

Those few minutes of extra daylight a day soon mount up and are a real tonic for everyone, especially at the moment. The increase in age in folks out getting their exercise is also a nice sight to see too. Coronavirus vaccinations are gathering pace and we are doing what we can within the practice too to step up and help roll the mass vaccination plan out in our area, with our primary care trust. I'm sure there are many farmers around too, who are a dab-hand with an automatic vaccinator!

These last two weeks we have seen an increase in the number of cows with twisted stomachs (displaced abomasum).

Most are to the left, wedging up between the rumen and the body wall, however some twist around on themselves on the right-hand-side, necking off the blood supply after they have dilated and obstructing the outflow of the stomach contents. This latter category is a right-sided abomasal torsion and is an emergency. If in doubt, don't delay in seeking treatment, as a few hours' delay can make the difference between life and death. Although a few of these are unsalvageable, most pull through and make the procedure quite a rewarding one to undertake. We have a crack team of surgeons who are all happy to undertake these procedures too.

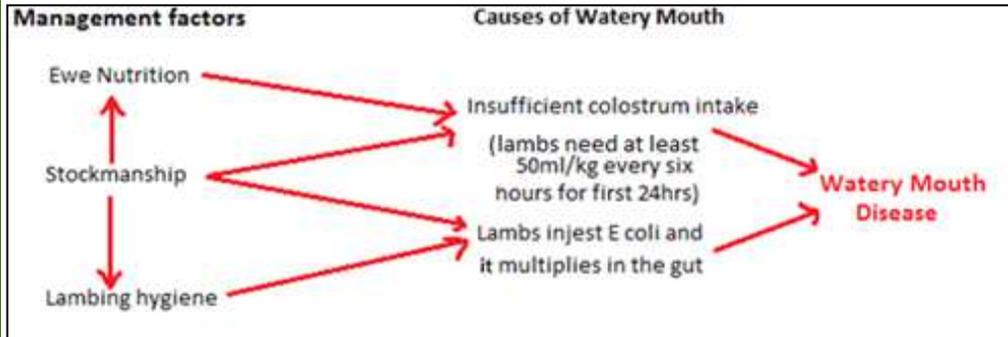


Our mastitis laboratory is kept in action by a steady stream of samples too- most of which go on for antibiotic sensitivity testing in-house. This testing is set to become a critical pillar of treatment going forward, as supply issues with lactating cow antibiotic tubes and tightening of legislation on the use of antibiotics continues. Good outcomes for the farm are still achieved, however a little more planning, investigation and execution is required. For example, regular culture of E. coli mastitis cases in a timely manner can confirm or reject diagnosis and get a picture of sensitivity patterns. Sensitivity patterns are essential in proving prudent veterinary prescription and use of all antibiotics, especially those in the category Highest Priority-Critically Important Antibiotics (HP-CIAs).

Take advantage of being in lockdown to expand your knowledge. We have run one online event so far and the next is on the 3rd of February where we will **Focus on Fluke. Give us a call at the office to register for this free event. For more details see the back page.**

Controlling Watery Mouth

Watery mouth outbreaks in young lambs (usually 6-48 hrs old) can be a headache for any shepherd, but particularly when lambing large numbers inside. Issues with watery mouth are seen when a combination of factors come together. Lambs are most likely to suffer when they have not received enough colostrum or they ingest very large numbers of bacteria from the environment as well as bacteria from ewes when suckling. Lambs quickly become dull, have a wet mouth and are reluctant to feed. They can also scour out and develop rattle belly. As lambs often die within hours, and E coli can be resistant to a lot of the commonly used antibiotics, prevention is vital.



Colostrum, colostrum, colostrum!

Colostrum plays a major role in preventing watery mouth, as well as giving lambs the best start in general. The quality of colostrum that a ewe produces is determined by ewe condition and nutrition therefore good management of ewes is vital. If a ewe is short of colostrum or it is poor quality lambs must be supplemented. Frozen colostrum from ewes having singles but that are producing plenty is best, but if this is not available then a good quality replacement powder should be used.



Lambing shed management

It's not much of a surprise that problems with watery mouth tend to be worse in more intensive lambing systems as there is a bigger build up of E coli in a smaller area. Regular cleaning out of lambing pens and plenty of clean dry straw helps to reduce how dirty ewes get and therefore reduces the amount of E coli that a lamb will ingest from the ewes fleece and udder. Winter shearing or dagging of ewes prior to housing can also help in a similar way. It is also a good idea to leave tailing and castrating with rubber rings until the lambs are a day or so old as it can discourage lambs from sucking vital colostrum.

Beth Collins

Calf Scours

Calf scour is a frustratingly common disease experienced on the majority of cattle farms, however with some diagnostic tests and attention to detail; this disease can be successfully reduced and even eliminated. Investigations need to start at the beginning i.e. calving, and look at calf rearing as a whole. It is then important to look at colostrum intake (calf needs at least 3 litres of good quality colostrum in the first six hours); calf shed hygiene and feeding protocols. Samples of scour can be analysed in the practice to help determine the main cause of disease.

The treatment of scours in calves has two principle aims. Firstly, to cure the calf, but also to make sure the disease doesn't spread to the other animals in the shed.

Different pathogens tend to cause disease in calves at slightly different ages, though this guide does not always hold:

Cause	Timing
Enterotoxigenic E coli K99	1-5 days
Rotavirus species A	5-10 days
Bovine Coronavirus	7-15 days
Cryptosporidia	15-35 days
Salmonella	3 weeks
Coccidiosis	4 weeks
Nutritional	chronic

A very poorly calf in week one, with runny, lumpy dung and a fever/chill, often signifies E.Coli. The best thing to do with this calf is speak to the vet as it is likely to require intravenous fluids and intensive care.

During the second week of life, Rotavirus can be a problem. Typically this is characterised by a yellow paste-like scour. Feeding milk more frequently (up to 6 times a day) in combination with electrolytes can help, and if you have any, feeding colostrum through this period will help to line the gut with antibodies. Antibiotics are not usually indicated as this scour is not caused by bacteria.

In the calf's third weeks, a watery scour coloured white, yellow or green (often containing blood) can highlight a problem with Cryptosporidiosis. If this is a constant problem, check calf hygiene and colostrum protocols. Cryptosporidiosis may be controlled by the use of a product containing halofuginone administered orally daily for up to one week after birth.

Once a calf is over four weeks old, it will be at risk of Coccidiosis. The muck will be a brownish-green colour, quite runny and often bloody too. The calf will most likely be dehydrated, losing weight and may be straining. Coccidiosis can be prevented by avoiding feed getting contaminated with dung, good hygiene and the availability of fresh, clean water. Coccidiosis may be controlled by use of products that contain diclazuril or toltrazuril.

A calf with a yellowish, custardy scour that is slightly lethargic, but has no fever has most likely got a nutritional scour. Reducing the amount of milk fed for two feeds, then steadily increasing
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will help; as will working more carefully and hygienically. Check the mixing of any milk powder and that it is given to calves at the same times each day.

Control

Control of neonatal calf diarrhoea is based on four equally important aspects:

- **Hygiene** - the calving box and early calf rearing accommodation must be cleaned and disinfected between calves. An infected box can spread pathogens to the next calf using it even if it does not look visibly contaminated. Avoid mixing young calves with older animals.
- **Colostrum management** - Ensure all calves receive at least 10% of bodyweight as colostrum within the first 12 hours after birth. This equates to 3 litres in 6 hours, followed by another 2 litres. Subsequently calves should receive either post-colostral milk for up to 3 weeks or colostrum mixed in with normal milk to ensure an ongoing supply of antibody to protect the calves against particularly viral infection.
- **Biosecurity** - Maintaining biosecurity involves avoiding introduction of infected animals into the herd and/or implementing strict isolation / quarantine of introductions until proven negative, and restricting access of calves to external sources of infection e.g. bringing calves to the mart and mixing them back in with home reared calves if unsold.
- **Vaccination** - The use of vaccine in cows must be considered if problems associated with *E. coli*, rotavirus or coronavirus are identified. This will increase the number of specific antibodies in colostrum but will not transfer antibodies to the calf through other means so needs to be used in combination with appropriate feeding of colostrum.

*****Focus on Fluke*****

Wednesday 3rd February 7.30pm

Free online event

Join us for a virtual client evening to discuss all things Fluke. Covering lifecycles, detection and control. There will be opportunities to discuss fluke control on your farms and ask questions.



To register please contact Anne on 01539 722692



Kendal Surgery

Monday to Friday 8.30am—7.00pm
Saturday 8.30am-12noon
Tel:01539 722692

Kirkby Lonsdale Surgery

Monday & Thursday 8.30am-7.00pm
Tuesday 8.30am-6.00pm
Wednesday & Friday 8.30am-5.00pm
Saturday 8.30am-12 noon
Tel:015242 71221

www.westmorland-vets.co.uk