

December 2009

Where has the year gone, the Christmas fair is on today and the weather has certainly taken a wintry turn. We are seeing a fair few calves suffering with pneumonia. This sudden drop in temperature is an ideal stress to trigger pneumonia. For anyone with cattle out don't forget the **mag** buckets, as I have just learnt to my detriment!!



We had a very successful Jolly with Oli to see the calf igloos. The points that we all discussed are summarised below:

1. Calves thrive in a **clean, dry environment**. It needs to be **free from draughts** but access to fresh air is crucial. Calves can't cope with **changes in temperature**, a straw barrier at the back of the shed is ideal so that the calves can **shelter in the warmth**.
2. The key to rearing a healthy calf is **colostrum**. Calves need a **minimum of 6 pints** in the first 6 hours of life with a total of **6 litres in 24 hours**. Colostrum not only provides **antibodies** to diseases but also provides an **excellent source of energy**, which is crucial to survival. Build up a frozen colostrum bank, from cows on your farm, as this colostrum will have the antibodies to the specific bugs on your farm. If the calf hasn't sucked then tube with colostrum.
3. Good **hygiene** is crucial for the new born calf. Make sure the calving box is frequently cleaned and disinfected. Keep the mothers as clean as possible. Wear **gloves** when calving a cow. Keep the new born calf away from older calves.
4. **Try not to disturb calving cows**. Too much interference can take the mothers mind off calving. If she has not got on with it after **4 hours**, this is the **time to put your hand in**. One of the worst things to do is to move a heifer when she has started calving. If calving is interrupted the calf can come out very **dopey** as it is **starved of oxygen**.
5. **Know the disease status of your farm and vaccinate accordingly**. Make sure you are up to date with BVD, IBR and leptospirosis. All of these can affect the viability of your calves.

Dairy cell check:

Top S.C.C	135	Average calving index	421
Top 1/3 rd average	137	Ave milk / cow /yr	8
Bottom 1/3 rd average	263	UK ave milk/cow/yr	6.9

AND FINALLY We would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas. We hope all your wishes of better beef / sheep and milk prices are come true!!!

Our office closes at **4 pm on 24th December** re-opening for the **morning on 28th December**, then normal until a **half day on the 31st December** and **resuming normal business on Sat 2nd Jan**. Please make sure you book and collect your drugs well in advance as the wholesalers don't do as many hours as you or us????