

## Newsletter February 2011

Pneumonia is certainly rife at the moment; the changeable weather and some chilling wind have taken their toll. Is that coughing a problem?? Is a question I am always asked as we go around. The answer is that any cough is an abnormal event, demonstrating that the respiratory system is not functioning correctly. Well do I need to treat them then?? Is the question that commonly follows; this is a harder question to answer, it is true that we all cough in response to dust and irritants and not just because of infection. That does not mean that we should accept covering our animals with dust when we bed them up! Not least because it has a serious effect on the respiratory system's ability to cope in the face of a challenge. A crude measure on whether treatment is needed is to measure the body temperature, as a general rule if it is significantly increased then treatment is advised. Other considerations are inappetance, nasal discharge and increased rate of breathing. All these are classic signs of pneumonia that we all observe on a regular basis. We have a chart that can help you combine the severity of all the symptoms and decide on whether treatment is advised. Please ask if you would like a copy.

Should I treat the whole group?? This is another common question when deciding on pneumonia treatments. Whole group treatment is necessary on occasions, and there are certain criteria I use to judge if it is required. If there are significant numbers affected approaching or above 50% then I believe group treatment is required. Please ask us for advice if you are considering this. What do I treat them with?? There are a huge number of antibiotics on the market all vying for the position of 'best treatment'. The antibiotic has to have the capability of penetrating the diseased lung tissue in high enough concentration to effect a cure, most achieve this. Often calves treated early in the disease process will not have made antibodies in time to prevent another bout, this is why some drugs that claim a long duration of activity, are particularly effective at preventing re-infection, e.g Zactran / Draxxin. Anti-inflammatory drugs are extremely important at preventing and reducing long-term lung damage, as well as aiding the recovery of an affected calf, e.g Metacam. Some products combine an anti-inflammatory with an antibiotic e.g. Resflor, Hexasol.

The disease process of pneumonia generally starts with an initiating virus or stress, which leads on to a bacterial infection. The quality of housing and husbandry has a huge impact on the health of the cattle housed within. If you suffer with pneumonia then we can often help to devise a plan to help prevent cases, which may include a vaccination plan. It is always worth looking at airflow and ventilation within a building, as this will have the biggest effect on lung health. Please ask us to help you!

Don't forget to order your vaccines, we have negotiated a very competitive price on Lepto vaccine this year after it has been reclassified. 50ml £56.83 + VAT, 20ml £26.05 + VAT. Also it will soon be time to give your first Huskvac dose.

We are extremely busy trying to fit in everyone's TB testing at the moment, we appreciate your understanding when we are running a bit late or when we can't fit you in on the day that you would really like. Thank you for your patience.