



TOPVETS

Moosletter

December 2013

Early Pregnancy testing

If you are interested in identifying cows in-calf to AB we can check them 5 weeks after breeding.

To give a more accurate idea of calving date we can age pregnancies between 5-12 weeks. Knowing the expected calving date helps management decisions especially around the transition period.

If all you need is an in-calf/empty, 5 weeks after removing the bulls is a good time to pregnancy test.

Please give us a ring at the clinic to book in.

Don't forget we now also have our handheld MINDA device so we can directly enter pregnancy testing data on farm as we go. This will save you the time and effort of having to record the results twice.

Theileria Update

We have diagnosed several properties with Theileria Ikeda this spring, mostly in 2-6 month old calves. Some of these calves have died, and some not so badly affected have survived. We have in stock a few doses of Butalex which is the only treatment available for Theileria, while it is not 100% guaranteed it is the best treatment we have available. This treatment is not currently registered for use in NZ and as such has a swath of paperwork and tagging requirements that must accompany any animals treated. The current withholding period is 140 days meat and 35 days milk. The offal from treated animals will never be eligible for human consumption, hence the requirement to tag with a blue "THL" tag and register NAIT tag details with MPI. Tick control remains the cornerstone of reducing the spread of this disease. Any questions you have please contact the clinic.



It's that time of year again! With the festive season upon us we are reflecting on the year that's been. It been a big one for us at Topvets with the big merge. Thank you for your continued support over this time.

It was good to see a lot of you at the farmer's BBQ the other day, we had a great day for it.

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Post-Weaning Calf Diseases

Health problems in post-weaning calves usually fall into three main categories: respiratory signs, ill-thrift/scouring and neurological signs.

Respiratory conditions

Infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR) is commonly associated with stress and close confinement and can cause fever and inflammation in the nasal passages and windpipe. Conjunctivitis can occur with mild or inapparent respiratory signs. May originate from a carrier animal.

Bacterial/viral pneumonia or pleuritis.

Lungworm—diagnosis is by faecal sample to look for lungworm larvae

Ill thrift/Scouring

Parasitism—faecal egg counts and blood testing can help confirm diagnosis

BVD (Bovine Viral Diarrhoea) - can be diagnosed by blood sampling or ear notch testing.

Yersiniosis—a bacterial infection

Salmonellosis (occasionally) - another bacteria

Trace element deficiency—copper and selenium deficiency can contribute to poor growth.



Neurological

Thiamine deficiency—associated factors: age (usually 6-12 months old affected) high sulphur in the diet, presence of bacteria that break down thiamine in the rumen.

Lead poisoning—more commonly seen in younger calves but see cases in weaners also. Lead paint and battery acid leakage and burnt buildings or vehicles can be sources.

Water deprivation or salt toxicity—due to excess water consumption when access to water is restored after a period of being withheld. Causes swelling in the brain and neurological signs.

Bacterial meningoencephalitis—rarer in weaners than in young calves.

Christmas Hazards

Please be careful with your pets this festive season. Many of the tasty treats we will be enjoying are potentially toxic to your pets.

Chocolate

Dogs are very sensitive to the methylxanthines found in chocolate. Dark chocolate is more toxic than milk but all should be avoided. Toxicity results in excitability, irritability, fast heart rate and even death.



Artificial Sweeteners

Xylitol—causes a rapid increase in blood insulin resulting rapidly in hypoglycaemia. Other effects can include liver failure and clotting disorders.

Raisins /Grapes—ingestion leads to acute kidney failure.

Onions/Garlic—causes damage to red blood cells, the powders are more concentrated and therefore more potent.

Macadamia nuts—specifically toxic for dogs. Can see depression, vomiting, unsteadiness and high temperature.

The Christmas Ham (and other fatty foods)—although not toxic as such, ham has a high fat content which can lead to the development of pancreatitis, some dogs seem to be particularly sensitive to dietary changes so even a few treats of human food can result in pancreatitis.

When to treat with Baycox C to prevent outbreaks of coccidiosis

Coccidiosis in a group of calves will lead to growth checks and may increase calves' susceptibility to other infections. Some calves may be affected without showing any outward clinical signs.

Generally outbreaks usually occur around times of stress for example, transporting, weaning, shifting, re-grouping etc. The other common time to see outbreaks occurring is within a couple of weeks of meal withdrawal as the coccidiostats in meal don't kill the coccidia but stop their development. When there is a known pattern of coccidia outbreaks in previous years the calves may be treated 7-10 days before this in subsequent years. In some cases it may be necessary to treat calves in batches depending on when they enter the risk period.

In absence of previous outbreak histories it can be difficult to determine the highest risk period but generally if the calves are on coccidiostat treated meal then they are at risk as they come off the meal. The gut can become overwhelmed within the next one to two weeks. Often stopping meal feeding also coincides with transport to other grazing.

There is evidence supporting blanket treatment of the whole group if coccidia is diagnosed in the group as even calves that are infected but are not showing clinical signs can have their growth checked. A 2004 Massey University study looked at calves in the first 6 weeks after meal withdrawal. The main finding was that there was a body weight advantage in those calves treated with Baycox C preventatively at the time of stopping meal feeding and this effect was assumed to be due to elimination of subclinical infection.

Generally by 10 weeks of age calves have the ability to resist normal coccidial exposure but can still be affected if there is a very high burden, the calves are stressed or immunocompromised or they have come off meal that was controlling high exposure.

Gravel Groundsel

Recently the Northland Regional Council has asked us to spread the word about the Gravel Groundsel plant, an introduced species which is starting to spread around Northland and is toxic to livestock.

Gravel groundsel is a daisy like plant with bright yellow daisy like flowers about 2cm diameter in clusters at the end of each branch. The plant grows 20-50cm in height and competes strongly with pasture species. It quickly colonises overgrazed pastures and pastures where ground is cultivated or where ground cover is reduced. The leaves are dark green and serrated usually 2-6cm long. Each flower produces up to around 100 seeds. Even light infestations can produce 1 million seeds per hectare and seeds are easily carried in the wind.

All plant growth stages contain pyrrolizidine alkaloids that damage the liver (this is the same toxin as in ragwort). The plant is toxic both when it's green and when it's dried so contaminated hay and silage may be toxic.

Symptoms of toxicity can be subtle e.g. reduced weight gain, low milk production with mild toxicity. In more severe cases we see loss of appetite, aimless wandering, sensitivity to sunlight, jaundice and abdominal straining sometimes with rectal eversion, scouring and nervous signs may also be seen. Death can result. The liver changes are irreversible and there is no antidote. Horses are more susceptible than cattle which are more susceptible than sheep. There is also limited evidence that alpacas may be susceptible also.



Prevention is best. Identify if you have Gravel Groundsel on your property and take action to control it.

Toxic Plants

Here's a bit of a reminder about some of the many plants that are toxic to livestock. These are just a few to be on the lookout for:

Toxic plants in pasture

Ragwort—causes chronic liver disease



Ragwort

Toxic plants along waterways/in wetlands

Swamp grass—cyanide induced sudden death.

Goat's rue—pulmonary oedema



Goat's rue

Toxic plants amongst trees, bush and scrub

Oak—kidney damage

Bracken—blood in urine

Tutu—sudden death.



Tutu

This is by no means a complete list but these are some of the more common toxic plants.

Merial Ancare Christmas Hams

We will be in touch with those of you who have brought products that have qualified you for a Christmas ham to organise collecting them.



Seasons greetings from all the team at TopVets



Thank you for your continued support.

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