

FEBRUARY NEWS - 2019

at Summerleaze Vets

In this month's newsletter we will be focusing on calf health as we have seen quite a few cases of pneumonia in recent weeks. We are also excited to announce our upcoming farm walk, targeting calf health and performance to maximise your herd's future. We will also launch the new Summerleaze Youngstock Programme at the farm walk.

Is it just me or are these evenings starting to look a bit lighter...?! Roll on the spring!

Why are Youngstock SO Important?

Calves are the future of your herd!

Whether a suckler or flying herd; beef rearing; or dairy unit, how well your youngstock are reared in the first few months of life will have a dramatic effect on maximising the potential of your herd.

- Research has shown that heifers calving in at 24 months of age or younger will have a higher lifetime yield, survive longer in the herd and have better fertility throughout their life.
- Rearing heifers is the 2nd largest annual expense on a UK dairy farm. If a heifer calves at 24 months old the breakeven point is only reached halfway through her 2nd lactation. If they calve at 3 years old, it won't be until the fourth lactation that you see any return.



Calves that have enough colostrum; good nutrition and have a clean environment will have an excellent start to life. This will maximise the likelihood of producing healthy calves with optimum growth rates, thus decreasing rearing costs and problems at calving associated with over-fat or poorly grown heifers.

The first few weeks of life present a window of opportunity to maximise long term performance, due to '**metabolic programming**'. This means that the nutrition and management of a calf in the first two months of life will affect the expression of genes, having a permanent impact on the health and productivity of that animal over its lifetime. Good nutrition pre-weaning has a significant long-term impact on metabolism. This **cannot be altered** after this first two-month period, so it is vital to get it right from the start.

Every extra gram of weight a calf gains before weaning translates to 4 additional litres of milk in their first lactation.

Interested in learning more? Please turn over for more information on our Farm Walk and Youngstock Programme.



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The early bird prevents the worm!.....



Lungworm Vaccine

is now available to order at the practice.

Help, My Calves Have Pneumonia!!!

Firstly, please don't worry – we are seeing a large number of cases at the moment, so you are not on your own! There are many different causes of pneumonia including several different bacteria and viruses.

- For a few cases, we would recommend treating affected calves as soon as you notice any slight changes in behaviour, such as reduced milk intakes or increased lying time. **Calves with a rectal temperature $>39.3^{\circ}\text{C}$ should be treated with Metacam and an antibiotic.**
- In cases where you are seeing a lot, please get in touch – there are lots of things that we can do to help, such as finding the cause and looking for a vaccine to help reduce the problem in this batch and for future batches.
- Prevention is always better than cure and we are under increasing pressure to reduce the use of antibiotics on farms. **Please speak to your vet if you would like to discuss how vaccination may help you.**

What's on at Summerleaze Vets?

Milk Sure

We will be running another Milk Sure course on **20th February 11am - 2pm at Coombefield Veterinary Hospital**. The course will be £100.00, lunch will be provided. Please let us know if you are interested.

Best Practice Medicines Course

As many of you know, Red Tractor changed several of their guidelines in June, especially targeting the use and storage of medicines and vaccines on farm. They recommended that at least one member of farm staff should be trained in the safe and appropriate use of medicines by attending the relevant course.

We will be running a course to meet these requirements on **Wednesday 6th March 2019, at Kilmington Cricket Pavilion from 12pm**. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. The course is £30 to attend, and places are limited so call the office to book in. Attendees will receive a certificate of competence.



And Finally!



Sadly, Maria will be leaving Summerleaze Vets on Friday 1st March to further her career within mixed animal practice. We would like to thank her for all her hard work and to wish her all the very best of luck for the future.