



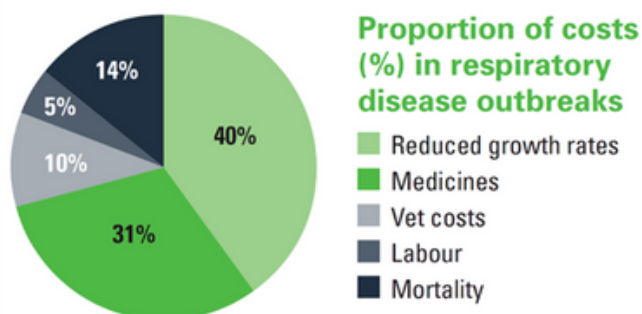
PNEUMONIA SEASON

- JANUARY 2026

Although this time of year brings many things, one problem is appearing more than most: pneumonia. With mild, damp days followed by very cold nights, conditions are unfortunately ideal for respiratory disease in calves. Pneumonia remains one of the most common, complex and costly conditions we see on farm.

“Pneumonia remains one of the most significant diseases affecting calves, costing the UK cattle industry an estimated £50m a year” (AHDB, 2025).

As many of you know, pneumonia can be triggered by a combination of environmental stressors, bacteria, viruses, and impaired immunity. Catching cases early is the single most effective way of limiting long-term damage.








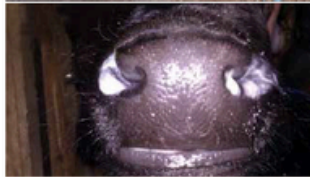
Having a thermometer to hand whenever you have the slightest suspicion a calf is looking off-colour and promptly treating anything with temperatures above 39.5°C will reduce the seriousness of the pneumonia bout, including the lasting damage it can cause. Even mild impacts on respiratory health can follow a calf throughout its life, contributing to:

- Lower daily liveweight gains
- Later finishing times
- Reduced future milk yield in heifers

If you're concerned about one calf, we recommend checking temperatures of the entire group. If more than a third of calves show respiratory signs or have temperatures, please contact your vet to discuss the most appropriate treatment and control plan.

Risk factors contributing to pneumonia outbreaks:

- Sick animals not being isolated
- Groups with varying ages of calves
- Recent stressors such as transport, diet changes, weaning, disbudding/castrating (especially without the use of NSAIDs)
- Poor ventilation
- Overstocking
- Extremes of temperature
- Poor hygiene/drainage

Signs of good health and vigour	Look for early signs of disease	Late signs of disease
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bright • Playful • Curious • Keen to drink milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet • Slow to stand • Still drinking milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dull • Reluctant to stand unaided • Off milk
		
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear eyes and nose • No cough <p>Normal temperature (38–39°C or 100–102°F)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discharge from eyes and nose • Cough on movement <p>High temperature (>39.5°C or 103°F)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe discharge with pus • Frequent coughing/wheezing <p>High temperature (>39.5°C or 103°F)</p>

Managing environmental factors

Environmental control remains one of the cornerstones of pneumonia prevention. Warm, damp and poorly ventilated sheds allow bacteria and viruses to thrive.

Practical steps to reduce risk

- Keep bedding clean and dry (should comfortably kneel on the bed)
- Use smoke bombs to assess ventilation
- Ensure no draughts at calf level (air speeds > 0.25 m/sec is considered a draught)
- Ensure good drainage to limit standing water and humidity
- Review stocking density and space allocation

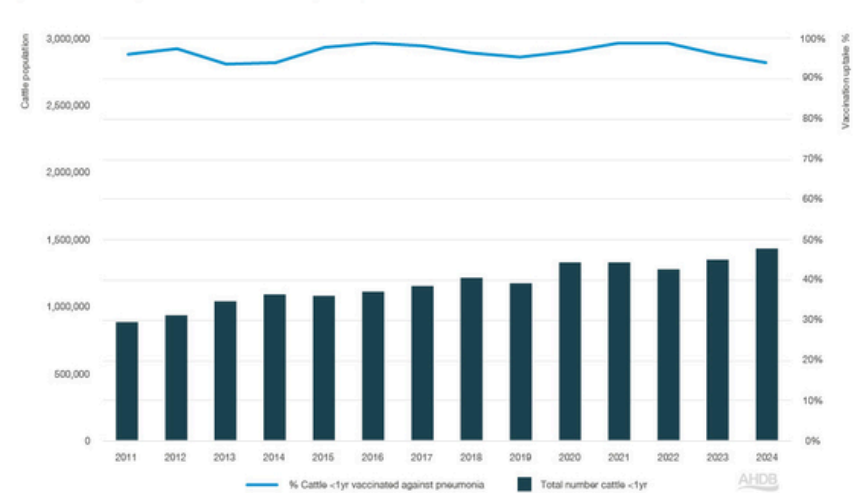
The link between temperature and humidity is described as the Temperature Humidity Index (THI), which is normally used to describe warm and hot conditions. View the table above to see how the ranges effect calves.

Vaccination

Vaccination is a cost-effective tool, playing a vital role in reducing severity of disease and spread throughout the group. There are options available, here are the most common two:

- Rispoval Intranasal - covers for Parainfluenza 3 and Respiratory Syncytial Virus - the most common viruses causing pneumonia in young calves under 6 months
 - Provides immunity from 10 days post intranasal
 - Provides cover for 12 weeks
- Bovilus Bovipast RSP - covers for the common viral causes AND pasteurella
 - 2 doses 4 weeks apart (therefore, will not be fully covered until 6 weeks after first dose)
 - Provides 6 months of cover

Figure 1. Percentage of cattle vaccinated against pneumonia



If you have a pneumonia outbreak on your farm, contact your vet as we can do further testing to ensure we’re using the correct vaccine for you.

Post mortem

Recently our vets attended an excellent post-mortem clinical club and on-topic, pneumonia was the most common finding across all age groups.

We offer a comprehensive on-farm post-mortem service, which can be invaluable in confirming causes of disease and guiding control plans. When necessary, we also work closely with the University of Bristol PM team at Langford, ensuring access to specialist diagnostics.

Post-mortems should ideally be carried out within 24 hours of death, following statutory Anthrax testing where required. While some findings are straightforward and obvious, we can collect additional samples for targeted lab testing when needed



A pneumonic lung



All the best ,
Jess

We would like to wish all our clients
a happy, healthy and productive new year!

COMPASSION RESPECT INTEGRITY SUSTAINABILITY PROGRESSION CARE

T: 01666 823035 Option"1" for visits or enquiries, "2" for medicines, "3" for TB testing

COURSES FOR THE NEW YEAR!.....



**** Courses - First Quarter 2026 ****

BCVA CHCSB Lantra Accredited foot Trimming Courses:

First Aid for Feet: Wednesday 18th February 2026. £300+VAT. Malmesbury and Upper Seagry.

Intermediate Course: Wednesday 28th - Friday 30th January 2026. £800+VAT. Malmesbury, Upper Seagry & Pewsey.

AHPA Accredited AI Course: (location TBC) - £550 + VAT

- Wednesday 28th - Fri 30th January 2026
- Wednesday 25th - Fri 28th February 2026
- Wednesday 25th - Fri 28th March 2026

Short Courses: - £75 + VAT

- **Calving the Cow:** Wednesday 4th February, George Veterinary Group, Malmesbury, 2pm-4pm
- **Care and Assessment of the Sick Cow and Down Cow Management:** Wednesday 21st January, Calne, 1.30pm-4pm
- **Youngstock Care and Management:** Wednesday 11th February, Iron Acton. 1pm-5pm

*For more information or to book a place on any of our courses please call the office on:
01666 823035 Ext. 1 or E: technical.training@georgevetgroup.co.uk*

****MEDICINE COURSES****

Farm Medicine Handling Course for Beef and Sheep

Thursday 15th January 11-12:30pm
Malmesbury, SN16 9AU

Red Tractor Approved

Smallholder Medicine Course

Tuesday 10th February 14:30 - 16:00
Malmesbury, SN16 9AU

Learn about basic medicine handling,
doseages and administration.



*****FOC*****

Selekt Pump Clinic

Monday 12th January 2026
at the practice

Please drop of your pumps
**Friday 9th January or latest
8.30am Monday 12th**

If you would like to attend any of
our meetings or bring your Selekt
pump in, please let us know.

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