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DECEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

NEW CALF SCOUR VACCINE

Calf scour is an all-too-common condition; it's painful and potentially life-threatening for calves, and stressful and time-consuming for those who look after them, so it makes sense for all farms to have a scour prevention plan. Vaccination to protect against E. Coli, bovine rotavirus and bovine coronavirus is a key component of scour prevention for many farms.

A new vaccine for the prevention of calf scour is now available. As part of our calf health strategy, we have reviewed the vaccines we prescribe and have decided to move across to Fencovis®, due to its unique properties compared to alternatives:



A **convenient** 2 ml single-dose intramuscular injection of Fencovis® administered to the dam 12 to 3 weeks before calving **prevents** calf diarrhoea caused by bovine rotavirus and E. coli K99, while reducing the incidence and severity of disease caused by bovine coronavirus. The effectiveness of the vaccine has been proven by extensive European studies and field trials.

Oil-free adjuvant – Adjuvants are used in killed vaccines to help stimulate a good immune response. The adjuvant in Fencovis® is oil-free for optimal safety.

Flexibility – Fencovis® comes as a ready-to-use injection available in 1, 5 and 25 dose packs, so it's flexible to use, however many animals you need to vaccinate.

Protection against scour pathogens through vaccination depends on good transfer of immunity from cow to calf through colostrum; we can monitor transfer of immunity and help you optimize colostrum protocols to ensure calves get the best start. Please speak to one of the farm team about prevention of calf scour, including the use of Fencovis® on your farm.

FESTIVE PERIOD OPENING HOURS



All of the branches will be closed on **Monday 26th & Tuesday 27th December, and Monday 2nd January** for the corresponding Bank Holidays.

As always, 24-hour emergency cover is provided.

We would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas, and happy and prosperous 2023.

The **MEDICINE HUB** is an online tool to help dairy, beef and sheep producers monitor and compare medicine use and tackle the threat of antimicrobial resistance. It provides a safe, secure and independent central repository to **collate, report and compare antibiotic use at individual farm level, which in turn provides information at the national level.** This information is crucial to help prove the industry's credentials to the public, the supply chain and to international competitors & customers.

Farmers and vets are increasingly being encouraged to upload data, and it would not be surprising to see this made mandatory in the not-too-distant future (as is already the case in the pig industry). To find out more, have any questions/concerns answered and to register please visit <https://ahdb.org.uk/medicine-hub>. Once you have registered and assigned North Park as your veterinary practice, **we can submit data on your behalf if you give us this level of permission.**

Q-FEVER, a disease caused by infection with the bacterium *Coxiella burnetii*, received some attention at the recent British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA) congress. It can infect humans, cattle, goats and sheep. The most common route of infection is through inhalation of bacteria. It is able to **spread up to 11 miles on the wind** and survive for extended periods in the environment. The average range of prevalence of infected herds across Europe is 35-70%, yet the disease is rarely reported in the UK. It was suggested that this is due to insufficient knowledge and availability of appropriate diagnostic testing in the UK.

In farmed species Q Fever results in abortion, still-births, premature and/or weak born offspring, retained cleansing, metritis, and infertility (increased calving to conception intervals, increased returns to service, poor pregnancy rate).

Treatment is rarely successful, with prevention through stringent biosecurity and environmental hygiene key, backed up with vaccination if deemed necessary. The key take-home message we took was the need to **consider Q Fever as a possible cause of poor fertility and abortions, particularly on dairy farms**. Increasing diagnostic testing is required to allow us to accurately determine the prevalence of Q-Fever within the practice area. This is important to know, due to the main route of transmission (spreading on the wind). We will then be in a better position to provide guidance and advice as to the cost/benefits of vaccination, for example.

Faecal egg counts (FECs) are a key tool to help us determine whether worming treatments are necessary, to optimise treatments and to assess efficacy of treatments. This will ultimately slow the rate of development of anthelmintic (wormer) resistance, save money and reduce environmental impacts (the 3-ML/clear wormers are toxic to dung beetles, amongst other invertebrates) by ensuring anthelmintics are only used when necessary. FECs are useful for **cattle, sheep and goats** and can be performed on pooled samples to give group-level information.

Correct sampling is important to ensure that the results – and advice – are accurate and suitable for the group. **10-15 animals should be sampled from each management group** (alternatively sample all the animals if groups are smaller) before pooling the sample. It is **crucial** that the **same amount of faeces** is collected from each animal before pooling to prevent a few outlier animals potentially skewing the results. A small level scoop or similar is ideal.

This year, worms have been a particular problem through the late summer and autumn, with many farms now showing clinical evidence of anthelmintic resistance. It is absolutely crucial to establish rigorous worm (and other parasite) control plans on your farm. Speak to any of the farm team for more details, including how to collect samples and conduct reliable FECs on your farm.

ALL DAIRY PRODUCERS – Please remember that your annual National Johne's Management Plan (**NJMP**) **declaration needs to be completed by the end of December**. This will involve one of our accredited vets reviewing the management plan on your farm and analysing your test results over the past 12 months, to assess progress. A new tool, **Johne's Tracker**, available through **Herd Companion**, allows us to make a detailed assessment of your progress, provide **thorough and tailored farm specific advice** to control the disease, and allow accurate benchmarking of your farm against the national herd.



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