

September 2026

Pneumonia Checklist

Calves are too valuable to risk them taking pneumonia so plan your vaccination program now. Even if you plan to sell your calves vaccinate now and get a premium for selling vaccinated calves.

Lungworm continues to cause severe lung damage with a high incidence of pneumonia seen as a result. Continue to worm calves throughout the grazing season, and don't let them be housed with a significant worm burden as this predisposes them to pneumonia.

Our practice will advise you on the risks and choices for vaccination. P13, BRSV, IBR and Pasteurella among others have to be considered, vaccination saves lives and increases performance.

Pasteurella pneumonia is a big problem in sheep and especially lambs in the Autumn and in the house, so ensure you have used a vaccine covering this.

Ensure vaccination is completed prior to weaning in order to protect the calves before they become stressed. Plan ahead to minimise the stress of weaning. Simple measures such as creep grazing calves ahead of the cows or creep feeding meal gradually weakens the cow calf bond. Weaning calves in batches instead of removing all of the cows is very beneficial. If calves are not weaned before housing then giving them their own "creep" pen before weaning helps ease weaning stress. Discuss with any of our vets the most appropriate vaccination program to provide broad protection to your calves. Some of the best vaccination programs should be started **6 weeks** before weaning in order to fully protect the calf for weaning, so start now.

Pneumonia Alert Check List Weaning -Wean on a good day, do not dehorn, or castrate at the same time.

Feeding -Start to creep feed calves at grass and if possible creep calves into an adjacent field with better grass.

Housing -Its best to house cattle when they are dry, don't mix groups and keep all doors open for ventilation, but avoid draughts.

Hoose - Treat during grazing period, don't worm and wean on the same day.

Vaccination -Vaccinate early, most vaccines require a four week booster so aim for 6-8 weeks before housing for the first injection. New purchases can be given intra-nasal vaccine on arrival to get protection more quickly.

Clip - Once housed clip cattle down the back to reduce sweating.

Antibiotics - should be used to control pneumonia outbreaks, (they don't kill viral disease) and work best with anti-inflammatories.

Housing Factors: Moisture: Too much moisture favours bacterial growth and hence disease. It makes the environment feel colder (damp) to the livestock and so energy in feed will be used up keeping the cattle warm rather than helping them grow.

Fresh air: Lack of fresh air increases the survival time and concentration of airborne bugs, and hence increases risk of disease. Noxious gases like Ammonia may also build up damaging the airways.

Air Speed: if excessive air speeds, or draughts are associated with energy losses, reduced growth rates and increased risk of disease. Too little air is associated with lack of fresh air and a stale environment. Speak to a Parklands vet for more information.

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Check your Ram before the Breeding Season

At Parklands we are already testing all flock rams for fertility. Book your slot now to avoid disappointment at scanning/lambing. We regularly identify problem rams at these tests and it helps avoid poor lambing rates later.

Check all the points in the picture, but even then we cannot guarantee the ram will be fertile which is why it's important to fertility test them too. The breeding ability of rams reaches its peak between 2 and 5 years old and will decline after this. Both young and old rams would be inappropriate for intensive breeding system. A fertile mature ram should be able to successfully inseminate 85% of a batch of 60 ewes in their first reproductive cycle. Ram lambs should be able to get 85% of 40 ewes pregnant after one mating. Don't take the chance, get your ram fertility tested at Parklands.



Reminder: Abortion Vaccines for Sheep

It's fast approaching the latest time to use the Toxoplasmosis (Toxo) and Enzootic (EAE) abortion vaccines for sheep. These vaccines need to be in the sheep at least 3 weeks before the ram is introduced or it may affect fertility in the ewes. One is also made to order by the companies so it's vital you order them with us well in advance of needing them.

Milk Fever in Cows at Grass

Dairy Cows out at grass up to the point of calving are at a higher risk of Milk Fever. This is due to the minerals in the grass leaving the cows more susceptible to the condition. This problem is also made worse by cows being overfat, which is also common in dry cows outside now as they were able to eat their fill of grass all summer! It may be prudent to bring cows into the house and change them onto silage for 3 weeks before calving to allow the cow every chance of correcting the mineral level herself. For more information on preventing Milk Fever contact a Parklands vet.

Tetany Risk

If poor weather prevails and the grass is poor quality this will mean cows will be at greater risk of Tetany. We have already seen cases of Tetany which is unusually early! Please ensure they have adequate access to magnesium. **Boluses are the surest way** of getting magnesium into cows but lick buckets and feeding Calcined Magnesite can also be used. Cows at particular risk of tetany are suckling big or multiple calves. Any stresses like sudden change in weather, poor grass or even a change to different fields can all cause outbreaks, for more information speak to a Parklands vet.

Footrot in sheep

A whole flock disease management programme will control footrot, incorporating a combination of vaccination with **Footvax**, antibiotic treatment, footbathing and culling. Vaccination with Footvax provides effective treatment to infected sheep as well as long term protection.

