

# Vet Viewpoint

A regional round-up of key veterinary issues

This week, vets give their advice on monitoring for abnormalities during calving



Keeping a close eye on cows and heifers close to calving is crucial to spot potential uterine twists.

## Laura Smith

Cain Vet Centre  
Llansantffraid

\* After months of expectation we have finally seen our first abnormal foetuses due to Schmallenberg infection.

A number of farms have reported lambs with typical twisted limbs and necks and one farm has had a calf that we suspect is affected by the virus.

We diagnosed evidence of infection on our dairy farms through bulk milk sampling in the autumn, with all farms revealing high levels of exposure within the herd. It is possible that this contributed to a drop in milk yield, along with some scouring and the odd sick cow.

We are now waiting with baited breath to see how bad the problem is going to be as lambing progresses.

## Ingrid Bijker

St Boniface Vet Clinic  
Crediton

\* I was recently asked to look at a heifer that was due to calve a few weeks earlier and had been "bagging up" for weeks. On examination, a uterine torsion with a dead calf was diagnosed.

During a uterine torsion, the uterus twists on its long axis and normally involves the whole of the womb, cervix and front section of the vagina. It occurs during the first and second stage of labour and is normally seen as a cow that doesn't

get on with calving.

Most cases can be diagnosed by putting a hand in the vagina, where you would feel the spiral twists. Early correction of the twist is of great importance and will increase your chances of a live calf and a healthy cow. So when in doubt, get a glove and examine her.

## Helen Redfern

Glenthorne Vet Group  
Uttoxeter

\* With replacement heifers at about £2,000, anything that reduces calf mortality (good colostrum, coccidiosis treatment), improves growth rates (artificial milk twice daily for calves under six months), and protects your replacements (snatch calving for Johne's), couldn't be more important.

Even calving replacements safely can make a difference. As a general rule if both front legs up to the elbows fit in the birth canal with the head present, then the calf should come. Head ropes can be helpful to stop the head falling back.

» Keep up to date with all the latest news on Schmallenberg virus at [www.fwi.co.uk/schmallenberg](http://www.fwi.co.uk/schmallenberg)

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A regional monthly round-up of key veterinary issues from members of the XL Vets group. For more information, go to [www.xlvets.co.uk](http://www.xlvets.co.uk)