

Leptospirosis Factsheet

Leptospirosis is endemic in the UK with an estimated 70% of British cattle exposed to this bacterial infection. The majority of cases are subclinical with few obvious outward signs although increases in temperature has been observed in animals experimentally infected. There are several possible clinical signs that are attributed to infection including;

- Milk drop syndrome
 - Sudden drop in yield
 - Thick yellow colostrum like milk
 - Cows have an increased temperature
 - BUT otherwise appear bright not anorexic etc
- Abortion
- Chronic infection lasts 6-12 weeks post initial infection
- Young calves show signs of meningitis
- Older calves show signs of general illness

The infection is spread via several different mechanisms from infected cattle

1. Aborted foetuses
2. Uterine discharges
3. URINE (chronic infection from the kidneys)

Acute bacterial infections are best treated with antibiotics ideally streptomycin and therefore PEN and STREP is the antibiotic of choice.

Vaccination is widely practiced in the UK not only to prevent the above disease processes but to protect livestock workers as Leptospirosis is a ZOOONOSIS. Infection in people can lead to; 1. Flu like symptoms 2. Meningitis 3. Liver failure.

Vaccination requires initial primary course (2 injections) then an annual booster best given before turnout as most infection occurs at grass.