



December Newsletter 2019

Lepto Vaccine

Following a number of months of difficulty, some UK stocks of lepto vaccine are now back in regular supply. Currently this is just the 25 dose (50ml) bottles. The 10 dose bottles are not expected until the new year.

There is currently a buy 3 get 1 free offer, but the drug company has not made it clear how long this offer will last. We understand that many cattle will require a primary course to get them up to date, and to make the administration of the offer easy (especially if the offer were to be withdrawn half-way through a course) we would like you to order all the doses you require at the same time. We are, however, happy to split this cost over 2 months if that is more convenient.

Medicines course

Many of you will have had advice during recent Red Tractor audits that you should attend a "use of medicines" course - this is now compulsory for the Dairy standards and recommended for Beef and Lamb, though what is recommended one year is often made compulsory the next.

Charlie and Alice will be holding our next medicines course for farmers on Wednesday 29th January. If you would like to attend, please give the office a ring to book a place. We're limiting numbers to 20 per meeting, but don't worry if you can't make it, we'll hold them every few months until everyone who wants to attend has done so. The cost is £5 per person which will include lunch and a certificate of attendance.

The meeting is not about teaching you how to suck eggs, and will include some recent research to keep it relevant.

Happy Christmas from all of us at Orchard Vets

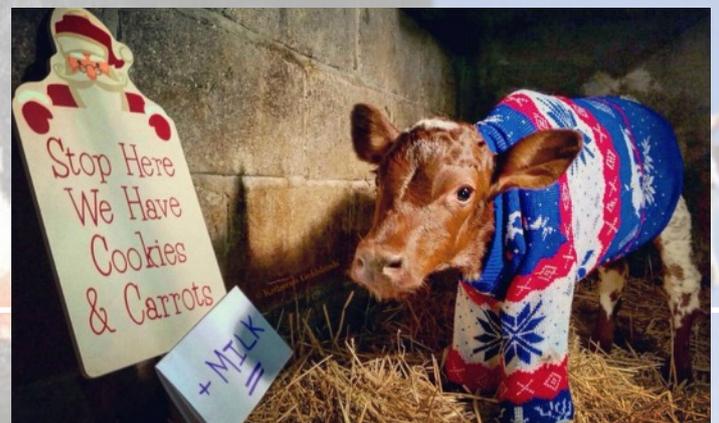
Whilst wishing you all a very merry Christmas, we appreciate that animals don't always respect public holidays. As well as having a vet on duty 24/7 over the festive period, the office opening hours are:

Christmas Eve 8am - 4pm

Christmas Day and Boxing Day - Closed

New Year's Eve - 8am - 4pm

New Year's Day - Closed



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Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is a common infection in dairy and beef herds causing infertility, abortion and poor milk yield. It is particularly important as Leptospirosis can also affect humans causing influenza-like symptoms with severe headaches. Dairy farmers are particularly at risk of infection from urine splashing onto the face whilst milking the cow. Infection arises from contact with infected urine or the products of abortion.



Disease is spread most often during the spring and summer months while cattle are at pasture. Leptospire are susceptible to drying, exposure to sunlight, or extremes of temperature. *Leptospira Hardjo* is not carried by vermin or wildlife but sheep can carry and excrete *Leptospira Hardjo* therefore mixed grazing is a risk factor. Other important risk factors include having an open herd, using shared bulls and access to shared water courses.

Clinical presentation

A sudden drop in milk yield occurs two to seven days after infection of susceptible cows. The udder becomes soft and flabby with colostrum-like secretions or blood-tinged milk in all quarters. Signs may be mild and go undetected but some cows become lethargic and stiff with a fever and reduced appetite. Abortion may occur three to 12 weeks following infection with most abortions occurring during the last three months of pregnancy. Infection may also produce premature and weakly calves



Diagnosis

There are various causes of milk drop and abortion. Leptospirosis can be confirmed by demonstrating rising levels of antibodies over a number of weeks on blood samples. Bulk milk tests can also be used to monitor for the ingress of infection into naïve herds.

Treatment and control



Antibiotic treatment of milk-drop cases is recommended to reduce excretion of leptospire and zoonotic risk. A single intramuscular injection of streptomycin will eliminate infection from most cattle. However, vaccination is the better approach avoiding unnecessary use of antibiotics. Control of *Leptospira Hardjo* in cattle herds relies upon a combination of management decisions to reduce risk of infection, strategic antibiotic treatment, and vaccination. The primary course of immunisation consists of two injections four weeks apart followed by annual boosting. Vaccination should prevent urine shedding following exposure and will protect against milk drop and abortion.

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