

Farm Animal Practice Newsletter: November 2008

Welcome to our new-look practice newsletter: this month we introduce a new member of the clinical team and reveal the results of our client feedback survey, while in this month's clinical update we've got news on foot-rot in sheep and coccidiosis in calves.

Hello to Jenny!

Many of you will already have met our new intern, Jenny Grewal, as she has already been with the practice for a few weeks. Jenny qualified from Bristol last year, and has joined us on a fixed-term one year training scholarship. She has a special interest in lameness, and will be helping out with Dave Tisdall's dairy cow lameness project. Outside work, Jenny enjoys sailing and cake. She is looking forward to getting out and meeting you all.



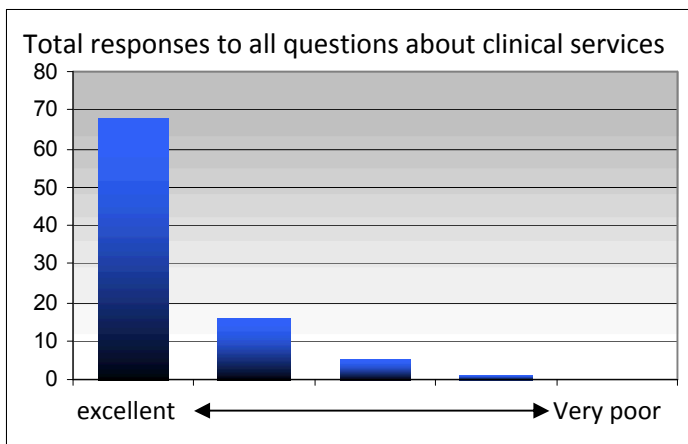
Client feedback survey

Thank you to all of you who took part in our recent client satisfaction survey. We are pleased that so many of you feel we are giving you excellent service, and we are looking at how to implement some of your suggestions for improvements. A summary of the most important results is given below:

- 93% rated our treatment of individual animals as good or excellent
- 90% rated our herd health planning as good or excellent
- 97% rated our attitude to their stock as caring or very caring
- 87% rated our professional fees as good or excellent value

Just over 1 in 4 respondents said that they would find a practice website useful, and included some helpful suggestions for what they would like included. The new FAP website is currently under construction, and we will try to include as many of your ideas as possible. Ideas for meetings/training included lameness and housing: a lameness meeting is scheduled for just before Christmas (see page 2); we'll look at housing

Practice News



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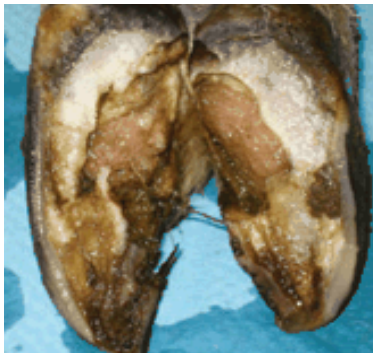
Farm Animal Practice

Upcoming events

- **“Lameness is for life, not just for Christmas”:** following on from our recent farmer meeting on getting the best out of your bull, we are pleased to announce a meeting covering the basics of recognising, treating and preventing lameness in cattle. There will be Christmas-themed refreshments and a bar at Langford. The meeting will be held on Friday 12th December: all are welcome, please contact the Practice with numbers. It should be a good opportunity to keep up to date as well as a social occasion – don’t miss it!
- **Dairy herd benchmark group meeting**—date and venue to be confirmed

Foot-rot in sheep

Lameness is one of the sheep flock’s greatest disease problems. One of the most important causes of lameness is foot-rot, which is estimated to cost the sheep industry over £24 million each year. Foot-rot occurs as a consequence of scald (a more mild lameness lesion). Scald is caused by the bacteria *Fusobacterium necrophorum* which is present in the environment and infects the foot through damaged interdigital skin. Foot-rot occurs when another bacterium (*Dichelobacter nodusus*) invades the damaged skin.

		Signs of disease	Treatment
Scald		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swelling and reddening of skin between the claws with a grey “scum” on top • No under-running of sole or wall of hoof 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical antibiotic spray (e.g. Terramycin aerosol) • Footbathing may be useful if flock problem
Foot-rot		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-running of the sole horn and outer wall, starting at the inter-digital space • Foul smelling grey oozing pus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical and injectable antibiotics • Footbathing in some situations • Care not to over-trim as this may make things worse

Photographs courtesy of EBLEX

If you’d like to discuss treatment of individual or flock problems, please feel free to contact the Farm Animal Practice.

Efforts should be concentrated on prevention rather than treatment—we shall discuss this in our next newsletter.

Coccidiosis in calves: is it costing you money?

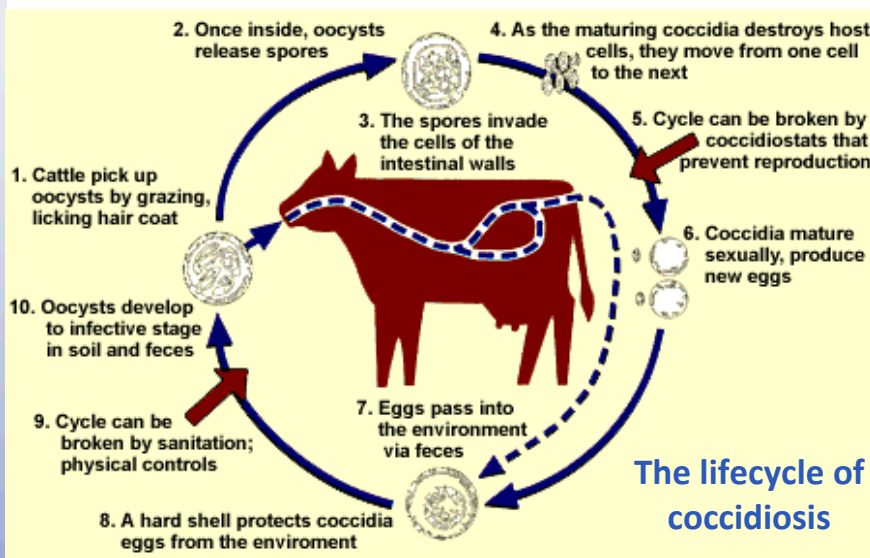
Coccidiosis is a parasite infection of the gut, usually seen in calves or lambs at between three weeks and six months of age.

Signs of coccidiosis in a calf

- Diarrhoea, sometimes with blood/clots and mucus
- Dull depressed calf with poor appetite
- Straining, sometimes high temperature
- Nervous signs (this is quite rare)
- Coccidia eggs present in faecal sample

Signs of lower level of infection in a group

- Ill-thrift and decreased growth rates
- Dull coat, slightly dry nose
- Mild diarrhoea, sometimes comes and goes
- Calves may appear less lively
- Signs may be very difficult to pick up



Clues that coccidiosis may be a problem

- Poor environmental hygiene, either indoors or at pasture
- Dirty water troughs and feed buckets
- Lack of dry bedding
- Low volume of bedding in creep area

Treatment of clinical cases

- Coccidiostats (e.g. Vecoxan, Baycox)
- Nursing and fluid therapy (e.g. oral LifeAid)
- More intensive measures in severe cases (under vet supervision)

Prevention

- Address the environmental signs outlined above
- Ensure thorough cleaning of pens between batches of calves
- Avoid overcrowding and stress
- Avoid mixing age groups
- Ensure good ventilation and drainage, with no draughts or driving rain
- Preventative treatment all calves in each group 2 weeks after challenge (eg moving into new building)

Why bother with prevention?

- Most economic loss comes from calves with no clinical signs ("subclinical" cases)
- Once clinical signs are seen the gut is already damaged
- Even sub-clinical infections will cause significant gut damage
- Gut damage decreases the calf's ability to absorb nutrients, and can therefore decrease growth rates by up to 20%

So....Prevention is better than cure!

