

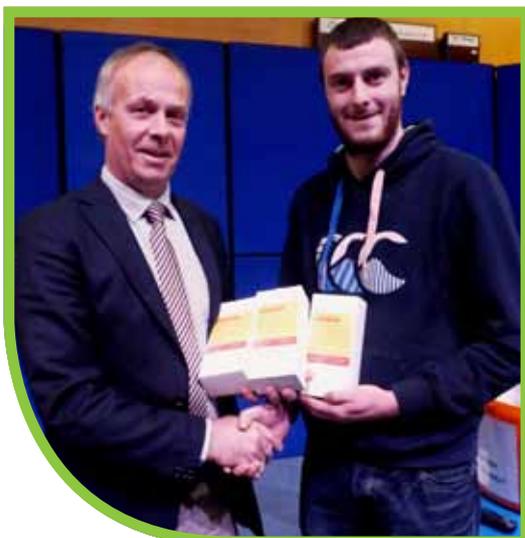
BLACKWATER VETERINARY CLINIC

Newsletter

Mallow, Co. Cork.



Prime Health Vets would like to thank Knockranny House Hotel, Westport, Co Mayo (www.knockrannyhousehotel.ie) and Duggan Veterinary Supplies for their generous sponsorship of our recent prizes



January Winner: Paul Redmond, Duntahane Veterinary Clinic and Chairman of Prime Health Vets presents Michael Cronin from Carrignavar with his prize of NIMROD Calf Paste Energy Booster, sponsored by Duggan Veterinary Supplies.



October Winner: Bill Cashman (Cashman & O'Driscoll), presents Helen O'Keeffe from Killavullen, Mallow, with her prize of a weekend away at Knockranny House Hotel & Spa in Co. Mayo



Over 400 Prime Health Vets clients attended our second seminar 'Better Calf Health & Disease Prevention' at Cork Mart on 9th January. Farmers attending generously donated €4,000 to Bóthar.

Paul Redmond, Chairman of Prime Health Vets welcomed farmers to the seminar and spoke about upcoming on-farm training sessions as well as the group's new website: www.primehealthvets.ie.

The following points summarise the main issues raised by our speakers on the evening –David Renney (a vet from the UK) and Jim O'Donovan (a vet in the Regional Veterinary Lab in Cork)

What are we trying to achieve?

1. *Mortality to weaning < 5%*
2. *Weaning weight > 65 kg*
3. *120 kg at 3 months old*
4. *First service at 13 – 14 months old*
5. *Calving at 24 months old with a condition score of 2.5-3.0.*

Having a compact calving pattern gives even batches of calves for rearing, making management and feeding easier. Prepare for the upcoming calving season by paying attention to the following;

Calving equipment:

1. *Clean, disinfected, soft calving ropes.*
2. *Clean buckets for warm water.*
3. *Soap, obstetric lubricant, disinfectant, iodine.*
4. *Towels.*
5. *Calving jack?*
6. *Calf reviver.*

Nutritional status of the cow:

We end up with high neonatal mortality and weak calves if the dam is low in Iodine, Selenium or Calcium so it is very important to make sure the mineral status of the dry cow is correct. Talk to your vet about taking samples to check the mineral status of the dry cows and the silage etc. that the cows are getting. He/she can also help in rectifying any deficiencies.

Vaccination of cows:

Vaccination of cows 12 to 3 weeks before calving is recommended if you have previously had problems with diseases like IBR, Rotavirus, E-Coli scours, Coronavirus or Salmonella etc. This will give the cow's colostrum an abundance of antibodies to pass on protection to the newborn calf. Plan a herd vaccination programme tailored for your farm with your vet to get best results for cow and calf.

Colostrum:

1. *Secreted in the first 24 hours.*
2. *Rich in protein and fat.*
3. *Very rich in antibodies and vitamins.*
4. *The calf's only defence against infections.*
5. *Give Holstein calves (~40Kgs) 4 litres of its own dam's first colostrum within 4 hours of birth. This can be done by stomach tube. Do not pool colostrum!*
6. *Make sure that the colostrum is not contaminated with faeces, blood or from cows with mastitis.*

Enteritis, respiratory diseases and blood infections are the most common causes of death in calves sent to the laboratory services of the Republic and Northern Ireland in 2011. The chart shows that 2/3 of these calves were low in colostrum. This can be due to poor quality colostrum (heifers, illness at calving, mastitis etc) or not enough given early enough.

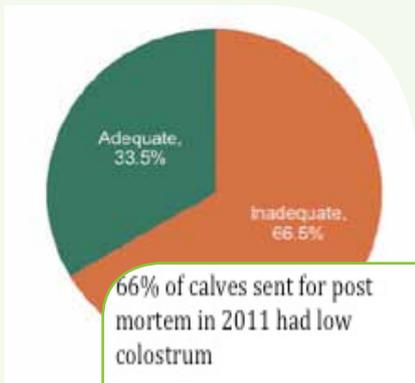


Where there is any doubt, have your vet check the colostrum for quality and/or sample about 5 calves (less than 3 days old) to check that they absorbed it properly.

Colostrum: other considerations

1. Home-produced colostrum is best.
2. Do not pool colostrum.
3. Prefer older cows as sources.
4. Can be kept chilled for up to 5 days.
5. If frozen, thaw it gently.

Scouring calves die mainly due to dehydration/acidosis, starvation and bacteraemia/septicaemia. In dealing with scour we adopt a three step approach:



1. Removing the calf into isolation. (Keep warm).
2. Rehydration (with electrolytes once or twice a day).
3. Feeding milk (the normal twice daily feeds).

Take the following steps should scour, pneumonia or navel ill strike a group of calves:

- Isolate the sick animal(s) immediately for individual veterinary treatment.
- Examine in-contact calves for reduced feed intakes or running temperatures.
- Have your vet take a range of samples from animals early in the disease to improve the chances of isolating the specific cause. This will make treatment more effective and guide you on how to prevent more losses.

Housing:

What are we trying to achieve?

1. Warmth
 - a. Lower critical temperature for calf: 15°C
 - b. Cold = stress and immunosuppression
2. Ventilation –
 - a. Prevents high humidity
 - b. Calves are warmer
 - c. Reduces survival of pathogens
3. Hygiene
 - a. Cleaning and disinfection
 - i. House
 - ii. all feeding equipment
 - b. Boot dips.

Features of the calf house

GOOD	BAD
Low roof	Big building, high roof
Wood	Concrete, steel
Any other insulation	Low inlets
Inlet above calves' heads	No outlet
Open ridge	Any wet surface
Pitched floor: 1 in 20	



Jeremy Meehan, Director of Education, Bothar (centre), accepts a symbolic cheque for €4,000 donated by the farmers attending the seminar, from Pat O'Reilly, (Treasurer, Prime Health Vets) (right) and Claire O'Loughlin, (Secretary, Prime Health Vets. Mr Meehan)



Jeremy O'Hanlon, Lombardstown and Tadhg Fitzgerald, Carrignavar

Calf Nutrition:

Traditional practice has been to give calves 8 to 10% of their bodyweight in milk per day. This will just maintain a calf in

- optimum conditions. Calves may need more than maintenance energy to cope with their environment, for example, once temperatures are 15°C or less. Calves will need more feed to keep warm and they also need more energy grow properly. Heifers that grow faster before weaning calve earlier and have higher milk production potential
- While a suckler calf can drink 20% of their body weight daily, dairy calves (40Kgs) should be targeted to drink 5.5– 6 L (13% to 15% b.w.) of milk/milk replacer (25% protein) daily over 2 feeds.
- Introduction of calf ration (non-pelleted) and roughage straw/hay at two to three weeks of age
- Having clean fresh water ad-lib will promote rumen development, by increasing the intake of coarse calf meal.
- Wean a calf gradually once it's eating 1 Kg of meal a day. Aim for weaning at 8 weeks, but postpone if the milk intake is high and meal intake is less than 1Kg
- A little hay/straw is necessary to stimulate the rumen for adult digestion but watch out for hay belly, as excessive hay actually reduces meal intake and also growth rates.
- Waste milk or milk with antibiotics should not be fed to calves.

Additional milk/ replacer required according to ambient temperature:

TEMP	EXTRA MILK
15°C	+ 15%
10°C	+27%
5°C	+40%
0°C	+50%

Summary

- Plan a herd health programme with your vet
- Set targets and monitor performance of this plan
- Start with the cow
- Monitor down-calving cows and be prepared to assist
- Know when to call the vet
- Immediate care for the newborn calf
- Colostrum: quality, quantity, quickly
- Housing: warmth, ventilation, hygiene
- Nutrition.



Martin Dorgan, Castlelyons, Conor O'Brien, (O'Brien & Noonan Veterinary), and Tom Geary, Conna,

Jeremy Meehan, Head of Education with Bothar, in thanking the farmers present for their donation, said: "There's something very special in the DNA of the Irish famer that even in these hard times, you continue to support those much less fortunate through Bóthar."



David Renney, (MD, Nimrod Veterinary Products), Claire O'Loughlin, (Secretary Prime Health Vets), Paul Redmond, (Chairman, Prime Health Vets), and Jim O'Donovan, (Research Officer, Department of Agriculture).