WORKING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

VOLUME 5 EDITION 1

Livestock MATTERS

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EXCELLENCE IN PRACTICE

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The members of XLVets have worked hard to create what they see as a model of how practices can work together, sharing the latest ideas and passing on savings and joint expertise to clients.

The group comprises of a number of the foremost farm practices in Ireland. With many years of combined experience, it is able to give expert advice on all areas of farm livestock, health and production.

XLVets member practices are dedicated to providing a high quality, cost effective service to their clients, to support long-term growth and future prosperity within the Irish livestock industry.

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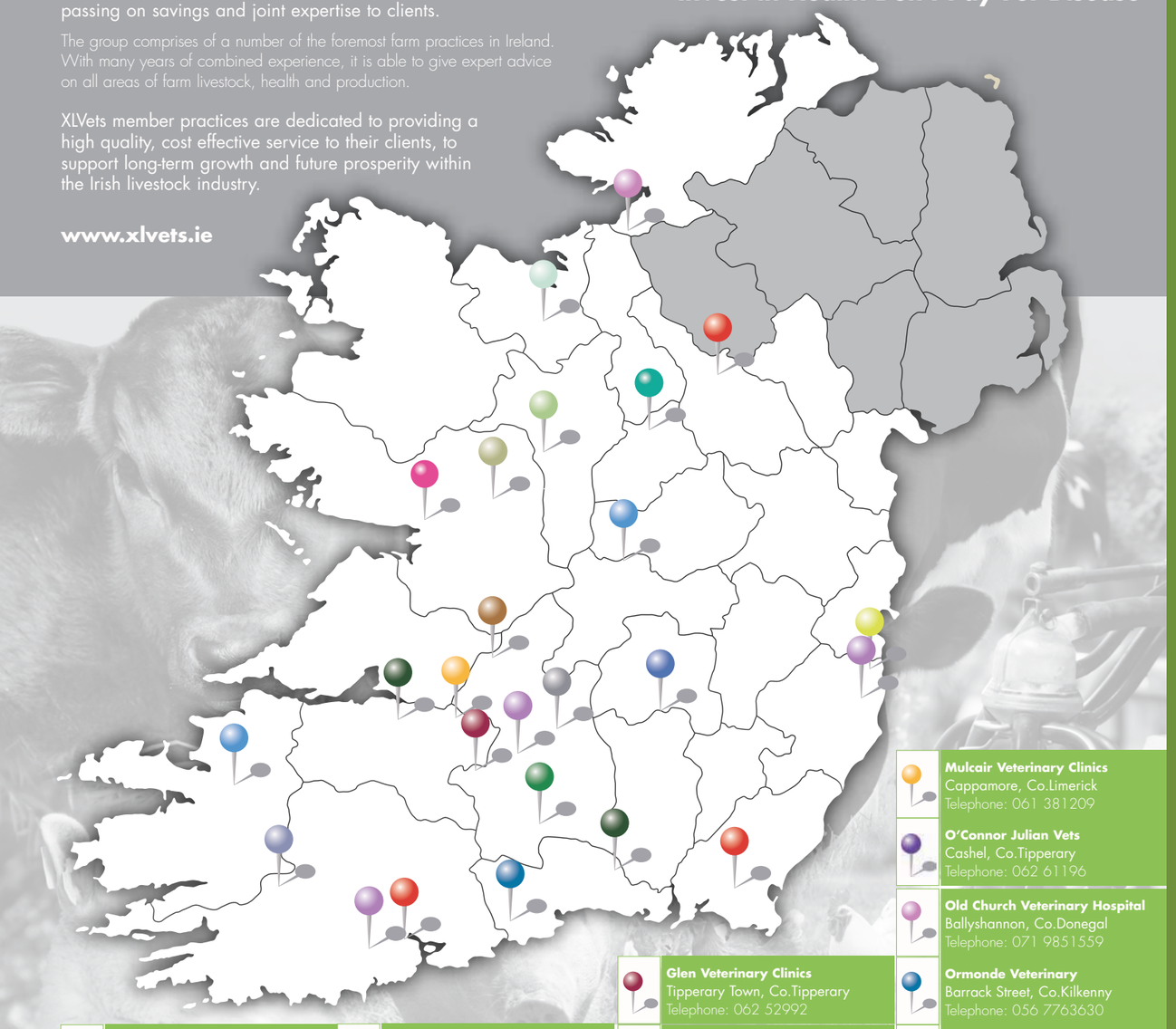

Adare Veterinary Surgery
Adare, Co.Limerick
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Telephone: 0906 626898

Animal Health Centre
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Telephone: 043 3346716

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XLVets is a novel and exciting initiative conceived from within the veterinary profession. We are all independently owned, progressive veterinary practices located throughout Ireland committed to working together for the benefit of our clients.

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The Veterinary Hospital
Arklow Road, Gorey, Co.Wexford

XLVet Ireland Ltd Registered Office at:
Dromsally, Cappamore
County Limerick
Tel: 061 381505

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Veterinary Surgeon Jerry Crowley

XLVets Practice Glenbower Veterinary Group, Killeagh, Co Cork

JERRY CROWLEY, MVB, CERT DHH

In this article, I will deal with immunity, gut development & feeding for growth and common disease threats for calves.

Calf Rearing

Successful calf rearing is what every farmer aspires to. The first hour of a calf`s life is often referred to as the "golden hour", much of the animals` future potential is decided by what happens in the first few hours after it leaves the safe (and sterile) environment of its mothers` womb.

Immunity

Immunity is defined as the body`s ability to resist infection. When a human or an animal with a competent immune system comes in contact with a disease-causing agent or pathogen such as the common flu, we develop the disease with the flu virus multiplying in the body, we may or may not show signs of illness and then the body`s immune system will produce an immune response to clear the infection.

Calves however are born without an active immune system and are therefore wide open to infection especially in the first 3 to 4 weeks of life. During this period the calf`s own immune system will develop. Nature however has provided a solution to this problem, whereby the cow produces colostrum which is rich in antibodies.

Another part of the solution is provided by the calf itself, whereby the calf`s gut is "open" (a state that allows the antibodies in the colostrum pass easily and quickly into the calf`s blood). This whole process is referred to as PASSIVE TRANSFER of IMMUNITY from the cow to her calf. Approximately 2 out of every 3 calves that are examined post mortem in the Regional Veterinary Laboratories in Ireland each year show failure of adequate passive transfer

Colostrum, 4 Q`s and Hygiene

Quality

Quantity

Quickly

Quietly

Colostrum **quality** can vary hugely with the level of antibodies ranging from 15-90 grams per litre, 15g/L would be likely in cows that leak milk before calving, high yielders, thin cows etc., with 90g/L in a healthy suckler cow.

It is worth noting that good dry cow management can improve colostrum quality, with vaccination programmes playing an important role on some farms.

The calf needs to get a minimum of 50 grams to achieve adequate immunity.

Timing is vital as the "open gut" state of the calf reduces rapidly over the first six hours of life. Colostrum needs to be harvested quickly and hygienically after calving, as milk production which commences after calving dilutes the antibody concentration, with milk taken 6 hours after calving no longer called colostrum, even if this is the first milk.

Bacterial contamination of colostrum has a number of negative effects. Bacteria in colostrum compete with the antibodies for absorption, reducing the amount of antibodies getting in to the calf`s bloodstream, leaving the calf with a poorer immune status and more prone to disease.

Research has shown that calves absorb more antibodies from colostrum when fed quietly avoiding stress.

These facts are the basis on which the 3,2,1 rule for colostrum are based. With 3 litres of the 1st milk being fed in the first 2 hours of life. Visit www.animalhealthireland.ie and view published materials for more information.

Gut development and feeding for growth

A suckled calf can consume up to 24% of its own bodyweight in milk/day achieving a liveweight gains of over 1 kg/day. Bucket reared calves need to be fed 15% of their bodyweight/day to achieve growth rates that are required to meet bulling weight targets in the case of a dairy replacement heifer.

Introducing concentrate feed provides the calf with fermentable carbohydrate, this fermentation process leads to the development of the calf`s gut from being a simple monogastric or one stomach system at birth, through the preruminant stages which eventually enables the animal to digest the complex carbohydrates in plants.

Good quality palatable fresh calf feed is a sound investment for calf rearing.

Calves are generally weaned off milk when they have at a minimum doubled their birthweight, and are consuming over 1.5kg of concentrate.

It is worth noting that feed conversion efficiency is much higher in young animals, the basic rule of thumb is grow calves as fast as you can, the one caveat being for replacement dairy heifer calves, where we want to avoid them getting fat (this will reduce future fertility and milk production ability).

Mature cow weight e.g. 600kg	The weight of the average mid lactation 4 year old cow in your herd
Birth weight e.g. 40kg	Day 1
Double birth weight e.g. 80kg	8 weeks
30% of mature weight e.g. 180kg	6 months
60-65% of mature weight	15 months
90% of mature weight	22-26 months

Targets for dairy replacement heifer calves

Diseases

Enteric or gut infections are the biggest killers of calves under 1 month

What causes scour in calves?		
Rotavirus	Virus	Most Common
Coccidia (usually >3weeks of age)	Parasite	
Cryptosporidia	Parasite	
E.coli	Bacteria	
Salmonella species	Bacteria	
Coronavirus	Virus	Least Common

Frequency of pathogens identified in calf post-mortem examinations and faecal samples submitted to DAFM RVLs during 2014	
Cryptosporidium parvum	26.1%
Rotavirus	33.3%
Coronavirus	0.8%
E.coli K99	1.8%
Salmonella species	1.7%
Coccidiosis	28.3%

General guidelines for successful calf rearing

Preparation of housing is vital for both calving area and calf rearing accommodation. Hot wash disinfection followed by an idle period will reduce the disease challenge to the new born calf`s fledgling immune system.

Colostrum management, follow the 3,2,1 rule.

Ensure calf housing is clean and warm, with dry bedding and draft free (see article on page 7 & 8 in this edition by Mark Drought)

Navel disinfection

Hygiene again, clean feeding utensils.
Feed for growth 15% of body weight in milk.

Introduce quality palatable calf concentrate in the first week, develops rumen.

Don't wean until eating at least 1.5kg concentrates.

Rear in small groups with calves of similar age DON`T MIX YOUNG AND OLD CALVES.

All in all out, get a batch together in house, rear them and ideally repeat the cleaning, disinfection, idle period before next batch.

Weigh calves to monitor their progress

Veterinary Surgeon	Mark Drought
XLVets Practice	Avondale Vets, Arklow, Co. Wicklow.

MARK DROUGHT, MVB

We discuss how a well-designed dairy calf house can significantly reduce the incidence of scour and pneumonia.

Dairy Calf Housing: Keeping Calves Healthy Indoors

Dairy calves are most susceptible to scour and pneumonia in the first 6-8 weeks of life. Scour is the biggest killer of calves under one month old and pneumonia causes the most deaths in animals over one month of age.

We could use all the vaccines in the world but unless we have the housing right we will face an uphill battle to keep calves healthy.

During these crucial early weeks calves will be housed and we must ensure this housing is fit for purpose. A lot of investment goes into cows' cubicle sheds but how much attention is paid to the calf housing? It should provide sufficient shelter and heat, ventilation and comfort to allow calves to thrive and also be designed to minimise disease challenge.

Every farm has different styles of calf housing from individual pens/hutches to sheds with larger groups of calves. Any of these systems can be successful when a few basic rules are followed.

General Points

A lot of calf houses are poorly designed. Older sheds especially often have too few air outlets resulting in inadequate ventilation. Some small modifications can make a big difference.

Calves shouldn't share an airspace with cows. Unfortunately, a lot of calf housing is in the same shed as the calving pens. If sick cows are kept in the calving pens, this makes a bad situation worse.

Ideally there should be a maximum of 40-50 calves in the same airspace.

Using outdoor plastic hutches can be an excellent solution on certain farms. Bear in mind that in cold weather calves may need extra feed to supply energy to keep warm.

Space

Calves require a minimum lying space of 1.7m². A total floor area of 2.3m² per calf is required if we include the feed passage. For example, a pen for 6 calves should be roughly 12m² (3m wide x 4m deep).

Calculate the size of your calf pens, is there enough space for the number of calves you plan to put in each pen?
Have you enough pens to house the number of calves you expect on the ground?

Calves should be grouped according to age. Groups of 5-6 calves are generally preferred. It is easier to detect sick calves in small groups.

With automatic milk feeders calves would be in bigger groups. These should be observed frequently for any signs of illness.

DO NOT mix older calves back into pens with young calves, the older calves may be shedding infectious agents. Keep batches of calves together, the less mixing the better.

With compact calving where we might have 80% of cows calving within a 6-week window, there will be huge strain on calf housing in a short space of time.

Moving weaned calves to other sheds and selling bull calves early can ease some of this pressure.

Figure 1. This pen for 6 calves has slats at the feeding area and a rubber mat to improve calf comfort

Bedding

Straw bedding should be deep and dry. The bedding should be cleaned out between batches of calves.

If you kneel in the straw your knees should stay dry if the bedding is sufficient.

Some farms use calf slats in the feeding area, this is a huge help to hygiene.

Rubber mats can also be used to improve calf comfort. (Fig. 1)

Figure 2. Gaps under doors will cause draughts

Ventilation

Viruses and bacteria thrive in humid air. Having good ventilation without draughts will seriously reduce the risk of calf pneumonia and other diseases.

The air outlet area is the space provided at the apex of the roof for air to escape.

The outlet should be at least 0.08m² per calf.

The air inlet area is usually at the eaves of the shed and must be at least twice the size of the outlet area. Ideally the air inlet would be at least 1.5m lower than the outlet.

A simple way to test ventilation is to crouch to calf level, if there is a smell of ammonia then the ventilation is inadequate.

Draughts must be avoided at all costs. Check there are no gaps under doors or holes in side sheeting near calf level. (Fig. 2)

In large airy sheds down-draughts may be an issue. In this case plyboard can be used to create shelter for calves to lie under. These can be hinged up to allow a tractor in to clean the shed. (Fig. 3)

Sick Calves

Sick calves (scour/pneumonia) should be identified promptly and moved to an isolation pen (ideally in a separate shed).

Treat these sick calves as highly infectious unless proven otherwise. Feed them last. Use a designated feeder, stomach tube etc. Disinfect your boots when entering and leaving the sick calf pen.

If these calves are returned to the main calf shed put them back in with calves of their own age, never mix back in with younger calves.

Hygiene

The easier it is to clean the calf house, the better. The walls should be smooth, with no cracks or crevices for dung to stick to.

Many farmers notice that most disease occurs in later born calves. This is due to the build-up of infectious agents over the housing period. Cleaning pens between batches of calves can help. You should never powerwash pens when calves are still in the shed.

When all the calves are turned out, clean and powerwash all surfaces of the calf house. Steam cleaning will improve hygiene. Disinfectant should be applied and allowed to soak in. Ideally leave the shed empty for 3-4 months. Talk to your vet about which disinfectant to use.

Some Tips to Keep Calves Healthy Indoors

- Don't overcrowd calf pens
- Keep groups together – avoid mixing batches
- Dry deep bedding
- Clean out straw bedding between batches of calves
- No draughts – block any gaps
- Isolate sick calves quickly

Figure 3. Plyboard shelters protect calves from down draughts

Veterinary Surgeon Paul Barnes

XLVets Practice Kilcoyne Veterinary
Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo.

Regardless if lambing indoors or outdoors organisation is key, with first steps towards lambing taking place months beforehand, it is a shame that so many of us come up short at the final hurdle.

Preparation

Having ewes in optimum condition for lambing greatly reduces the risk of many diseases and will give the best chance of strong, lively lambs.

Scanning ewes to allow batching according to litter size enables feed requirements to be met accordingly.

Lame ewes should be isolated, treated & marked at scanning to reduce problems before housing. Body condition scores should be monitored from scanning and thin ewes separated to receive extra feed. Clostridial Vaccine boosters should be given 4-6 weeks before lambing to allow cover for lambs via colostrum. If ewes are to be housed, ensure enough trough space is available for meal feeding so all ewes can eat at one time, 500-600mm is the recommendation for larger lowland breeds and a floor space of 1.2m²-1.3m² per ewe.

PAUL BARNES, MVB

Every sheep farmers aim at lambing is to get as many live lambs on the ground as possible, and preparation before the mayhem is essential. Failure to prepare is preparing to fail, and this is most applicable to lambing sheep.

Increasing Lambing Success

Sheep Housing

Feed rations should contain high protein from a good quality source (18-20% protein). Mineral supplementation is essential for healthy viable lambs, with particular focus on Selenium, Iodine and Magnesium levels, single bearing ewes which may be receiving little or no meal should not be forgotten. Space is always a premium during lambing, 1 lambing pen per 10 ewes as a general rule, adoption facilities and an area for foster lambs. A lamb heater box or heat bulb for weak lambs should be available. Lambing kit should be checked, essentials include ropes.

Lambing Kit

Lambing Process

Lambing consists of three stages of labour:

Stage one begins where the ewe isolates herself and begins straining. This stage can last for 3-6 hours during which time cervical dilation occurs and contractions begin and increase in frequency as the ewe progresses into stage two. At the end of stage one the cervix will be fully dilated and the water bag will appear.

Stage one labour

Stage two typically takes about an hour, the ewe will have powerful abdominal straining and the lamb will be forced into the birth canal with bursting of the water bag.
Occasionally this fails to burst and lambs may be born in the bag and may die from suffocation. If stage two is persisting for more than one hour after the end of stage one then intervention may be required,

Intervals between lambs varies from 10-60 minutes and again intervention may be required if this is more than 60 minutes. If intervention is required, shoulder length gloves should be used and plenty of lubricant.

Stage Two

Stage three involves passing of the cleanings and typically occurs within 2-3 hours after birth of lambs.

Common malpresentations can be easily corrected by an experienced shepherd when spotted in time. With uncommon presentations or an oversized foetus veterinary assistance should be sought to achieve a favourable outcome.

Common Problems

Abortions:

Abortion storms can often see up to 30% of ewes in a flock abort.Abortions can often be worse in subsequent years after introduction of the disease so it is essential to investigate all abortions, Foetus and Placenta and where possible should be submitted for testing.

Aborted ewes should be isolated immediately and identified for future blood testing or culling where necessary.

Any bought in ewes should be lambed separate from the main flock to minimise risk of disease spread, as ewes may become infected and abort the following year.

Twin Lamb Disease:

Often seen in older ewes carrying multiple lambs in last month of pregnancy, due to energy shortage created by inadequate feed intake, poor forage quality, low concentrate allowance or high foetal demand.

]Twin lamb disease can be brought on by stress e.g. Poor weather conditions, handling or housing. Signs such as not coming for feed, isolation and depression progressing to recumbency.

Treatment with a high energy propylene glycol based solution may be effective in very early stages; more advanced stages may need veterinary attention and intravenous glucose solution.

Hypocalcaemia:

Not uncommon in older ewes maintained at pasture during late gestation, but can also occur from time to time during early lactation. "Storms" of hypocalcaemia often occur after a stressful event such as housing or handeling. Signs include weakness, inability to stand even when lifted

Hypocalcaemia

bloat, comatose and death within 48hours. Rapid response is seen to intravenous calcium and ewes will often stand within 5 minutes, a slower response is seen with sub-cutaneous injection (4-8hours), warming the solution to body temperature before administration may speed recovery time.

Hypocal ewe 24 hours later

Vaginal Prolapse:

Typically occurs in the final month of pregnancy affecting around 1% of pregnant sheep but may be as high as 15% in some flocks.

Factors such as excessive body condition, multiple foetus', high fibre diets, limited exercise, lameness, short docked tails and sub-clinical hypocalcaemia may precipitate incidences of vaginal prolapse.

The prolapse should be cleaned in an antiseptic solution, caudal analgesia (epidural) will greatly assist with replacement of prolapses and reduce the stress on the ewe.

The prolapse can then be retained by a Buhner suture, a harness or a plastic retention device. Ewes with vaginal prolapse are more prone to ringwomb and need to be monitored carefully during lambing.

Vaginal Prolapse

Uterine prolapse:

Occurs after lambing in 0.1% of ewes, and is larger than a vaginal prolapse, easily recognisable by the presence of caruncles (buttons). Uterine Prolapse usually occurs immediately after lambing due to prolonged labour, or 12-48 hours later due to excessive straining, inflammation or infection.

Uterine prolapse should be replaced by veterinary assistance using caudal anaesthesia, and if not fully inverted the ewe will continue to strain and often re-prolapse. Supportive treatment after uterine prolapse with a course of Anti-biotics & Anti-Inflammatories will greatly improve survival and ewes return to lactation.

Uterine Prolapse

Ringwomb:

Is the failure of cervical dilation at the end of first stage labour. Only two to three fingers may be passed. Gentle manipulation should be stopped if no progress is being made after 5-10 minutes and veterinary assistance sought. Often a caesarean will be required in true ringwomb.

Mismothering:

New born lambs only have fat reserves to maintain lambs for 6 hours, so it is essential to ensure lambs have sucked plenty of colostrum, (200ml/kg in the first 24 hours & 50ml/kg in the first 2 hours).

Older lambs will burn fat reserves after 24 hours of starvation; hypoglycaemic and hypothermic lambs should receive glucose solution by intraperitoneal injection and placed in a warming box at 45 degrees C.

The best treatment for many problems around lambing is prevention, be it getting nutrition correct to avoid metabolic diseases such as twin lamb disease and hypocalcaemia, or maintaining high standards of hygiene in the lambing shed and lambing pens to avoid infectious diseases in lambs.

It is much easier to avoid problems which lead to lamb mortality than to try and treat them after they have occurred, and with lamb mortality up to 20% on some farms, there is definite room for improvement.

Lambing Kit

- Gloves
- Lubrication gel
- Head snare
- Ropes

Preparation for Lambing

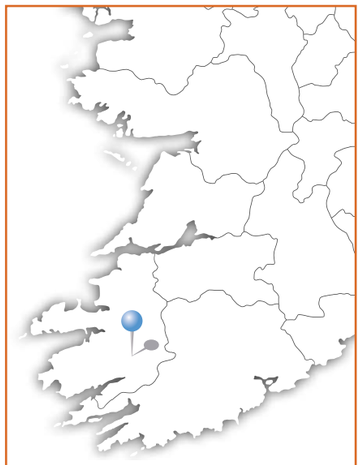
- Scanning
- Mineral supplements
- Clostridial vaccinate 4-6 weeks before lambing
- Mark and isolate lame ewes
- Prepare housing
  - Batch for litter size
  - BCS
  - Ewe lambs separate

EWE Treatment Kit

- Calcium
- Twin lamb drench
- Antibiotic
- Oxytocin
- Pain Relief/ Anti-inflammatory
- Harness/retainers for vaginal prolapse

Lamb Revival Essentials

- Bottle & teat
- Stomach tube
- Colostrum
- Glucose solution



Veterinary Surgeon Donal Murphy

XLVets Practice Sliabh Luachra Veterinary Centre, Rathmore, Co.Kerry

Veterinary Practice stopped for a few hours in September 2014 when 3 Rathmore lads brought the Sam Maguire and Tom Markham back to the Kingdom

Many years ago I had a female German Veterinary student seeing practice with me during a busy spring. One morning about 11am I was taking a cleaning from a dairy cow, and while my fingers were busy trying to peel the offending after –birth from the uterus, I was engaged in a very serious conversation with the farmer, a Cork man.

The topic of our conversation was local championship football! When the job was completed we departed from the yard, only to be urgently called back to the same farm a few hours later, to attend to a very sick calf.

Alas, by the time we reached the farm the poor calf was dead. The farmer explained that he had forgotten to tell me about the calf when I was on farm that morning.

My student was speechless and absolutely aghast, that any sane farmer could forget about a sick dying calf and instead talk about a "stupid" football match! I tried to explain to her that it was actually a pretty important match we were talking about, but she was not convinced.

I think the story illustrates a certain aspect of our Irishness, i.e. the importance of sport in a lot of our lives.

The mental and physical positives derived from playing sports are well documented, but there is also massive pleasure to be gained from having a keen interest in sport.

While I can categorise a lot of my clients into Man United, Liverpool supporters and a few other less well supported clubs, and while during the soccer season some fairly heated debates can be had, the big passion in our neck of the woods is the GAA, and more specifically football.

We are located just inside the Kerry border, so the Kerry – Cork rivalry is intense and ever-present. We have clients in Cork that get great satisfaction in calling you out after a Cork victory over Kerry, and you wouldn't see them for a week if Kerry won. The slagging (a very Irish trait) around Munster Final time never abates from year to year, and there are very few occasions in the Irish sporting calendar to match a Kerry –Cork Munster Football Final in Killarney.

Due to the fact that the GAA is parish based, there are a whole host of club rivalries to be enjoyed also. On an Autumn Saturday a few years ago, I did call outs to farmers from 13 different clubs.

As it happened all were GAA men, so that meant 13 different conversations about matches played, upcoming fixtures or any other club issues. At the end of that day I was thinking to myself "Where would we be but for the GAA".

It gives a sense of identity to a Parish, and after big championship wins the whole area gets a huge lift that lasts for days (sometimes weeks), and all other worries or concerns are forgotten for a while. The other side of that story is that after bad defeats the club is plunged into a collective depression that is very slow to shift.

Rathmore have narrowly lost County Semi-Finals in the past 2 years and the sense of disappointment after those losses is very difficult to erase from the memory.

I think that people who have no interest in sport are missing out on so much. There is a sense of togetherness when you share a sporting interest or sporting ambition with other likeminded individuals, which sustains and exhorts you to greater effort. If you lose after giving it your best shot, then good luck to your opponent.

To conclude, I will quote another of my foreign students, this time Max a 3rd year French Vet student. Max arrived in Rathmore the evening of the 2014 Munster Final when an unfancied Kerry team demolished Cork.

Rathmore had 2 players on that Kerry team, and Max experienced all the joy, phone calls and general euphoria for the following few days.

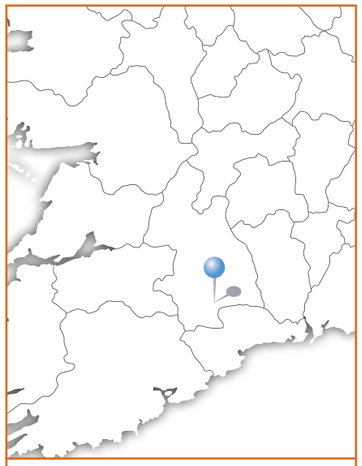
When one farmer, who was unable to stop because of oncoming traffic at a junction where we met, so that all he could do was shake his fist in triumph out of the window of his slow moving jeep, Max uttered the immortal words " I think if France zey win zee World Cup, it would not be zis way"

That sums us up very well.

Winning local Championships gives a lift to the Parish that cannot be quantified

DONAL MURPHY, MVB, CERT DHH

Important Role Sport plays in the Local community



Veterinary Surgeon Sarah Mitchell

XLVets Practice Southview Veterinary Hospital, Irishtown, Clonmel, Tipperary

SARAH MITCHELL, MVB

Foaling Mares and Foal Management

Mare and foal should be allowed to lie quietly after foaling for several minutes to allow blood to continue to flow from mare to foal through the umbilical cord

A lot of energy and effort has gone into getting your mare in foal, so it is very important you are prepared to make sure nothing goes wrong during the foaling or in the first few days of life.

Pregnancy length and Foaling Dates:

On average a mare will foal 11 months from her last breeding date. This does vary between mares and can depend on the time of year (as the days get longer often the pregnancy gets shorter). In general a pregnancy can last 320 - 380 days so it is important to recognise the signals that your mare is due to foal so that you can be ready. You may not see all of these signs but if you are checking your mare every day in the last month of her pregnancy, you will notice some, if not all of them.

In our practice we recommend tetanus vaccination at least 30 days prior to foaling so that the mares AND the foals are protected against this disease at foaling.

Also, if your mare has been stitched at the time of breeding this will need to be reversed before the foaling time –usually about 2 weeks before her foaling date or if your are noticing any of the below signs. You will need to call your veterinary surgeon to do this small procedure.

Changes in Mare	Time before Foaling
Udder fills and starts to increase in size	2-4 Weeks
Tailhead relaxes and abdominal muscles 'drop'	1-4 Weeks
Teats fill with milk	2-7 Days
Dripping milk	1-7 Days
Waxing – yellow wax like beads appear on the ends of the teats – usually a sign foaling is imminent.	1-4 Days

Note the filling of the udder and the 'wax' at the tip of the teet. In most cases the mare will foal 24-48 hours after this appears

Stages of Labour

Stage 1

- Onset of contractions and the stage where the foal is moving into position in the mare
- Can last 1-2 hours
- Mares do seem to prefer to foal at night – probably because they are happier to foal uninterrupted in a quiet, dark place
- The mare may appear to be a bit colicky, she will be restless, pacing the box, kicking at her belly, tail will be up and she may urinate frequently

Stage 2

- This is the stage where the foal is actually pushed out
- Usually 15-20 minutes after the water breaks
- If it is taking more than 30 minutes then the mare needs assistance
- It is normal during this phase for the mare to stand up and lie down several times and even to roll to get the foal into position. If you see her doing this is does not necessarily mean she needs help
- The foal should present front feet first, then nose, head, shoulders and hindquarters
- If you see a hoof or hooves coming sole upwards then the mare needs assistance
- If your mare does need assistance then this is considered VERY URGENT so call for your veterinary surgeon straight away if you are not comfortable with assisting her yourself
- It is normal for mare and foal to remain lying down for several minutes after foaling

Stage 3

- The placenta is expelled 1-3 hours post foaling
- If after 3 hours the placenta is retained then you need to call your veterinary surgeon to check the mare, as a retained placenta can lead to a serious uterine infection and laminitis in mares
- When the placenta is fully expelled it needs to be laid out to check that a 'tag' has not been left behind in the mare– you can check it yourself or else leave it in a plastic bag (away from dogs and wildlife) to be checked by your vet when he or she comes for the post foaling check up

Normal timeline of events post foaling. If your foal is not hitting these targets it should be checked immediately by your vet.

Time post birth	Event
1-2 minutes	Foal should roll onto its chest
2-20 minutes	Suck reflex present (can be checked by putting finger in mouth)
30 minutes	Foal should stand (... > 2 hours is abnormal)
30-90 minutes	Foal should be nursing (... > 3-4 hours is abnormal)
8-10 hours	Should pass meconium (the first dung)
After several hours	Should pass urine

Examine the afterbirth after foaling to check that it is complete. It is important to ensure the tips of both uterine horns are present

The Foal at Birth

Mare and foal will remain lying down for several minutes after foaling. The cord remains intact during this time and blood continues to flow from mare to foal. After a short time the mare will usually stand and break the cord. If you need to break the cord yourself, wait until it has stopped pulsing (4-5 minutes) and then twist and pull it about 1 inch from the abdomen, where it narrows. If it is bleeding you can apply pressure to it for 2-3 minutes which should stop the blood flow. You should apply 2% iodine, or a chlorhexidine solution, to the foal's navel shortly after the cord is broken. It should be reapplied 1-2 times per day until is it dry and you are sure it is not infected.

Colostrum

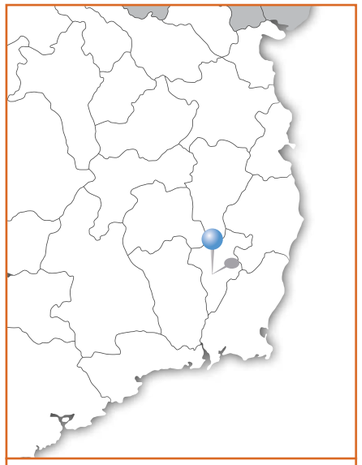
A foal needs to ingest colostrum antibodies within 8-12 hours of foaling to develop its immune system. Failure to do so can have serious consequences for its ability to fight infection in the first few days of its life.

It is possible for your vet to check the levels of antibodies 12-24 hours post foaling with a simple blood test and we do recommend this is done. If the IGG levels are low it is possible for your vet to give your foal a plasma drip to support its immune system.

Post Foaling Check

We recommend a post foaling check by your veterinary surgeon to:

1. Check that mare is healthy and there is no damage to mare during foaling.
2. Check that the complete placenta has been expelled.
3. Check the foal is healthy and navel is not infected.
4. Administer tetanus antitoxin to mare and foal if mare is not vaccinated.
5. Administer enema to foal to prevent retained meconium.



Veterinary Surgeon Kieran Devaney

XLVets Practice Ormonde Veterinary, 14 Barrack St., Kilkenny

KIERAN DEVANEY, MVB

Iodine deficiency

This year herds in our practice have recorded lower than expected iodine levels. The classical sign of iodine deficiency is thyroid enlargement or goitre seen in young animals. Other signs noticed on farm may include late gestation abortions, still-born or weak calves and lambs that are unwilling to suck, more assisted births and increased neonatal mortality.

Iodine deficiency in cattle and sheep is also associated with reduced fertility, growth rates and milk yield. Cows deficient in iodine can also be more prone to held cleanings. If you are having issues with any of the above contact your vet for a discussion. Submission of samples to the lab will aid a diagnosis and rule out infectious causes.

Severe goitre in calves/lambs will be detectable on exam by your vet or at your local vet lab. More subtle cases may require further investigation comparing soil and forage analysis in conjunction with animal blood samples. If these are not available which is often the case, blood samples taken by your vet can give a snapshot of iodine levels at the time of sampling. Interpretation of iodine status can be multifaceted, your own vet is best suited to interpret and advise based on their knowledge of your herd/flock, area and annual changes.

Iodine deficiency can be primary occurring where low iodine in the soil leads to reduced iodine in grass and forages. It can also be secondary occurring due to ingestion of goitrogens found in certain brassicas and legumes e.g. fodder beet, kale, rape, white clover. Selenium is required to activate thyroid hormone and thus selenium deficiency may lead to secondary iodine deficiency. When sampling for iodine we would usually test selenium levels also.

Methods of supplementation include drenches, boluses, painting 5% tincture of iodine on the flank skin fold, inclusion in concentrates, blocks, licks, and medicated water supply. Some of the above products deliver a cocktail of trace elements and vitamins also. Before using any of these products it is advisable to identify exact deficiencies on the farm and supplement only according to specific need.

It is advisable to monitor all trace element levels on a regular basis. The availability of trace elements can change annually depending on weather, reseeding, liming etc.

Where routine supplementation is practiced, monitoring levels in stock is necessary to check that the level of supplementation is adequate. A monitoring programme should be drawn up with your vet as part of a health plan.

competition

Welcome to the XLVets Readers' Competition...

VOLUME 5 EDITION 1

ENTER TODAY GOOD LUCK...

To enter, simply answer the three questions below and complete your details on the entry form. All the answers can be found in the articles in this issue of the magazine. Details of where to send your entry can be found below.

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN...

We have an XLVets Calf Jacket to give away to the first correct entry drawn at random after the competition closes.

A winner will be chosen from all the correct entries received before the closing date, Thursday 16th March 2017. The winner will be revealed in the next issue of XLVets Ireland Livestock Matters.

My Details

Name

Address

Daytime Telephone Number

Email

XLVets Practice Name

Calf Jacket Size (please circle) L XL

☐ I do not wish to receive further information from XLVets

☐ I would like to receive further information from XLVets by e-mail

Send your completed entry to: Farm Competition No.6
XLVets Ireland, Dromsally, Cappamore, Co.Limerick

? one... When is a thorough bred horse considered to be 1-year-old?

? two... According to our article – What is the cost to rear a replacement cow?

? three... What four factors should be considered when deciding a cattle parasite control programme?

The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Post, or email your entry to office@xlvets.ie
or text your answer, followed by your name to 087 9422891

Benefits of calf jackets:

- Maintains the calves body heat
- Prevent illness
- Protect from sudden drops in temperature
- Easy to fit – available in Large and X Large
- Long adjustable straps
- Water Resistant and insulated for extra comfort
- Breathable material
- Machine washable (30°)

XLVets was recognised by the Irish Institute of Training and Development as Ireland's best learning and development network in 2016. The award was made in recognition of XLVets achievements in delivering highly effective training to farmers since 2010.

Members of XLVets are knowledge transfer approved trainers and available to attend your group meeting. To book a trainer, please contact your nearest XLVets practice; details below.

Practice Name	Address	Contact No.
Adare Veterinary Clinic	Curraghbeg, Adare, Co Limerick	061 396390
All Creatures Veterinary Clinic,	Lanesboro Street, Roscommon Town, Co Roscommon	090 6626898
Animal Health Centre,	Main Street, Taghmon, Co. Wexford	053 9134140
Avondale Veterinary Clinic	Ferrybank, Arklow, Co Wicklow	040 233744
Castle Veterinary	Church Street, Castleisland, Co Kerry	066 714 1230
Clerkin Vets	90 Bridge Street, Cootehill, Co Cavan	049 5552777
Comeragh Veterinary	Main Street, Kilmacthomas, Co Waterford	051 294143
Donal Lynch MVB	Killurin, Tullamore, Co Offaly	057 9354505
Geraghty and Neary Veterinary	College Road, Mountbellew, Co Galway	090 9679277
Glasslyn Veterinary Clinic	Station Road, Bandon, Co Cork	021 4772277
Glen Veterinary Clinic	Blind Street, Tipperary Town, Co Tipperary	062 52992
Glenbower Veterinary Group	Clashdermot East, Killeagh, Co Cork	024 95189
Glenina Veterinary Clinic	1a Glenina Heights, Dublin Road, Co Galway	091 752014
Gortlandroe Veterinary Clinic	St. Conlon's Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary	067 31016
Kilcoyne Veterinary	Mountain Road, Tubberycurry, Co Sligo	071 9185016
Killenaule Vets	Killenaule, Thurles, Co Tipperary	052 9156065
Longford Animal Health Centre	Cooleeney, Shroid, Longford, Co Longford	043 3346716
Mulcair Veterinary Clinic	Dromsally, Cappamore, Co Limerick	061 381209
O'Connor & Julian Cashel Vets	Cahir Road, Cashel, Co Tipperary	062 61196
Old Church Veterinary Hospital	The Mall, Ballyshannon, Co Donegal	071 9851559
Ormonde Veterinary	14 Barrack Street, Kilkenny, Co Kilkenny	056 7764724
Riverview Veterinary Group	Distillery Road, Bandon, Co Cork	023 8841503
Sliabh Luachra Veterinary Centre	West End, Rathmore, Co Kerry	064 7758009
Southview Veterinary	Irishtown, Clonmel, Co Tipperary	052 6121429
Veterinary Hospital	Arklow Road, Gorey, Co Wexford	053 9421151

For more information about XLVets, please visit our website www.xlvets.ie or contact the XLVets office on 061 381505