnosis is critical for success

Fluid replacement is number 1

Investigate severe problems

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Nematodirus warning has been issued by Department

Nematodirus Warning—Lambs

The Department has issued a Nematodirus warning as the weather conditions have been ideal for the parasite. Lambs typically have scour and a “humpy” appearance. The disease is often confused with coccidiosis (which requires different treatment) but a simple dung sample will tell the difference in 36 hours. Lambs should be treated in late April/early May as losses are likely. Treatment should be with a white or yellow drench as the more modern ivermectins are not effective against this parasite. *Valbazen* is recommended.

Coccidiosis

Coccidiosis is caused by a persistent parasite with likes moist conditions. Signs include blood stained scour, black dung, straining (forcing) or no signs at all.

If one animal has coccidiosis in a group then the entire group should be treated. If the animals are infected and then treated normally they are immune to future infection. Many farmers strategically use vecoxan or baycox in this way to prevent outbreaks/losses. Timing is critical for success. Typically a week after disbudding is the ideal time.

Coccidiosis has a three week life cycle so calves/lambs under three weeks are unlikely to have coccidiosis. Bought in calves are likely to be infected so blanket treatment is advised. Contact us for advice.

Clostridial Disease.

Many farmers vaccinate their cattle and sheep against clostridial diseases. However very few do this correctly

- Animals need to be vaccinated twice 4-6 weeks apart in their first year.
- A single shot booster is required the following year.
- A single shot in the first year s **ineffective** and will not protect animals against disease
- Ten in one vaccines are better than Blackleg vaccine in cattle as many animals die each year from *Clostridium sordelli*, malignant oedema and Blacks disease.
- If ewes are vaccinated properly to start and boosted a month before lambing, lambs will not need vaccination until 3 months
- Vaccination is the only effective way to control clostridial disease.

Pre-breeding Examination of Cows

Dairy cows that are at risk of not going in calf in a ten week breeding season should be examined two weeks before the start of breeding season.

Cows that are deemed “at risk” include cows that

- Retained cleanings
- Are dirty
- Hard calving
- Twins
- Thin
- Calved after 17th March
- Haven't had a heat

These cows can be examined using the scanner and metricheck to increase their chances of going in calf and therefore reducing culling rates.

Contact us to arrange a visit in mid April.



Using a vasectomized bull increases submission rate

Getting cows back in calf

Getting cows back in calf is one of the most important jobs on the farm. The two main things to be concerned about are firstly, submission rate (cows coming into heat) and secondly, conception rate.

Submission rate.

Cows should be back cycling by at least 42 days post calving. Things that delay this include excessive weight loss after calving and low energy intake, uterine disease, the effect of suckling in suckler cows and poor heat detection. Any dairy cow not seen in heat by 42 days post calving should be examined by us using both the scanner and metricheck to ensure that she is not dirty, has a cystic ovary or other problem. This pre-breeding exam can significantly improve breeding performance and has been very worthwhile on farms in our practice. Contact us for details.

Poor heat detection is very common as it is very difficult to have time to observe cows adequately to pick up cows with short or silent heats. Tail paint and scratch cards are useful and available from the practice. Using a vasectomized bull with a chinball marker has transformed the fertility rates on farms in the practice and is the best way to detect cows in heat. A lively well developed Friesian animal is the best candidate to use. Vasectomy only costs €80 and is very successful.

Conception rate.

Poor conception rates may be caused by bulls with poor fertility, mistiming of AI, negative energy balance, diseases like Lepto, IBR and BVD, copper and iodine deficiency and other causes. If you think you have an issue with poor fertility contact the practice for advice.

The old saying “a stitch in time saves nine” is very true with fertility—a little veterinary intervention in May can make a big difference to the outcome of the breeding season.

XL Vets Training

Disbudding Calves

We will be holding a few short (2 hour) training events in the coming weeks on disbudding calves. Group sizes will be small (10-12 farmers) and the event will include

- Methods of disbudding
- Technique for using local anaesthetic
- Pain relief
- Aftercare

The event will be practical and that everyone will get a chance to disbud a calf themselves. Contact us if you want to attend. The training is free.

Dairy Mentor Programme

We still have a few spots left on the dairy mentor programme. If you are interested contact us ASAP.

Clinic Times

Clinic times in Ahascragh are 2pm and 7pm Monday to Friday. Saturday 2 pm only. We encourage clients to book in for clinic so we can best use our resources to ensure you are seen quickly. Appointments for evening clinic will begin at 6pm where this can be arranged.

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information.

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