

January 2012

Happy New Year to all of Trefaldwyn Vets clients. May the New Year bring continued high livestock prices, lower the cost of fuel and certainly not vice versa.

In the main **pneumonia** is still our biggest problem. For those of you who **vaccinate** this has been kept to a minimum. For those who don't, this is ideal weather to bring about the condition. Please think about your **housing conditions**, your **colostrum in takes** and your **vaccination protocol**. Don't forget that **other diseases** such as BVD can have a really big impact on pneumonia, especially with bought in cattle.

- Remember the farmer who bought in 30 calves of which 15 calves died. On blood sampling the remaining 15, six had BVD.

Practical ways to reduce coccidiosis.

1. When buildings are empty then either **steam clean** or use an ammonia based disinfectant.
2. Try not to **overstock** the sheds or fields.
3. Aim for a **compact lambing or calving**, this way the youngsters are all roughly the same age.
 - Older calves/ lambs will have cocci in larger numbers that can kill younger animals.
4. Try to batch your calves / lambs into **3 week batches** ie maximum 21 day age difference.
5. A **good colostrum in take** is vital. We can **blood sample some calves** to make sure this is good enough or you can check the quality.
6. **Clipping tails/dagging** will help to keep udders clean.
7. Use plenty of **clean dry bedding**, making sure that drainage is adequate.
8. Regularly **change the position** of shelters and troughs in the fields as well as calf hutches.
9. Place water and feed troughs so they **can't easily get faeces in them**.
- 10 Avoid grazing young animals on fields where there was a **problem last year**.

Health risks associated with mouldy feeds.

Feeding mouldy silage during housing is often by **mistake** and occasionally **unavoidable**.

But there are **financial implications** from potential **diseases** and from **reduced palatability of spoiled feed**.

- a. **Listeria**: meningitis, eye problems, abortion, pneumonia and septicaemia.
- b. **Fungal infections**: abortion, pneumonia.
- c. **Bacillus**: abortions and stillbirths.
- d. **Mycotoxins**: Non specific problems, joint swellings.

Into the shit:

How your cow pats look is a very **good indicator** to how well your herd is and how well you are feeding them.

- They should be **reasonably firm**, with a **flat top** and **about 1 inch deep**. They should be a creamy consistency and able to stand a rose up in them!!
- On very high fibre diets this may be **firmer and drier** but if too firm it can indicate a lack of rumen degradable protein.
- If **very loose** the **converse** is occurring and the animal is suffering from rumen acidosis.

Rumen acidosis is where the rumen pH drops below 6. If this occurs the animal stops eating and her performance drops. It is caused by 2 factors:

- a. Large feeds containing high levels of sugars / starch.
- b. Reduced rumination / cudging ie **poor cow comfort**. A cow should chew her cud for 8 – 10 hours per day.

Grants:

- There are a variety of grants out there which will help your productivity/ efficiency.

In England there are **various capital grants** where as in Wales there are grants for looking at specific problems.

If interested please ask Oli.

Foot trimming course.

Back in October we ran a pilot 4 days cattle foot trimming course in association with Liverpool University. It was in Churchstoke and seemed to be very worthwhile and people got lots out of it.

Please could you let Oli know if you would be **interested in attending one of these**.