



# Tysul Vets Newsletter December 2015



## Transition Cow Management

by Sarah Mosley BVSc, MRCVS

The period around calving is an important time for dairy cows, starting at drying off, where they are moved into a different group/environment and fed a different ration, though calving which puts stress and strain on various body systems, and carrying on into early lactation where an increasing production of milk continues to put the dairy cow at risk of diseases.

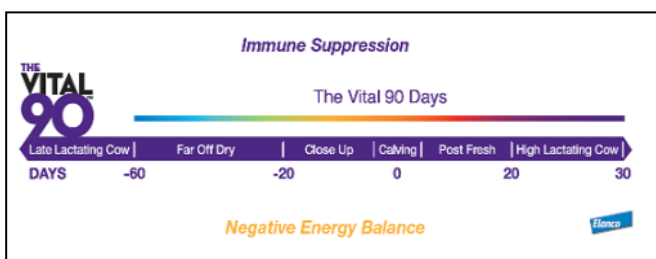
Problems are most commonly encountered due to having a certain degree of immune suppression (especially around calving) and having metabolic problems such as hypocalcaemia (milk fever) and being in a negative energy balance.

A weakened immune system can lead to problems such as mastitis, metritis and retained placentas, which can compromise the cows future well-being, fertility and overall profitability.

The inevitable period of negative energy balance increases the risk of ketosis, displaced abomasums and ovarian dysfunction as well as putting further strain on the immune system.

On top of the direct costs of reduced milk yield, treatment, discarded milk, deaths and culling, there are also future costs of poor fertility and the risks of further disease.

As always, prevention is better than the cure and there are many management factors in the dry period which can reduce the problems encountered in early lactation. The time period to concentrate on is roughly 90 days long (roughly 60 days pre to 30 days post calving) as illustrated by the image below (produced by Elanco, 2014).



Tysul Vets offer an on-farm consultation in conjunction with Elanco's 'Healthy Start Checklist' to consider the factors affecting dry cow management. This allows each farm to be assessed against established parameters to find out which factors are working well and which factors can be improved including practical advice and discussions about how changes may be made. The three areas looked at are:

- Housing
- Health indicators
- Nutrition and water

***If you would like more information on this or would like to arrange a consultation, please telephone reception and ask to speak to one of our farm vets on 01559 363318.***



## Cymorth TB

The Welsh Government have announced details of a support strategy for farmers allowing them to request a voluntary funded guidance visit from their vet.

Herds in Wales to whom a visit will be offered by APHA will be:

- New Herd Breakdowns
- Existing Herd Breakdowns
- Herds coming off Restriction

Please get in touch for more information on this initiative.

01559 363318

*Nadolig Llawen i chi gyd | Happy  
Christmas to you all*

### Christmas Opening Hours

We will close at 3.00 pm on Christmas Eve  
Closed - Christmas Day, Boxing Day (Saturday), Boxing  
Day (Monday) and New Years Day. -  
Emergency services as usual on 01559 363318

To make sure that you have sufficient supplies in over the Christmas period our last delivery day will be Christmas Eve - so to be on the safe side order on Mon21st or Tuesday 22nd December. Our next delivery will then be on Tuesday 29th December.



## Systemic pasteurellosis in lambs

by Annwen Richards, BVSc, MRCVS

**Causative agent:** *Biberstina trehalosi* (previously known as *Pasteurella trehalosi*)

**Animals at risk:** Lambs 6-10 months old

**Time of year:** Autumn (Sept to Dec)

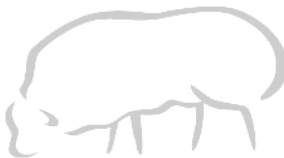
**Aetiology:** The bacteria *B. Trehalosi* is present naturally in the tonsils of healthy sheep. Certain trigger factors may cause the bacteria to invade the bloodstream and cause systemic disease.

### **Risk factors:**

- Cold and/or wet weather
- Change of pasture/diet
- Recent stress/handling/transit

### **Symptoms:**

- Sudden death (most common as very sudden onset)
- Recumbency
- Dullness
- Rapid breathing
- Frothing at mouth



### **Diagnosis:**

- Typical lesions are seen at post mortem
- Confirmation by culture of the bacterium from the lung, liver or spleen

### **Treatment:**

- Very difficult as lambs often deteriorate rapidly
- Long acting oxytetracycline or tilmicosin (the latter must be administered by vet)
- Antiinflammatories

**Note:** Stress of handling may precipitate infection

### **Severity:**

- Not contagious but as all lambs in group likely to have similar stressors
- Mortality averages 2% of the group but may reach up to 10% in severe cases

### **Differentials:**

Other causes of sudden death in this age group of lambs include:

- Clostridial diseases (pulpy kidney, braxy, black disease) ruminal acidosis
- plant poisoning e.g. rhododendron and brassica
- nitrate poisoning
- acute and sub-acute fluke

### **Management:**

- Limit any stresses where possible
- Avoid sudden changes in diet or grazing
- Care when handling for transport/drenching etc.
- Prophylactic treatment of the whole group with antibiotics may only help in the short term and may not be economic unless over 4% of group affected
- Stresses involved with handling to administer antibiotics may increase losses

### **Prevention:**

Vaccination of all lambs intended to finish late in the season and lambs to be kept or sold as stores.

**Ovipast plus** vaccine helps protect lambs against *Pasteurella*.

**Ovivac-p plus** vaccine also helps protect lambs against *Pasteurella* and the clostridial diseases that can affect growing lambs: pulpy kidney, tetanus, braxy and blackleg. The vaccines can be given to lambs from 3 weeks of age. Two injections must be given 4-6 weeks apart to complete the primary vaccination course.

Where prevalence of *Pasteurella* is high a booster with **Ovipast plus** may be required 2-3 weeks prior to expected seasonal outbreaks. Note: **Heptavac-p plus** should be given to ewe/ram lambs intended for breeding and adult sheep and rams as this covers for the clostridial diseases that can affect adult animals as well as *Pasteurella*.

**If you do not currently vaccinate your lambs against *Pasteurella* or Clostridial diseases please contact the surgery for advice.**

**If you are experiencing any losses in your lambs this year, you are not alone. Often we are only contacted when the problem has been going on for a while and when losses are significant. Please contact the surgery for advice so that we can work together to prevent the same problem happening in next years lamb crop.**

From **January 2016** our newsletters will no longer be posted out with bills **unless requested**. All newsletters will be available to pick up in reception or can be viewed and downloaded from our website.

[www.tysulvets.co.uk](http://www.tysulvets.co.uk)

We are also happy to email you a copy if you let us have your details

[tysulvets@gmail.com](mailto:tysulvets@gmail.com)