

PEAK VETERINARY NEWS

December 2019

Pneumonia in Calves

With the sudden change in temperature we are starting to see more cases of pneumonia. Pneumonia is a 'multifactorial' disease which means that it is a result of a combination of factors: infectious causes (viruses/bacteria/parasites) and environmental/management factors.

Pneumonia is costly in both the short term due to direct cost of the disease and long term due to slower growth rates and reduced fertility as an adult.

Clinical signs:

- Dullness
- Decreased appetite
- Breathing heavily / lifting
- Temperatures >39 °C
- Discharge from eyes and nose

If left too long without treatment it may result in permanent damage to airways causing severe breathing difficulties and at the stage treatment is likely to be ineffective and the calf may die.

Causative Agents:

- Bacterial
 - Mannheimia haemolytica (also known as Pasturella)
 - Histophilus somni
 - Mycoplasma species
- Viral
 - Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR)
 - Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD)
 - Bovine Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)
 - Parainfluenza 3 (PI3)

Treatment:

First line of treatment is the use of an anti-inflammatory (e.g. metacam or flunixin), this will reduce the calf's temperature alongside reduction of inflammation of airways. Antibiotics may be required depending on if there are signs of a bacterial infection (e.g. snotty nose). Antibiotics are not required if it appears to only be viral.

Prevention:

- Good colostrum intake: calves should receive at least 3l colostrum within the first 2 hours of life.
- Good calf nutrition: dairy calves should have water available at all times and have 2l milk or milk replacer 2-3 times daily. Concentrates should be made available from 1-2 weeks old.
- Minimise stress: disbudding and castration should be done early with appropriate pain relief. Avoid weaning at the same time as movement in suckler calves and avoid mixing calves of different ages.

The mainstay to prevention of disease is through reducing infectious pressure:

- Always ensure good hygiene in the calves' housing.
- Ventilation is extremely important in the prevention of pneumonia. If you can smell ammonia in your calf shed it is **NOT** well ventilated.
- Vaccination. Different vaccines are available depending on the infectious agent on your farm. Blood tests can be performed to identify the main infectious agents.





Ringworm

Unlike its name would suggest, ringworm is actually a skin infection caused by the Trichophyton fungus group.

Trichophyton can survive in the environment for months. This means that there is often an outbreak at housing due to the fungus surviving in sheds over the summer. Housing also comes hand in hand with a slight drop in immunity, which means the fungus can infect. There is also a higher risk in immunosuppressed calves, especially those that didn't get enough colostrum or ones that have had a knock from something like a scour outbreak.

The most influential risk with ringworm is the fact that it is a zoonotic disease, meaning it is transmissible to both humans and other animals that the cows may come into contact with.

Presentation

Ringworm lesions are very characteristic. They tend to be circular, raised, hairless, grey and scaly. They are most common around the face but can spread to the whole body in a bad case. They do not tend to be itchy

Treatment

Ringworm is self-limiting, meaning it will spontaneously resolve itself. However, it can take up to 9 months to achieve this which isn't ideal in a lot of situations



Various treatments are available, although some are old wives tales!

- Ringvac – this is a vaccination available for ringworm. It can be used both to treat infected animals and to prevent an outbreak
- Imaverol (enilconazole) – this has to be given topically and sponged on daily
- Sunlight – turning out affected cattle will help to reduce the prevalence of the outbreak, however this is usually due to moving the cattle away from both high stocking densities and infected pens
- Iodine – it has to be diluted, but putting iodine on the lesions has anti-fungal properties and can help clear them up

Practice News

As mentioned before we have a new vet to replace Ken, called Emily.
She is up and running now, you will all start to see her out and about on farm

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your loyalty throughout 2019
and to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Andrew, Hollie, Wenna, Maddy and Emily

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