



It is not uncommon to find 25% of first-calving heifers getting mastitis in the first month.

Vet Viewpoint

A regional round-up of key veterinary issues

Ian Stewart

Parklands Veterinary Group
Dungannon

* A farmer noticed a dull heifer with sunken eyes. Her left forequarter was blue and cold and stripping produced a watery bloody material, containing gas. This severest form of mastitis affects cows mostly at calving when the teats are open and their immune system is at its weakest. At calving, they are

exposed to many environmental bacteria (especially in calving pens). Clean, dry conditions and lots of straw will help reduce the incidence.

The priority is to save the heifer's life, for the quarter is always lost, and treatment includes antibiotics, anti-inflammatories and oral fluids. The heifer will do well if it survives and the earlier the case is detected the better the chance of success. In this case, the yield was down the previous evening and some gassy fluid was stripped from the left forequarter. Gas in milk is never normal and is a big warning sign.

Andy Stokes

Penbode Vets
Devon

* During recent weeks we have found several cows with deformed calves inside them, which we suspect are a result of infection by the Schmallenberg virus last year. So far they have been premature and despite flexed limbs and twisted necks, we've been able to deliver most of them without resorting to surgery. It is of great concern what March and April will bring.

A lack of energy in diets has been a consistent feature. The resulting loss of body condition and poor heat expression has meant fewer cows in-calf.

Dave Gilbert

Lambert Leonard and May
Cheshire

* At the practice spring-calving is now in full swing. Despite a challenging winter out, most of these herds seem to have come through OK, although condition is down a little on last year.

At the moment milk fevers and displacements seem under control, but we'll have to wait and see how it affects this year's mating.

The biggest issue for these herds seems to be mastitis, particularly in first-calving heifers. This is a growing area of interest and it isn't uncommon to find 25% of heifers succumbing in the first month.

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¹ Percentage kill: Adults 97%-100%, immature 6-8 weeks 91%-95%, immatures 5 weeks - 91%, 3-4 week immatures 23%-73%. Product SPC.
² Maes L, Vanparijs O, Lauwers H. (1990) Activité d'ovicide du closantel contre Fasciola hepatica: approche pharmacodynamique. Revue Méd. Vet., 141, 12, 991-995.
³ Res Vet Sci. 1988 Mar;44(2):229-32. Flukicidal action of closantel against immature and mature Fasciola hepatica in experimentally infected rats and sheep. Maes L, Lauwers H, Deckers W, Vanparijs O.
⁴ Coles, G. C., Rhodes, A. C., Stafford, K. A. (2000) Activity of closantel against adult triclabendazole-resistant Fasciola hepatica. Veterinary Record 146, 504.

Vet Viewpoint is 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