

# Black Sheep Farm Health

October 2020 Newsletter



## The Field Report

The autumn has definitely set in, with calvings back in full swing. Some housekeeping this month - an update on coming into the practice and our first feedback survey.

Remember to be honest: we can take the truth! Also a primer on the causes of calf pneumonia; don't forget to get your pneumonia vaccine orders in as soon as you can.

## Coronavirus Update

Just a reminder that clients are currently not permitted in the practice buildings for everyone's safety. When picking up drugs, please try and ring ahead so we can leave them out for you in good time. Don't be offended when you find the door locked! The vets are still mostly working from home so if you need to speak to someone in particular. For general enquires, the practice landlines (01669 838 288 / 01669 838 284) are still your best port of call.

## \*\*\*WIN A CLULITE HEADTORCH\*\*\* Fill in our feedback survey

We have just launched our first feedback survey online. We would really like to hear from anyone using our services - farmers, shepherds, herdspeople, farm secretaries, general dogsbodies - because we want to provide the best service we possibly can. In the cut and thrust of busy practice life, sometimes it's not obvious to us what we are doing well and what we could be doing better. That's where you come in.

The survey is online and can be found here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JJNLSVX>

We can supply a paper copy should you prefer.

It should take less than five minutes and is anonymous. All respondents will be entered into a draw to win a HL10 Clulite Headtorch - perfect for the longer nights now drawing in, and charged by the mains to save you scrabbling around for batteries.



## Calf Pneumonia - what are going to do about it?

- Calf pneumonia is still one of the most significant diseases in beef cattle, despite a good understanding of the risk factors.
- No single thing causes calf pneumonia; even a strong calf can be overwhelmed by a poor environment.
- The greatest costs of pneumonia are the unseen losses to calf growth, on top of calf mortality and medicines.

Pneumonia is one of the most common reasons for death and poor performance in young cattle from weaning to 10 months, costing the beef industry an estimated £50 million a year. Costs per affected animal range from £30-£80, with subclinical cases also causing significant performance losses. **Although dead calves are the most striking, by far the greatest cost is in animals that survive but then get knocked growth rates.**

Calf pneumonia is a complex, multifactorial disease, with many animals in a group often showing subclinical signs, including reduced feeding, raised temperatures, increased breathing rate and effort, coughing, depressed and nasal discharge.

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## Calf Pneumonia Contd.

Any disease is balance between protection and challenge. Many factors influence this including:

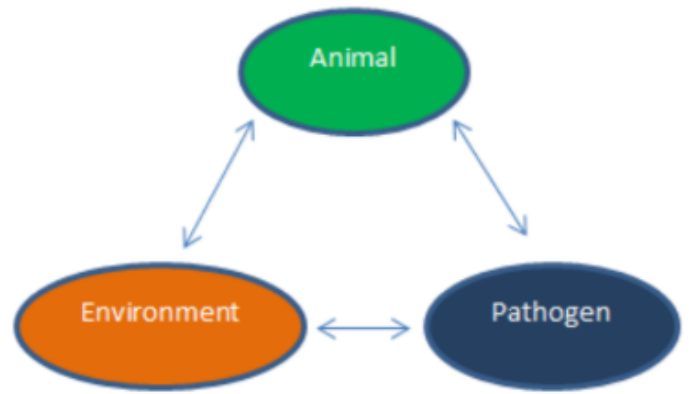
**Nutrition** - Adequate colostrum intake, supplementing youngstock during bad weather, monitoring BCS.

**Stress** - Avoid mixing age groups and high stocking densities, avoiding disbudding and castration at weaning, avoiding simultaneous housing

**Environment** - damp bedding, poor (<2m/s) airflow, lack of outflow, extreme variation in temperature

**Concurrent disease** - BVD, coccidiosis and heavy parasite burdens

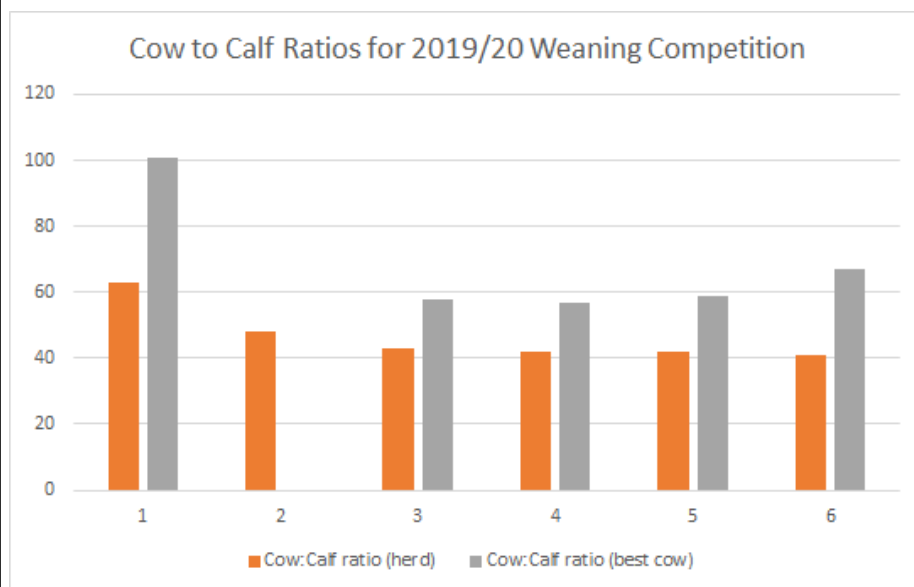
**Vaccination is a cornerstone of any control strategy: speak to us to discuss which product would be best for you.**



## Weaning Weight Competition 2019/20 Results

We have finally gotten around to crowning a winner for the inaugural BSFH Weaning Weight Competition for spring born calves! Congratulations to Lee and Beth at The Christmas Farm - a herd average of 63% and an individual cow weaning 101% meant they romped to victory with a bottle of Hepple Gin. We may have to introduce a separate Dexter category next year....

Thank you to all participants for providing results, it has been a great conversation starter. Stay tuned for this winter's competition. We are looking to double the number of entries at least this year. If anybody has suggestions for alternative prizes, just send us a message.



Remember the BSFH weigh scales are **free to hire for clients at any time of the year** - just ring us to book them out.

PS Lee and Beth are looking for some additional organic grazing near Longframlington. If you know of any available, please get in touch and we will pass your details on.