

March 2009



DAMORY VETERINARY CLINIC

# Newsletter

## NEWSLETTER TOPICS

**Bluetongue vaccine: Price soon to increase - booster now**  
**Lameness scoring - Introductory offer**  
**Calf scour and Cryptosporidium**  
**Meeting on health planning and Johne's disease**

### Bluetongue Vaccine - price soon to increase

Just another reminder that all stock needs to be bluetongue vaccinated this year in order to be protected. Any stock fully vaccinated last year need a single booster, any unvaccinated stock need a primary course of two injections three weeks apart. The vaccine price is set to increase some time this month, so we strongly advise to order now and vaccinate before turnout and the potential risk period.

### Lameness scoring - introductory offer

For a limited period we are offering a full lameness score for £30. Some of you may be required to either perform a locomotion score regularly yourself, or have the scoring done by an independent assessor. We have received special training to use the now widely applied scoring system by Dairy Co.

### Calf scour and Cryptosporidium

We have recently seen an increase in Cryptosporidium infections in newborn calves. It is a single cell parasite (similar to Coccidiosis) which does not respond to antibiotics. Calves have diarrhoea and are depressed, and mortality varies between farms. Cryptosporidium can infect humans and has recently contaminated mains water supplies. The main prevention is to assure colostrum intake is adequate, and some farms can solve the problem just by improving colostrum management (e.g. use a feeding bag for the first meal, or – in Johne's free herds – keep frozen colostrum from healthy older cows if needed). If your calves have a problem of scour/not doing in the first week of life we usually approach it by:

Assessing colostrum uptake - a blood sample between 1 and 7 days of age gives a very accurate picture of antibody status which reflects the amount, the timing and the quality of colostrum.

Identify any organisms involved. As mentioned last month, we have now a quick test in our lab which covers Rota and Coronavirus, E coli and Cryptosporidium. Cost is £10 per sample, results are normally reported on the same day. For some tests (e.g. Salmonella) we still have to send the sample away.

If we do identify Rota or Coronavirus or E coli, vaccines are available for the dry cow to protect the calf via colostrum (provided it gets enough of it!).

If we identify Cryptosporidium, a specific drench for calves is available, and we have had good results with it.

### **Meeting on Johne's disease and Herd Health Planning on Tuesday, 31st March in the Brewery Visitor Centre, Blandford**

We are planning to run a meeting on Johne's disease control and a new online herd health planning programme. The main speaker is Peter Orpin, a practicing vet from Leicestershire who is past president of the British Cattle Veterinary Association and has done extensive work in the last 10 years to develop herd health planning tools as well as control and eradication programmes for Johne's disease. Johne's disease is present on many farms and being potentially zoonotic (possible link with a human chronic bowel disease) the milk buyers are looking at it more closely, and monitoring, control and eradication strategies will become more relevant. Control is also economically sensible (some farms lose several cows every year to it). New tools (e.g. using milk recording samples for screening) are available and will be introduced.

Herd Health Planning is often associated with a multi-page document presented for farm assurance purposes. A new purely online based programme provides a better solution and improves general communication. You can access lab results online, enter and look up herd data. We can perform risk assessments for diseases (e.g. Johne's), give you costing figures for health and fertility problems etc etc. This will supersede the old style plan, and hopefully be more useful to all of us.