



Tysul Vets Newsletter

February 2015

Farm Animal Emergencies

(By Danielle Carroll,
BVSC, MRCVS)



How to help us to help you!

It runs with the nature of the job that from time to time you will require a vet to deal with an accident or emergency involving your livestock. Here are some top tips on how you can help us achieve the best outcome for you and your livestock:

❖ Please contact us as soon as possible. Problems are usually much easier to rectify when they are addressed quickly. Call **01559 363 318** (24 hrs)

❖ Please provide the reception / telephone staff with as much info as possible, this will be relayed to the vet so they can arrive prepared to deal with the situation.



❖ Please have the animal suitably restrained, if they are up and able to walk the vet would prefer to examine them in a crush with a halter on but please be aware that if you have a cow calving the vet may wish to work in a straw pen. If a calving cow is wearing a halter and restrained to a fixed point when the vet arrives, less time will be lost before the vet can begin to examine her and deliver the calf.



❖ Animals that are calving, injured or in pain are often stressed and unpredictable please be aware of this and keep them and yourselves safe until the vet arrives. Ideally they should be restrained (as described above) but if not they should be placed in a secure pen which will prevent them from sustaining further injuries and worsening any problems they already have.

❖ The vet will always require water so please have a bucket ready for when they arrive. If you suspect the vet will need to operate they will require two clean buckets of water (preferably warm) which you could be getting together whilst you are waiting.



❖ Accidents often occur in locations which are not ideal but if it is possible please provide a suitable working environment. For example if the cow is down in a pen please ensure that there is clean bedding down and other cattle are moved into a separate pen, this will make it easier and safer for the vet to work (and will mean that there are less disturbances).

❖ Ill or injured animals are more susceptible to the hypothermia (low temperature) especially when they are outside and exposed to the wind and rain and more so if they are unable to get up and move themselves to shelter. If an animal is down in a pen and you suspect (or know) that they are cold you could cover them with straw or an old sheet. If the animal is outside and able to walk it would be preferable if you could walk them into a building/shed. If the animal is unable to walk and is outside in a cold and exposed location you could provide them with shelter (e.g. straw bales) and a cover (e.g. an old sheet) to help maintain their body temperature until the vet arrives to assess them.



❖ Emergencies often happen in the middle of the night when it is dark so please ensure you have adequate lighting so the vet can see what they are doing. The headlights of a vehicle, head torches, hand torches or spotlights can provide light if there is no light source in the shed or the animal is out in a field. (Continued next page)



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- ❖ The vets will usually carry battery powered clippers but it may be handy to have an extension connected to an electricity source available in case power is needed.



- ❖ It is always useful if you can provide somewhere off the floor for the vet to place their equipment (e.g. a table or a barrel). This will help to keep the equipment clean and is particularly important if you think the vet may need to perform an operation as the vet will need to keep their surgical kit in a location where it will not become contaminated.



- ❖ If you have a cow that is down and you suspect that she may have injured herself please have a hoist or clamp available so that the animal can be lifted and assessed for injury. If you do not own suitable equipment to lift a cow you could inform the person taking the call that it may be required then the vet may be able to bring it with them if it is available.

- ❖ It is always helpful to have extra pairs of hands so if you think extra man power may be required please contact family, friends or neighbours to come and help you and the vet. Helpers are particularly useful when cows with twisted uteruses need to be rolled or when a caesarian is being performed.



- ❖ When an animal is bleeding it is important to reduce the amount of blood that is lost by acting as soon as possible. In an emergency like this the vet will make every effort to get to you as soon as possible but you can help by applying pressure with a clean towel or bandaging material. If you can see that a blood vessel has been damaged and is bleeding significantly (e.g. the milk vein of a dairy cow) you could try and stem the flow of blood by placing a clean clamp or peg to the vessel. If you have any questions about what to do whilst you are waiting for the vet to arrive you can always ask the person taking your call if you could speak to a vet who will then be able to advise you on the situation.



- ❖ When you have a cow with suspected milk fever, it would be helpful if you have a bucket of hot water available to warm a bottle of calcium before the vet runs it into the vein. If you have a bottle of calcium you could place it into the bucket to be warming so it will be ready to administer as soon as the vet arrives and has examined the cow.



TB Testing Contract Awarded.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has confirmed the award of contracts for the supply of a flexible package of veterinary services across two regions covering Wales to improve our ability to detect animal disease.

From 1 April 2015 all new TB testing and other Official Veterinarian (OV) work in Wales will be undertaken by the two regional suppliers, who will be responsible for allocating vets and ensuring testing is carried out to a high standard. This will ensure the ongoing quality of testing for animal disease.

Iechyd Da, awarded the Wales South contract, is a consortium of 38 independent Welsh veterinary practices and Welsh Lamb & Beef Producers Ltd, a producer co-operative of around 8,000 Welsh livestock farmers.

David Thomas, senior official veterinarian (SOV) for Iechyd Da said the consortium was 'delighted' to have secured the contract.

He said: "The contract award ensures that TB Testing in the area will be delivered by the farmers' local vet practice, as all existing practices delivering TB testing in South Wales are a member of the Iechyd Da consortium."

This of course includes Tysul Vets. More information to follow next month.

Buying in young calves

(By Annwen Richards, BVSc, MRCVS)

Infectious disease risks

Purchasing young dairy-cross and beef calves to rear as replacements or to finish, presents many challenges. Not only is there the stress following transport and a change in their diet and environment but also they will, in most circumstances, be mixed in with calves from other farms of origin. This results in a mixture of several infectious diseases being transmitted between infected, immune and naïve animals.

Young calves may still have some protection from the antibodies in their dam's colostrum/milk, however the level of this depends on the "quality, quantity and quickness" of colostrum fed to a newborn calf. Furthermore, which infections the antibodies protect against will depend on the diseases the dam has come across on the origin farm and also on which vaccinations the dam has received.



When purchasing calves from several sources and markets, colostrum management in those calves and also the diseases and vaccination programmes present on the farm of origin are unknown.

How to reduce the risks

- ❖ Buy calves from farms with regular disease monitoring and/or effective vaccination programmes in place.
- ❖ Avoid buying from markets where animals from different farms are mixed together in the same air space.
- ❖ Avoid long journeys in transit and overstocking of livestock trailers.
- ❖ Isolate new batches of calves from the same farm for 3-4 weeks after purchase.
- ❖ Monitor calves closely within the isolation period for signs of scouring and pneumonia as well as other diseases.
- ❖ Identify and treat any problems promptly and if possible remove the animal(s) affected from the group.
- ❖ Avoid sudden changes in diet, environmental temperature and ventilation.
- ❖ Avoid draughts, regular group changes and mixing calves of different ages.
- ❖ Operate an all-in all-out system with cleaning and disinfecting of pens between batches

Protecting calves against pneumonia

Pneumonia is one of the greatest problems on units with calves of different ages and from different origins.

Viruses and bacteria that can cause pneumonia can be transmitted between animals in the same air space, by nose to nose contact and via feeding equipment.

Symptoms of pneumonia can be worse following stress and transit.

When buying in calves from all over all year round there is a constant risk of buying in calves infected with pneumonia viruses and bacteria.

Vaccination of animals following arrival on the farm is one way to protect them against pneumonia viruses.

An example vaccination protocol to protect them from RSV, PI3 and IBR, the commonest causes of pneumonia:

- Start vaccinating calves 1 week after arrival
- **Rispoval Intranasal RS + PI3** in calves over 9 days of age
- Leave 2 week interval between vaccines
- **Rispoval Intranasal IBR** in calves from 2 weeks of age
- Isolate calves for 4 weeks
- Repeat Vaccination protocol when calves are 3 months old.

BVD can suppress the immune system and could be making calves more susceptible to other pneumonia viruses, as well as causing pneumonia cases.

Tagging and testing DNA samples of calves is worth considering, enabling early identification of persistently infected animals. Isolate and retest any positive calves 4 weeks after first sample. Any calves still positive need to be culled from the herd as they will be a source of infection to other calves.

Costs: (Approxiate)

1x Rispoval Intranasal RS + PI3 = £8

1x Rispoval IBR live = £2.60

1x BVD tag and test = £8

= **Approximately £20 per calf inc. VAT**

Average cost of a case of pneumonia = £80+ per calf

NADIS DISEASE FORECAST

(By Liz Harries, BVSc, MRCVS)

The most recent NADIS disease forecast can be found at www.nadis.org.uk. Below is a summarised version of this months.

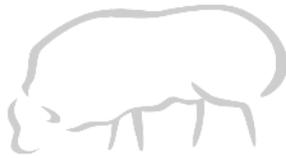
Review Flock Health Plan.

- This is the best time of the year to plan ahead for the forthcoming grazing season with your vet, please get in touch with us if you would like to create/review your current flock health plan.
- Plan ahead to have suitable “safe gazing” for ewes and lambs at turnout, to reduce reliance and need for anthelmintic treatment.

Watch out for Chronic Liver Fluke in Sheep

This winter was predicted to be a low risk but control measures are still required to prevent disease outbreaks.

- The high risk time for disease associated with chronic liver fluke is the late winter/early spring.
- Not all diseased sheep will show the classic “bottle jaw” so it is important to check for and consider disease even if it is not obvious.
- Liver fluke can be a contributing factor in low scanning rates and increased barrens.
- Care must be taken not to over use anthelmintics which kill developing fluke as this increases the chance of resistance developing. During late winter it is chronic not acute disease that will be seen and there are several effective treatments that target fluke up to 7 weeks post infection that are better to use at this point. Speak to one of the vets for more advice on this.



Beef Cattle

- Untreated beef cattle on infected pastures need to be checked for the presence of fluke eggs in the faeces.
- Over 25% of bovine livers are condemned due to liver fluke damage, if you are having problems with this discuss treatment plans with one of the vets.



Watch out for:

Parasitic Gastroenteritis in Store Lambs and Yearlings

- Outwintered store lambs are at risk of PGE especially if grazing contaminated ground.
- Risk periods can extend into February, discuss carrying out faecal egg counts before treatment.

Watch out for:

Lice in Sheep

- Spread by close contact
- Lice infestations are widespread in most flocks
- Speak to one of the vets if you are worried you have a problem in your flock.

Tysul Vets

01559 363318

Mon-Fri: 8.30-5.00

Sat: 9.00-12.00

24 hour emergency service

NADIS
Animal Health Skills