

# FARM FIRST NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2021

**Calf Scour** or diarrhoea is a common problem in calves and is caused by viruses, bacteria, parasites, nutritional issues and many other factors. We attend to see most calf scour outbreaks from Christmas onwards, as housing gets more contaminated through the winter. A faecal sample can be examined to find the cause of the diarrhoea which is very useful for deciding on the treatment needed and how to prevent new cases. The sample should be as fresh as possible and from newly infected calves that have not yet been treated, and **Farming Connect** funding can be used for this type of test.



Most causes of scour are very infectious, so it is important to isolate any sick calves into a separate pen. Ensure there is a deep bed of fresh straw, a heat lamp if needed, and free access to water and hay. Scour causes dehydration as the calf loses a lot of fluid and electrolytes. If the calf is severely dehydrated and cannot stand, call the vet as the calf may need intravenous fluids. If the calf is fairly bright and on its feet, oral fluids and TLC are key. Rehydion gel can be used to replace the electrolytes and fluid, whilst allowing recovery, repair, and growth to continue. Mix 40ml with 2 litres of warm milk or water and give twice daily. It can also be given straight from the bottle. Continue feeding milk to allow the calf to provide high energy levels. Electrolyte powders can also be used, but these should be mixed with water not milk. To help reduce pain, inflammation, and fever anti-inflammatories such as Metacam or Flunixin can be given. However, these should not be used in severely dehydrated calves as they can cause kidney failure. In some cases, antibiotics are given to treat secondary bacterial infections.

It is important to prevent spread of infection and an outbreak of disease. Pens should be kept clean and bedded up regularly with fresh straw. Colostrum is full of antibodies and energy and is essential for every calf to reduce the risks of many diseases including scour. It is generally recommended that calves receive 4 litres of colostrum within the first two hours of life. Hygiene is essential and feeding equipment should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Troughs, pens, calving areas, and hurdles should also be kept clean. Milk prepared at the wrong temperature or concentration may cause nutritional scour. Scour in calves may also occur if animals are fed at irregular intervals, so a regular routine is important. Isolation, prompt examination, and treatment of sick individuals are essential to control outbreaks. Vaccines are available against most of the infectious causes of calf diarrhoea but will only work if calves receive adequate volumes of good quality colostrum.

**For more information please call Farm First Vets on 01873 840167.**

## Closamectin Pour-On



This product has been unavailable for a while but is now back in stock for us to order. Please note that there has been a change to the instructions, which now state that all animals in a group should be treated, and that treated animals

should be kept apart from untreated animals throughout the withdrawal period. This is due to the significant risk of cross-contamination due to grooming/licking.



## CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

**Friday, 24th December - 8:15am to 1:00pm**

**Christmas Day and Boxing Day - closed**

**Monday, 27th and Tuesday, 28th - closed**

**Wed 29th and Thur 30th - 8:15am to 5:30pm**

**Friday 31st - 8:15am to 1:00pm**

**New Years Day, 2nd and 3rd January - closed**

**Open as usual from Tuesday, 4th January**



## Higher risk of Ergot in feed stocks this autumn

SAC have warned of a higher risk of Ergot contamination of grain and headed grass this year, as a result of the 2021 growing season, weather conditions, seed availability etc. Farmers should keep an eye out for ergots (right) in stored grain and particularly big bale silage / haylage made with mature grass that has headed. Any pastures held back for reserved late autumn or overwintering grazing should also be considered. The last confirmed case confirmed by SRUC Veterinary Services was as a result of haylage contamination.



The clinical signs seen are mainly as a result of blood vessel constriction with gangrene at the extremities (usually ears and lower limbs), associated lameness and lower limb swelling. Some animals may recover if identified early enough (see left), but euthanasia on welfare grounds may be required.

## Do you have chronic lame cows with toe necrosis?

**Mobility Score 3 on more than one score?**

**Repeatedly seen by the foot trimmer but not getting better?**

These cows may be suffering from a condition called toe necrosis, which can occur for a number of reasons, e.g. when a cow's soles are too thin, resulting in bruising and abscess formation in the



toe which disrupts the blood supply to the toe. This makes cows extremely lame. Traditionally these cows would have had their affected claw amputated, however we have recently been developing a new procedure. Careful paring under local anaesthetic to remove the damaged tissue allows the cow to heal by growing new horn. One way to tackle any chronic lameness issue is to collaborate your vet and foot trimmer to resolve cases as quickly and efficiently as possible. Nipping problems in the bud before they become long term issues helps to save money and maintain a high standard of welfare for the cows. **For more information speak to one of the team.**

### Pre-Lambing Preparation

As we approach lambing this year, make sure you get your flock in the best condition for giving birth and feeding their lambs. We have put together a package to look at the diet, forage analysis and carry out some blood sampling to make sure that their nutrition is correct in the run up to lambing. Farms in Wales should be able to use **Farming Connect** funding for this. Please call us for a chat if you are interested in all or part of this service.

**Also, don't forget to give ewes their Heptavac - P boosters  
4-6 weeks before lambing.**

### !!! JOKE !!!

One of our client's wives said to him, "For Christmas, take £200 and buy me a Nativity scene. If there's anything left over, you can spend it on fishing stuff!"



(For some reason, Rob loved this one – not that he's tight...)

We wish all our clients a  
Merry Christmas and a  
Prosperous New Year