



Newsletter

October 2020

MOT your bull

Although true infertility is rare, sub-fertility is found in around 20% of bulls examined. Using pregnancies generated as an indicator of bull fertility means that problems in a bull may also not be picked up on for some considerable time.

If bulls are to be used, you should get all new bulls examined for obvious defects before purchase. Bulls already on the farm should also ideally be checked over by one of us at least once a year. Introducing a new bull to a herd also has serious biosecurity implications which we're happy to discuss to suit your individual farm needs.

We offer a full bull fertility examination service, including semen evaluation with certification if required. Whilst this cannot guarantee fertility (or infertility for that matter), it greatly reduces the risk of allowing poorly performing animals to take charge of arguably the most important job on the farm!

During October and November, bull fertility exams are £70+VAT per bull, giving some piece of mind prior to the service period for autumn calving herds.

Professor Martin Green has been awarded BVA's most prestigious scientific award for contributions to cattle health

The Dalrymple-Champneys Cup and Medal is presented each year to a British Veterinary Association member whose work supports the advancement of veterinary science. Martin received the award in recognition of his significant contributions towards the understanding and promotion of bovine mastitis control as well as selective dry cow therapy, dairy herd health, and the use of statistical epidemiology in veterinary research

On receiving the award he said: "Enhancing and promoting dairy cow health and welfare has been a passion I've shared with many people; everything I have been involved with has been a team effort. During my years in practice I was inspired and encouraged by many wonderful people, particularly those at Hampden Veterinary Hospital, Aylesbury and Orchard Veterinary Group, Glastonbury - many thanks to you all. My long-term involvement with dairy herd health and veterinary post graduate education and specialisation stemmed from these times."

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Orchard Vets Glastonbury

Plan now for pneumonia

Now's the time to plan for winter pneumonia outbreaks. But it's important to remember that the disease has a number of causes and your control strategies must reflect this challenge.

Pneumonia in cattle is a complex disease caused by an interaction between various infectious agents (whether bacterial, viral or both), the environment and the immune status of the individual animal. A preventative approach – involving broad-spectrum vaccination – as well as good stockmanship and having an effective treatment protocol at the ready are the keys to effective disease control.

The key pneumonia viruses RSV, PI3 and IBR may cause serious disease on their own or they may weaken a calf's natural defences, allowing bacterial infections to take hold. But bacteria also play a key role in pneumonia outbreaks, particularly in the case of pasteurellosis, where *Mannheimia haemolytica* (formerly known as *Pasteurella*) is implicated and this makes a sound case for a broad spectrum vaccination approach.

Mannheimia species were found to be present in around 30% of disease outbreaks in the 0-3 month age group. Although some common pneumonia antibiotics can treat *M. haemolytica* infections, the lung damage is already done by the time clinical signs have appeared. Therefore, using a vaccine that provides protection against *M. haemolytica* is recommended.

Note that any pneumonia vaccination course should be completed at least two weeks prior to housing, which is the key risk period. So when it comes to preventing pneumonia, planning ahead is crucial. If you've experienced a pneumonia problem in the past it's important to work closely with us to try and stop it happening again, yet still have a proven treatment regime up your sleeve should any problem return.

Pneumonia outbreaks occur when environmental factors and infectious organisms interact to cause disease. The severity of any outbreak depends on a number of factors and often these are very specific to an individual farm, which is why it is so important to implement the right disease prevention and intervention plan for your own unit.

Review your pneumonia management performance year on year. Always look at how you can improve your health plan and often this means investigating the causal pathogens that may have caused you a problem in the past. We can then discuss whether a vaccination regime is appropriate, what treatment protocol to use if you do get a problem, as well as talk about any management and nutritional changes that will tip the environmental factors in your favour.

Most pneumonia problems occur because of adverse environmental conditions. But clearly, it's not possible to control the weather – the greatest disease risk comes with humid, muggy conditions, which help bacteria to survive longer than they would in a dry atmosphere – but producers can control the situation in calf buildings. Not overstocking, keeping house humidity down with good ventilation, avoiding extremes of temperature, ensuring age groups are not mixed – which often comes from a tight calving pattern linked to good fertility management – and practising sound hygiene are all integral elements of any proactive pneumonia management plan. Good nutrition too, is an important factor in helping to reduce the impact of the disease.

But even with first class husbandry skills, the likelihood is that you are going to have to treat some calves or cattle for pneumonia at some stage, simply because of the complex nature of the disease. For further advice on managing the threat of pneumonia in your cattle, contact the practice for further details.