

## **Fever Tags**

Last week, one of our farms fitted their first Fever Tags in a group of calves. These tags have a probe that is placed in the ear canal and reads the calf's temperature every 15 minutes. If the calf's temperature is above 39.7°C or 103.5°F for 6 hours, the tag flashes red. This 'early warning' of disease typically detects sick calves 24 to 72 hours before the animal would have shown visible signs of disease such as depression, reduced appetite etc. So the idea of the tags is that calves are treated earlier, resulting in a better response to treatment and less longterm lung damage.

Fever tags can be used in any age of animal and potentially might be useful in purchased store cattle. These older cattle can be very good at masking the signs of disease until they are severely affected and treatment is useless. Often we post mortem animals that were only noticed to be sick shortly before they died, yet the changes in the lungs have clearly been going on for much longer.



Fever tags have been available for a couple of years now and reports of their use are varied. One of the complaints is that fitting the tags causes the ear to droop. However, in the calves where we're trialling them, this has not been a problem. Other reports have been that the tags are constantly

flashing and that antibiotic use actually increases. In our trial calves the tags have now been in for a week, and as yet no tag has flashed and no calves have appeared ill. We'll keep you informed of how they perform.

Fever tags have a battery life of about 2 years, and can be re-used 3 or 4 times in different animals. The idea is that you fit them prior to a period of risk (eg in recently purchased animals) and cut them out a month or so later and re-use them in another animal. The cost of the tags is about £20 each, with discount for quantity.

## **Schmallenberg virus (SBV)**

Disease due to Schmallenberg virus has re-surfaced in both Belgium and the Netherlands. Abortions, foetal deformities and diarrhoea with fever in dairy cows have all been reported. There are also anecdotal reports of disease in the UK. There is no vaccine currently available, but it's worth being aware that you might see cases of deformed lambs and calves again this winter. Also, if you have a higher than expected barren rate in either ewes or cows, SBV is a possible cause – we can identify this from blood testing.

## More on vaccines

In the last newsletter we talked generally about handling and storing vaccines and how unused vaccine should be discarded at the end of the day. The following table provides more detail on individual vaccines and the recommendations for how soon they should be used after re-constituting or broaching the vial. You will see that all the listed vaccines should be transported and stored at 2°C to 8°C but there is variation in how long the vaccine remains stable once it has been re-constituted or the vial broached. Ideally, all vaccines should be used as soon as possible, but it's best to check the datasheet each time to check the specific recommendations for that vaccine.

Vaccine	Storage	Shelf-life once broached
<a href="#">Scabivax Forte</a>	Store and transport refrigerated (2 °C – 8 °C). Do not freeze. Protect from light.	8 hours
<a href="#">Heptavac P or Ovivac P</a>	Store and transport refrigerated (2 °C – 8 °C). Do not freeze. Protect from light.	10 hours
<a href="#">Enzovax</a>	Store and transport refrigerated (2 °C – 8 °C). Do not freeze. Protect from light.	2 hours
<a href="#">Toxovax</a>	Store and transport refrigerated (2 °C – 8 °C). Do not freeze. Protect from light.	2 hours
<a href="#">Footvax</a>	Store and transport refrigerated (2 °C – 8 °C). Do not freeze. Protect from light.	Use immediately
Bovela	Store and transport refrigerated (2 °C – 8 °C). Do not freeze.	8 hours
Bovidec	Store and transport refrigerated (2 °C – 8 °C). Do not freeze.	Use immediately
Bovipast RSP	Store in a refrigerator (2 °C - 8 °C). Protect from light and frost	10 hours
Rispoval RS + PI3 Intranasal	Store and transport refrigerated (2 °C – 8 °C). Do not freeze. Protect from light.	2 hours
Leptavoid	Store and transport refrigerated (2 °C – 8 °C). Do not freeze. Protect from light.	8 hours

Another important aspect to consider is giving more than one vaccine at the same time. Once again, check the datasheet or discuss with the vet who knows your farm. If two vaccines are given at the same time (eg Toxovax and Enzovax), they should be given at different sites, preferably one on each side of the body.

## Vaccinating ewes for orf

Vaccinating ewes does not pass protection to the lambs in the colostrum. But a recent study of risk factors for orf in lambs found that where both ewes and lambs were vaccinated there was less disease in lambs than when only lambs were vaccinated. Ewes can be vaccinated in early or mid pregnancy, but not within 7 weeks of being housed.

## Ringworm in cattle

Ringworm is perhaps a disease that we tend to accept as common and inevitable – but we don't need to as there is an effective vaccine. Speak to use for more details.