

September 2025

Farm Autumn Conference- 'Beyond the Bottle'

Future proofing herds immunity with new frontiers in cattle management

Our next conference will be new technology and therapies to reduce disease and antibiotic reliance.

Date 1st October 2025

Topics include

- Multimin - advantages of using beyond improved growth rates
- Precision Microbes and keeping calves healthy and thriving
- Ferapease and the benefits of calmer stress free cattle on growth and health
- Sensehub Calves an introduction to the monitoring technology for calves and cows
- Mastatest rapid mastitis identification and reducing treatments required.
- Parasite testing advances offer immediate fluke antibody results
- Parklands vets update on what we offer and discussion around Bluetongue risk.
- “Selekt” talk on oral rehydration therapy for cows with

This itinerary is aimed at innovation in our thinking about controlling disease on farm through new technologies and reduced reliance on the traditional therapies of antibiotics etc. Spaces are limited so please book your place by phoning your practice.

Pneumonia prevention

The Summer usually brings a welcome relief from Pneumonia, and although there was some this summer there is not near as much as in the winter. Can this be prevented? It can certainly be controlled with care and planning. **Vaccination** is a cornerstone of pneumonia prevention, if we wish to use an injectable product which requires 2 doses one month apart and covers the 3 main causes of pneumonia in calves we need to start vaccinating now to have them protected for the house. Cattle carrying **lungworm** are much more likely to contract pneumonia and also get reduced benefit from the vaccines. Many farmers will delay dosing for worms this time of year until housing to save money. This is false economy because if the cattle do have worms they will not be thriving or possibly losing condition, so the downside is much more than the cost of the dose. How do you know how long the cattle may be out for? We might get a late summer! Speak to a Parklands vets for a bespoke plan for your farm.

Parklands Veterinary Group—Practice details

2 Caledon Road,
Aughnacloy, BT69 6AL

Tel: 028 855 57811

Dungannon@parklandsvets.co.uk

81 Molesworth Road,
Cookstown, BT80 8NU

Tel: 028 867 65765

Cookstown@parklandsvets.co.uk

66a Glenshane Road,
Londonderry, BT47 3SF

Tel: 028 71876140

Drumahoe@parklandsvets.co.uk

5 Old Moy Road,
Dungannon BT71 6PS

Tel: 028 877 52299

Dungannon@parklandsvets.co.uk

26 Townhill Road,
Portglenone BT44 8AD

Tel: 028 258 21239

Portglenone@parklandsvets.co.uk

Website: Parklandsvets.com

Don't lose focus on your Transition Cows

More attention to detail during the transition period can help ensure optimal milk production, health, and fertility performance. We're aware that there are many plates to juggle on farm, but we would encourage you not to forget about transition cows and make their management a top priority - transition cows are really the most important cows on the farm, and they shouldn't be an afterthought.

Pretty much all the health incidents and diseases she's going to get in her next lactation will stem from this period. This period is also crucial for future fertility, helping to ensure optimum follicle quality and size, return to ovarian cyclicity and uterine health. If you get things wrong during this period, either metabolically or through stress to the cow, she's much more likely to get any number of transition diseases post-calving, as well as having poorer fertility in the next lactation.

The diseases arising from the transition period include: milk fever, both clinical and sub-clinical; retained cleansings; metritis; ketosis; left displaced abomasums (LDAs); and mastitis.

Monitoring during the transition period

Monitoring body condition score (BCS) of the transition group and far off dry cows, as well as carrying out rumen fill and muck scoring can provide useful data for developing a management plan with your vet to maximise transition cow performance. For example, if the data shows that the far-off cows had a high BCS it would be worth tweaking the diet.

Despite seeing the cows regularly, it can be hard to identify patterns and trends, so finding time to carry out regular reporting ensures cows are scored at the right time.

Focus areas

Firstly, you must ensure the cows are dried off at the right BCS. You don't want them dried off overfat or overthin, and you don't want their BCS to change during that period – the optimum score is between 2.5 and 3 at drying off.

In instances where cows are not at the right BCS at drying off, there are options, Choline bolus around calving may help. Extra care can be given to these cows post-calving, e.g., administering calcium boluses and pump drenching with oral fluids.

In addition, during the three-week period in the run up to calving, we recommend maximising dry matter intake, so the cows are full all the time. To help achieve this, they need plenty of feed and water trough and lying space.

Feed space should be 0.75m per cow, and water space, a minimum of 0.1m per cow.

These are the fundamentals really – if you get the nutrition right on paper, but get all the fundamentals wrong on-farm, problems will still occur.

For grazing dry cows, don't have too much grass in front of them and keep an eye on potassium levels in the grass, as these can cause high numbers of milk fever cases if left uncontrolled. High levels of slurry spread on pasture can increase potassium.

Whatever you're feeding, make sure you've had your forage tested to ensure the potassium and sodium levels aren't too high. Kingshay offer a forage analysis service.

In addition to nutrition, carry out pre-dry off foot trimming and minimise group changes both pre- and post-calving, as this creates stress for the cows.

Foot trimming ahead of dry off is really worthwhile because you're correcting any existing problems, so when the cow calves down, the problems won't be amplified. A cow's foot structure changes as she calves down – her ligaments loosen and the fat pad can change in the foot, all making her more prone to lameness around calving.

Attention to detail in all these areas will help set the cow up to cope better with the metabolic challenge of calving and peak milk yield production.

