

# Newsletter

# November 2023

As we enter winter, we are getting mild weather and plenty of rain. Gut parasites and fluke will still be active – housing treatment discussed below. Cattle are getting housed - the main article below focuses on the provision of fresh air to housed cattle. Whilst we would all like to have bespoke buildings for our stock, in reality we have to invest in existing buildings to make them perform better.

## CALVES AND FRESH AIR

As housing descends upon us once again, so does the perennial issue of calf pneumonia. Across the cattle industry, the **main health issues for calves are scours for calves under 4 weeks old and respiratory disease for calves over 4 weeks old**. This continues despite our better understanding of all the issues involved. Vaccinations are part of a preventative program, but if the environment is not good enough then calf health will be compromised.

One main factor is that a lot of calf housing – whether for dairy, beef or weaned growing cattle – isn't designed to ensure an optimal environment for positive health. **Too often our calves or growing cattle are housed in buildings designed for adult cattle, or not designed for cattle at all**. If the building isn't designed for the removal of stale air and moisture and the provision of fresh air – then we end up with a stale environment that compromises health.

We often discuss the **Stack Effect** – where the presence of animals heats the air which rises and escapes through a roof outlet, whilst drawing in fresh air from the sides of the building. **In real life, this rarely happens as the calves are too small to generate the required heat. Moisture and concrete will also soak up heat – limiting the Stack Effect**. This leads to a shed completely dependent on natural ventilation. Relying on natural ventilation means that all sides of the building become the inlet and the outlet. Important questions to ask are: Does this enable the whole building to be adequately ventilated? Where is the prevailing wind? Is the calf building in a wind shadow of other buildings?

If we could prioritise one part of the calf requirements it would be the constant delivery of fresh air at calf level. Fresh air will improve respiratory health. **Fresh air contains Open Air Factors (OAFs) that actively reduce respiratory pathogens**. In naturally ventilated buildings, we cannot guarantee fresh air delivery to all parts of the building that require it.

One method to overcome this is **Positive Pressure Tube Ventilation (PPTV)**. A fan system draws air into a tube that is placed above the calf accommodation. There is not enough room here to describe the system in full, but **it will deliver fresh air 24/7 at calf level. The exact design will be building specific, but the air speed at calf level must be 0.3 metres/sec**. These systems are good value (£3-5K per shed) as the improvements in calf health will be paid back year on year. Below is a recent Farmer's Weekly article on it: <https://www.fwi.co.uk/livestock/housing/tips-on-using-positive-pressure-tube-ventilation-in-calf-sheds>

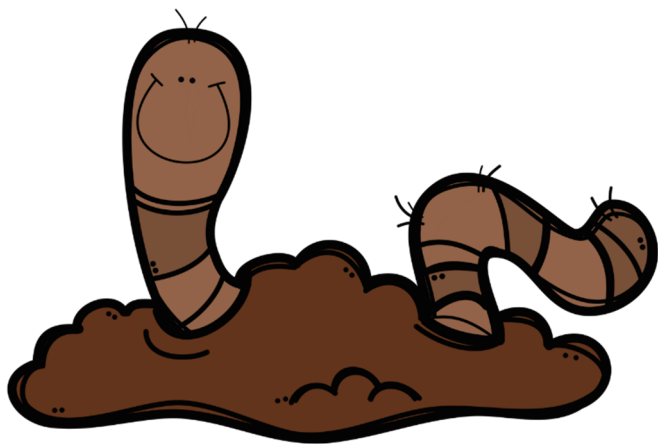
**This is one part of a complex equation. Removal of stale air and moisture, provision of a dry bed and ensuring there are no draughts are also crucial.**

Please talk to us if you would like an assessment of any of your livestock buildings.



Photograph from <https://files.ontario.ca/omafra-positive-pressure-air-tube-vent-figure-1-en-975x731-2012-11-06-v1.jpg>

## PARASITE MANAGEMENT AT HOUSING



There are three groups of parasites you'll need to be thinking about as stock come in for winter housing; gutworms, fluke and ectoparasites (lice/mange). If you don't struggle with fluke on your farm, that's one consideration off the list. If you're not sure about your fluke status, ask us about sampling (faeces or blood samples) and we can help work out your status.

When it comes to cattle, we only need to think about worming for first and second season grazing animals. Adult cattle should not need worming. If you have an ill thrifty group that you were worried about, drop in a faecal sample for us to check before treating. Gut worms – Ostertagi - can encyst in the stomach wall over winter, so we have to use clear drenches on our first and second season grazers at housing. These products will also have an effect on lice - though if all animals are not treated at the same time, you will want to have a separate run through with a lice/mange spot on. Clipping cattle can also reduce the risk of lice/mange.

Remember you need to delay your fluke treatment for at least 7 weeks after housing (nice Christmas present!). Usually, you should avoid combination products (clear drench with flukicide) at housing. The most common product comes with closantel (eg Closamectin), which only kills fluke which are 7 weeks old – i.e. if you treat at housing, any fluke under 7 weeks old will not be killed. Do not use triclabendazole (eg Fasinex) to fluke cattle as it will contribute to resistance problems, when we really need to save triclabendazole for sheep only.

As always with dosing;

- Weigh animals correctly and dose to heaviest animal (only when all are similar weight range!)
- Administer product correctly (is the gun working/calibrated?)
- Use correct product, at correct dose, the correct way
- Avoid unnecessary doses, eg combination products.

### Veterinary Declaration for Animal Health

From 13<sup>th</sup> December there will be a **requirement for non-assurance scheme farms to provide a veterinary declaration when they send animals for slaughter** – and where the products from that animal may be exported to the EU. So, if you are not Red Tractor or QMMS Assured then you will need to be aware of this. The declaration covers 12 months so it will be an annual requirement. The declaration is to prove that the animals have had regular health visits from your vet. This will require a visit which can be combined with any routine or emergency work. Please make our receptionist Ali aware so we can ensure the follow up paperwork is done.



More details at...

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/veterinary-declaration-for-animal-health-visits>

### Product Updates

**All the sheep abortion vaccines are in stock.**

### Scabiguard

This is now fully back in stock – 50 dose vials. Please call Ali for any orders.

