

December 2015

First of all we would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our clients a **very happy Christmas** and **thank each and every one** of you for your **continued support**. It means a great deal to us and we are **very grateful**. It has been a very **tricky year financially** for every sector and we can just hope that there is light at the end of the tunnel. We are all hoping that Father Christmas is able to bring us better prices across the sectors.

So what are we seeing at the moment: **In the cattle:**

- Over the last month we have seen an increase in the amount of **calf scour**.
- As we all know calf scour causes a **significant economic loss** in our herds. For **beef** it has been calculated that a single case of scour **costs £58 per case and £44 in dairy**. At the moment these are costs people can well do without.
- All the major causes of **infectious diarrhoea** are commonly **found on farms whether or not scour is a problem**.
- There are lots of different causes of diarrhea: both **infectious and non infectious**.
- In young calves the 6 most common causes are:

1: Rotavirus 2: Coronavirus 3: E coli 4: Salmonella Dublin or typhimurium. 5: Crypto 6: Cocci

- **Mixed infections** with more than one bug are common, but the **trigger factors** are often influenced by **environment and management** and so there is a lot which can be done to try and control it.

Diagnostic tests are very worthwhile to try and **influence treatment, prevention and control strategies**.

- Often the infection is **not in itself what kills** the calf it is the **dehydration and acidosis** from the loss of fluid and salts. Though intestinal damage causes **long term failure to thrive**.

Treatment should always involve the use of a **rehydration therapy** paying particular attention to the **levels of bicarb** in the product, ie **effydral**. It is often **not beneficial to starve the calf** as the energy from the milk is very important in gut repair. If the calf is **looking well** and has **recovered** from the main clinical signs but not stopped scouring there are certain **binders** such as **recofast** which work very well.

In the sheep:

The dreaded **sheep scab** has reared its ugly head: Again the cost of this can turn a profitable flock into one that is quickly losing money. An outbreak of scab can cost up to **£18 / ewe** through loss in production, added work and treatment costs.

- It is vital that all **suspect cases** are brought to the **vet for correct diagnosis** as treatment for scab is often totally different to lice treatment.
- **Good biosecurity** is essential to prevent the introduction of scab. This not only involves the **maintenance of good fencing** to prevent infected sheep from entering your farm but also **quarantine dosing** of all incoming sheep with either cydectin or dectomax. These sheep should be kept **isolated** from the main flock for at least 2 weeks and observed for signs of infection.

The sheep scab mite can **last off the sheep for up to 16 days**. This means fence posts, trees and anything that sheep like to scratch on are **sources of infection**. Likewise **races and trailers** need to be cleaned and disinfected after use.

- **Treatment** is relatively simple as there are only 2 options, either the dip or injection with a group 3 wormer.

In a recent post mortem survey in sheep which we carried out we saw a high incidence of **OPA / SPA / driving sickness / Jaagsiekte**. They are all the same thing.

- This disease is spread through the air by **inhalation of the virus or direct contact with the infected snot**.
- The **symptoms** are a difficulty in breathing, the sheep hold back when they are being moved. They often have weight loss and there is lots of discharge coming from the nose. A good diagnosis is to pick the sheep up by the back end and see if lots of fluid, pour from their nose.

The **incubation period** of this disease can be very long ie 2 – 4 years.

- Again it is **introduced to the flock** through the **purchase** of an infected sheep which may appear 100% healthy.
- Reliable tests to enable early detection of this disease are not as of yet available.

It shows the importance of having **sheep regularly post mortemed** so we can see what is going on, on your farm. If the sheep are culled early then spread is minimized and so is the financial loss to your pocket.

Trefaldwyn vets invite each and everyone of you for a Christmas drink and a pub quiz at the Talbot in Berriew on Wed 16th December 2015. Light refreshments will be provided. Pub quiz to start at 20.00.

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Please RSVP by 14/12/15.