

Newsletter December 2017



Management of the Downer Cow

Recently Eoghan had the chance to attend the British Cattle Veterinary Association Congress. Attending these type of events keep the message we deliver on farm up to date and relevant.

Of particular interest this year was a session by Dr Phil Poulton, an Australian vet who is a recognised specialist on “downer cows”.

**A downer cow is one which has remained down for more than 24 hours despite treatment.** These cows are unlikely to be still suffering from the initial cause of recumbency, i.e. a cow with milk fever is unlikely to be still suffering from low calcium levels after supplementation. She is much more likely to be suffering from injuries to bone, muscle or nerves as a result of falling down on hard surfaces and/or trying unsuccessfully to get back up again.



**A veterinary exam at this point will prevent a cow with a poor prognosis suffering unnecessarily.**

The care and nursing of cows that we do treat is critical. **All will benefit from painkillers/anti-inflammatories** (e.g. Metacam® or steroids) but also from dedicated nursing and occasional hoisting using hip clamps. The key points of nursing are summarised below;

- The cow should be moved to a well bedded pen (clean bedding on deep litter).
- The pen should be restricted to 3m x 3m, using hurdles, in order to restrict the crawling and slipping behaviour which makes some nerve damage worse.
- They should be rolled so they are not sat on the same side for too long (and hind legs especially). This should be done several times per day to avoid muscle damage.
- Fresh food and water should be available. Inappetant cows should be pumped orally with fluids and rehydration sachets.
- After a veterinary exam most can be hoisted carefully twice daily.
- Where possible, use a chest strap as well as hip clamps when hoisting, and never leave a hoisted cow unattended.
- Unfortunately, cows which are unable to stand after hoisting or continue to lie flat on their side have a poor prognosis.



Merry Christmas from FarmVets SouthWest

Our offices are open as normal over the Christmas period except for the following;

Saturday 23rd December, Sunday, 24th December - CLOSED  
Christmas Day & Boxing Day - CLOSED  
New Years Day - CLOSED

**Don't forget to order and collect medicines in good time!**  
**All at FarmVets SouthWest wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2018**

## Pneumonia vaccines: What your calves REALLY want for Christmas...

As a follow up to last month's Youngstock Roadshow Meeting summary where we emphasised the importance of colostrum, we thought it would be a good idea to review **vaccination options for the control of pneumonia**. Whilst environmental factors (dry and draught free housing) are really important, **it is next to impossible to eliminate disease exposure**.

### Which causes can you vaccinate against?

- **Parainfluenza 3 (PI3)** - Flu like virus that produces mild pneumonia leaving the calf susceptible to secondary infection.
- **BRSV** - Severe, rapid onset viral pneumonia that can often be fatal. Once again it also leaves the calf susceptible to secondary infection.
- **IBR** - As well as affecting your adult cattle, IBR may contribute to pneumonia in youngstock.
- **BVD** - Whilst not a direct cause of pneumonia it can severely impair your calves' immune system, leaving them susceptible to secondary infection.
- **Pasteurellosis** - Common bacterial cause of pneumonia. Often referred to as 'shipping fever' given its pattern of affecting calves soon after periods of stress (i.e. transportation or poor housing).



FarmVets SouthWest stock various vaccine options that will protect your calves against one or more of these common causes of pneumonia. **Which vaccine is best will depend on the disease exposure on your farm**. You may want to consider a nasal swab to isolate the pathogens within your stock.

No vaccine is perfect, but correct use of a suitable choice will reduce risk and greatly improve recovery rates of those affected. This should in turn also reduce antibiotic usage within your herd. **Speak to your FVSW vet today and discuss the best option for your youngstock.**

## RoboVet <sup>+</sup> New year, new computer system

**At the start of this month we will be moving to a new computer system, RoboVet.** Holly and the other administration staff have been working incredibly hard to ensure this runs as smoothly as possible, but please bear with us whilst we adapt to the change.

**You will notice that next month's invoices and receipts look very different - please call any of our offices if you need clarification or have any queries.**

## Farewell to Matt

As most of you will already be aware, Matt Swanborough has now left FarmVets SouthWest and started his new role as Veterinary Advisor for the pharmaceutical company, Norbrook.

**"A huge thank you to all of the clients I have worked with for being so welcoming. I'm sure some of you remember me when I first started in 2014! I have really enjoyed my time at FVSW but felt this was an exciting opportunity I simply couldn't turn down."**

We wish Matt all the best and sincerely thank him for all his excellent work. We look forward to inviting him back in the near future as a guest speaker for one of our Farmer's Meetings.



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