

Vet Viewpoint

A regional round-up of key veterinary issues

Tim O'Sullivan



**Shropshire Farm Vets
Shropshire**

* High levels of stillbirth in heifers are seen at this time of year. This can be down to difficult calvings, especially if heifers have got fat on good grazing. Retained cleansings and uterine infections can follow, often due to vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

If you are keeping heifers out as long as possible this autumn, you need to consider supplying minerals either via bolus, lick or in feed or water. If using licks, keep them badger-proof as a lot of minerals are in a molasses or salt base that will be of interest to our furry friends.

Root crops and brassicas are especially likely to cause problems with iodine. Everybody's production is different, so discuss your farm's needs with your vet before you go to the expense of buying extra minerals.

rates compared to our year-round calving herds.

One of our bigger herds recently started a three-month-on, three-month-off calving, with tangible improvements not just on fertility, but also calf health. Scour reduced to the point of just one of the last 400 calves born requiring treatment.

Compact calving minimises the opportunity for disease to pass from older to younger animals. Pneumonia

Jennie Batt



**Larkmead Veterinary Group
Oxfordshire**

* In the pig sector we have been dealing with an unusually early wave of respiratory disease. Enzootic pneumonia has been dominating; several clean herds have succumbed. Influenza has also created difficulties on some otherwise generally healthy units.

We tend to associate this time of year with fertility issues in breeding stock, but so far producers appear relatively unscathed in this respect.

The whole industry remains on red alert as external threats of African swine fever and porcine epidemic diarrhoea virus do not appear to be reducing. There is some concern these may pick up pace again soon and we're urging farmers to consider herd biosecurity with renewed care.

is also expected to be less prevalent over the winter as a result.

But why the improvement in fertility? The advantage may come from focusing the mind. Three months serving, followed by three months calving – they do say a change is as good as a rest. Block-calving "lite" might not work for all, but it raises a few questions.

Anuschka Marsman



**ProStock Vets
Camarthen**

* Milk price is a hot topic in our part of the world and doom and gloom seems to be prevailing. Cost of milk production and borrowing costs are key

performance indicators.

Being Dutch I've checked out what they're doing across the Channel. ING bank thinks the bottom milk price has been reached. Rabobank thinks this will happen in the new year.

Dutch dairy farmers have had a good year. They rely heavily on export (40% of total production) and are over quota every year, but optimism remains strong. Maybe we should have a word with Campina? Its marketing must be very different from that of our milk buyers.

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A regional monthly round-up of key veterinary issues from members of the XL Vets group.
www.xlvets.co.uk

Miranda Macinnes



**Calwetton Veterinary Group
Cornwall**

* We do a lot of analysis for our dairy clients and on the whole our block calvers have excellent submission and pregnancy