

January 2011

Happy New Year and what a cold start to the season. As ever with this cold weather and huge changes we are seeing huge amounts of pneumonia in calves. Not wanting to sound like a broken down old record, please see previous newsletters for how to help prevent.

- ❖ We are seeing an increase in scours in calves. This cold weather is stressing the calves out and they are more susceptible to disease.
- ❖ Make sure the calves have good shelter where they can keep out of the draughts and cold. Hygiene is also really important, make sure the calving boxes are kept as clean as possible. Paramount to calf survival is the amount of colostrum that the new born receives. The first 24 hours is critical, in the dairy we recommend 6 pints in the first 6 hours of life, with a total of 6 litres in 24 hours.

In the sheep we are having a few sudden deaths, on one of the post mortems we found yew leaves. Make sure you are feeding your sheep enough or else they will start to scavenge and eat the poisonous plants.

- ❖ When moving hungry sheep it can trigger calcium deficiency, where by they drop down and are simply unable to move. If this is the case then place 50ml of calcium under the skin and call us at the vets.

Skim versus Whey based milk replacers;

Many calf rearers believe that when artificially reared calves are fed skim rather than whey based milk replacers that performance is improved with calves having a better coat bloom.

The results of a recent study which compared 2 groups of calves fed on either whey or skimmed milk powder, showed.

1. Calf performance was very good in both groups, with both exceeding the MLC target for rearing calves to 12 weeks of 115kg.
2. There was no significant difference in daily live weight gain between either group. In fact the calves reared on the whey based system ended up slightly heavier.
3. Concentrate intakes from start to weaning were not significantly different.
4. Concentrate intake from weaning to 12 weeks was better in the whey based group. This in turn leads to a better rumen development.
5. The skim fed calves had a better coat bloom.
6. It was cheaper to feed the whey based powder than the skimmed based powder.

Sheep measles and bladder worm.

Cysticercus Ovis and C tenuicollis. These are both increasing problems.

There are no visible signs in the live lamb, but when slaughtered in the case of measles the infected carcass is full of small cysts throughout the meat and is usually condemned. The bladder worm infects the liver along with other parts of the offal.

Once the sheep has been exposed to these worms it is impossible to prevent the cysts from developing.

Here are a few measure to try and help reduce the problem.

1. Ensure all farm dogs are wormed at least once every 3 months.
2. Ensure all visiting dogs have been recently wormed.
3. Ensure all dead stock is removed quickly and disposed of correctly.
4. Treat sheep meat before feeding to the dogs.
5. Encourage the public to pick up their dog poos off your fields.

Dairy cell check:

Average S.C.C	156	Average protein	3.5	Average % of cows with a SCC above 300 in different stages of lactation
Average milk yield	8.5	Calving to conception rate	137	0-99 days 9
Average milk / cow / yr	8			100 - 199 days 8
				200 + days 13.5