Herd Disease Status

By Ally Capron MRCVS

Words like biosecurity, herd disease status and isolation are thrown around a lot when discussing herd health. But what are the effects to farmers, and how can this improve productivity?

Disease status on farms is affected by four key principles:

**Biosecurity**
Biosecurity is the risk of a disease entering a farm. By definition this is made up of two components, firstly the likelihood that the disease will be introduced, and secondly the consequence of this happening.

**Surveillance**
Surveillance allows us to identify if a disease has entered a herd, and take steps to prevent further spread. This can be from blood or milk samples, clinical monitoring or abattoir inspections. These steps may be in the form of vaccination, culling, or a change in management depending on the disease.

**Immunity**
Immunity can be natural immunity from circulating disease in the herd, or from vaccination. If an animal has the antibodies to a disease then they should be more resilient if another animal with the infection is introduced to the herd.

**Control in the herd**
Controlling disease in the herd involves treating clinical signs and offering the sick animal any support that we can, either with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as Ketofen to decrease temperature and inflammation, or with antibiotics if secondary bacterial infections are involved.

If either one of the four points are weak, then the others can be strengthened to compensate but the overall disease status will be compromised.

The costs of diseases such as BVD, IBR and Johne’s are difficult to see in everyday life once established in a herd, however research has been done to consider the losses associated with wastage, treatment and prevention costs for the UK herd. It is suggested that BVD costs at least 18 million pounds, and leptospirosis up to 22 million pounds. On a farm level BVD is estimated to cost a 100 cow beef herd up to £46 per cow per year. If BVD or IBR enter a herd naïve to the disease, the immediate impact can be very obvious indeed, and can lead to catastrophic consequences in terms of both welfare and profit margin for a herd that very year.

The first step to reducing the impact of these diseases is to know what is present on any farm, and take actions to reduce the spread to naïve animals. This may be from within the herd or when considering introducing animals. If the risk of exposure is unavoidable, for example showing or buying, then the use of an appropriate vaccination protocol may be the most prudent action to increase herd immunity, alongside sound isolation protocols to reduce the chance of infection transmission to the rest of the herd. Every farm and disease is unique, so a unique strategy for each individual situation must be formulated to reflect this. If you have any questions on the scenario on your unit, please do not hesitate to contact one of the vets.
Pain Relief in Cattle: Why use it and when?
By Jenny Clay MRCVS

How cattle experience pain has been a topic of continued debate. It has been shown that the pain pathways present in cattle reflect those seen in humans, so it is likely that painful stimuli will have a similar impact on them. As such it is important that we do as much as we can to prevent pain and discomfort, and improve the welfare and productivity of the animals under our care.

Painful experiences in cattle can be as part of a management procedure (e.g. disbudding, castration, nose-rings), or spontaneous (e.g. calving, lameness and mastitis). It is important that in these two situations we are able to pre-empt or recognise and deal with pain appropriately. For the purpose of this article, I have focused on the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (e.g. Metacam and Ketofen).

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) act on a pathway which exhibits the following effects:

- Pain relief
- Reduce a fever
- Decrease inflammation

The two main non-steroidals we prescribe at Oakwood are Metacam and Ketofen. They have slight differences in the licensing which I have outlined below:

**Metacam**: Licensed for calf diarrhoea if over 7 days old, respiratory disease, acute mastitis and dehorning. Withdrawal period = 15 days for meat, 5 days for milk.

**Ketofen**: Licensed for downer cows, respiratory disease, acute mastitis, swelling post calving and lameness. Withdrawal period = 4 days for meat, 0 days for milk.

It is worth noting that there are however situations where non-steroidals are contraindicated. Examples of this would be dehydration, ulcerated GI tract and kidney or liver disease. If you have any concern about using a non-steroidal, please seek veterinary advice.
**NEW PIG PCV M HYO COMBINED VACCINE AVAILABLE**

MSD have now launched their new combined 2ml PCV M Hyo piglet vaccine. This is a combination of the Porcilis PCV and M+Pac vaccines and is call PORCILIS PCV M HYO. The vaccine is now available from the surgery in 50ml, 100ml and 200ml bottles. Pricing is the same per dose in all bottle sizes, and works out slightly more expensive than the cost of the two individual vaccines combined. If ordering please be clear with the exact name of the vaccine, so that our dispensing staff know exactly which product you are ordering. Using our online ordering facility on our website should make ordering the correct product easier.

Porcilis PCV M Hyo is a single 2ml dose piglet vaccine. It is given intramuscularly from 3 weeks age. It will control PCV (PMWS) and Mycoplasma hyopneumonia (enzootic pneumonia) diseases. We have been involved in some of the initial farm trials, and so far the product seems to be working very well and is easier to use than two individual vaccines.

If you have any specific queries over this product or wish to discuss pricing please speak to either Steve or Jenny Smith from the practice. All bottle sizes are now available from the practice.

**NEW ONE-SHOT BVD VACCINE - BOVELA**

Many of you may already have read in the farming press about the new BVD vaccine Bovela. Bovela is the only BVD vaccine licensed in the UK requiring a single dose for animals beginning the primary course - the other available vaccines all require 2 doses to be administered, usually around 4 weeks apart. Bovela is a modified live vaccine and it is claimed it will provide superior BVD protection to other BVD vaccines on the market, which are inactivated.

The 1st dose of Bovela should be given at least 3 weeks prior to service to ensure foetal protection and avoid the birth of persistently infected calves, thereafter it may be given annually to pregnant or non-pregnant cattle. It may also be given to calves of over 3 months of age to protect from effects of BVD. Bovela also offers protection against BVD type 1 AND type 2, an emerging threat in Europe.

The down side is that Bovela is around double the price of other BVD vaccines, and following the single shot primary course, annual re-vaccination is only licensed with Bovela again, not with one of the cheaper vaccines as we have been asked.

Bovela 5 dose is priced at £23.49+VAT and the 25 dose at £117.44+VAT. (Prices correct at time of printing, subject to change.)

**AMOXINSOL IN WATER ANTIBIOTIC**

We will be switching from Amoxinsol to CITRAMOX in water antibiotic. The Citramox is exactly the same as the Amoxinsol but available in 1kg bags. Dose rate exactly the same at 1kg per 500 gallons water (2250 litres). Meat withdrawal 2 days. It is used in pigs and poultry to treat meningitis and pneumonia. The reason for switching is that Citramox is cheaper than Amoxinsol.

If you have any specific queries over this product or wish to discuss pricing please speak to either Steve or Jenny Smith from the practice.
Thank you to all of those that attended our cattle meeting on 15th July. The talk focused on youngstock and covered calf colostrum practices and calf scour. The meeting coincided with the launch of the “Keeping Britain’s Youngstock Healthy” campaign - an initiative orchestrated by MSD Animal Health. At Oakwood we are embracing the campaign and are keen to recruit farms to sign up to our very own Youngstock Scheme. The scheme is applicable to beef and dairy farms and would involve:

- Initial consultation on farm
- Strategy to monitor and improve calf health
- 10-12 calf blood samples to look at colostrum absorption
- Colostrometer allocated to each farm
- Scour kits allocated to each farm
- Ongoing monitoring of calf health

If you are interested in the scheme, or would like any more information, please call the surgery and ask to speak to Jenny Clay.

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**Practice News**

We would like to welcome new Veterinary Surgeon Alice Bednall-Brough to the practice in August. Alice has graduated this year from Edinburgh University and will be undertaking both large and small animal work at Oakwood. She has a particular interest in pig medicine having worked at an intensive indoor unit in the midlands prior to starting university, and is looking forward to getting stuck in to life in farm practice in East Anglia.

Jenny Moore will once again be going off to a dry cow paddock somewhere towards the end of August, as her second baby is due at the beginning of September. She hopes to return to doing some clinical work at the beginning of 2016.

Congratulations to head receptionist Demelza Scholes who has recently got engaged to her boyfriend Nick! Yes he is one brave man.............