

THE HEALTH CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF CALF REARING IN A TIGHT SPRING CALVING HERD

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THE FOCUS HERE IS ON THE HEALTH ISSUES BUT THERE ARE ARE OTHER OBVIOUS COST CONSIDERATIONS

If you want a cost comparison vs Autumn Calving
or AYR systems, have a look at a presentation by
Dr Alana Boulton on You Tube

INTERACTIVE QUESTION TIME!

In the rugby world cup in September there is 'a group of death' consisting of England, Australia, Wales, Fiji and Uruguay, but only 2 will make it!.....Which 2?

1. **Wales** and England
2. **Wales** and **Australia**
3. England and **Australia**
4. Another combination

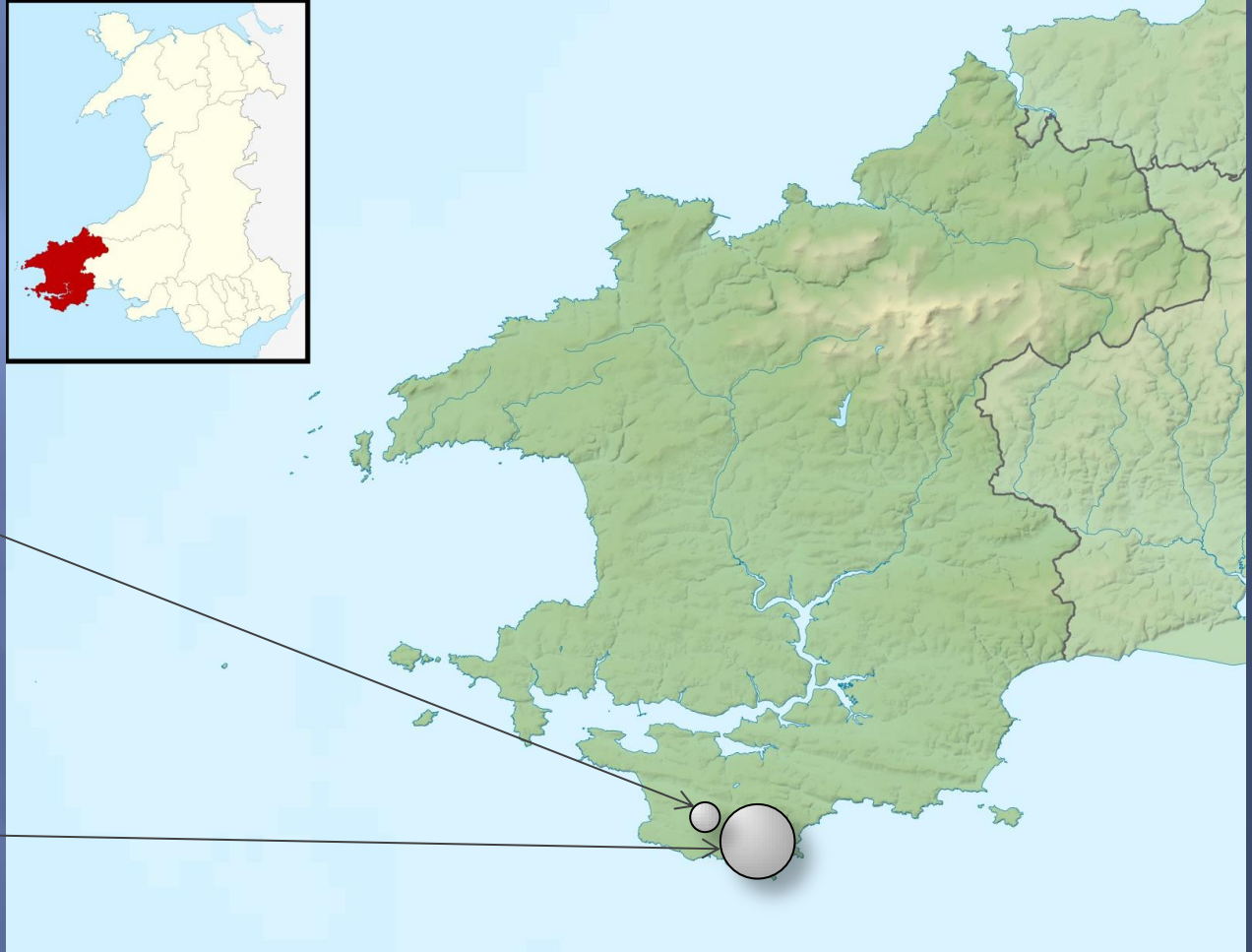
If you are a dairy farmer, which type of enterprise do you have?

1. Spring calving
2. Autumn Calving
3. AYR

In your enterprise, which calf health issues do you consider most costly?

1. Nutritional Scour
2. Infectious scour
3. Virus Pneumonia
4. Navel/joint ill
5. Eye problems
6. Coccidiosis
7. Worms

WHERE ARE WE?



Warren

Stackpole
Home Farm
& Stackpole
Quay

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Two separate businesses:

- James Bros Enterprises Ltd.
- Premier Livestock Ltd.

Calves are reared on the unit at Warren, so in essence are contract reared.

This creates it's own 'challenges and benefits' e.g. care at birth (cleanliness, colostrum), TB, staff skills, calf environment.



Warren Farm

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DESCRIPTION OF THE SEASON AT WARREN

- Calves start coming in Feb - April
- Calves weaned at 6-7 weeks
- Calves turned out to grazing from April onwards
- Winter housing from November onwards
- Housed until next season's calves come in, when the yearlings are turned out to make room in the sheds



TITLE:

**‘THE HEALTH CHALLENGES AND
BENEFITS OF CALF REARING IN A
TIGHT SPRING CALVING HERD’**

It's easier to split these into two sections: the housed period and the outdoor period

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SUMMARISED AS:

Housed Period (0-7wks)

1. Challenges
2. Benefits

Outdoor Period (7wks-6mths)

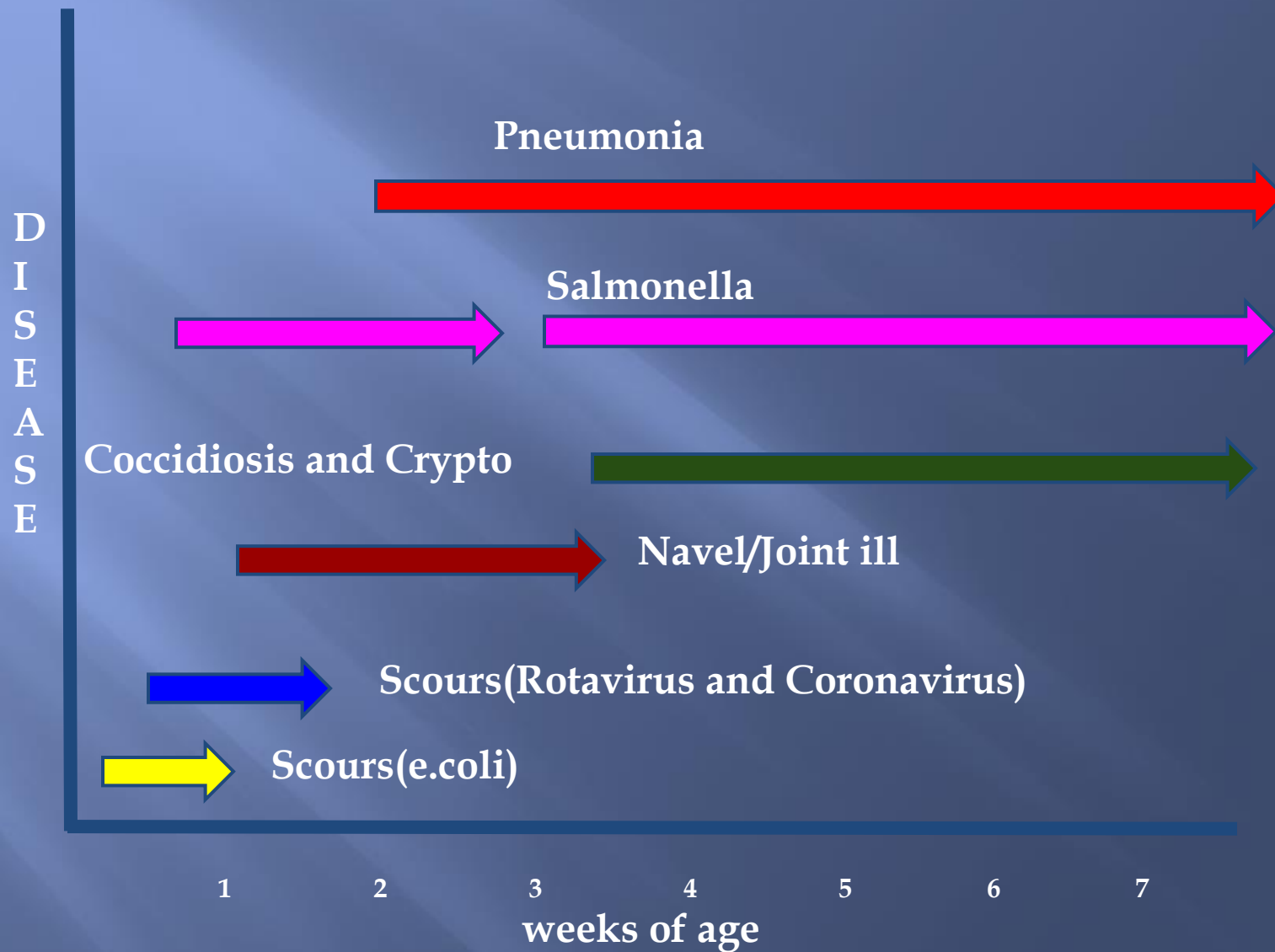
3. Challenges
4. Benefits

1. **CHALLENGES (WHEN HOUSED)** leading to health issues

- Housing available to create a 'clean' environment (turning out the yearlings)
- Cleanliness of calves arriving
- Communication with the calving team
- Availability of good quality colostrum/milk early on (Johnes!)
- Colostrum intakes
- Numbers arriving daily at peak

HEALTH CONDITIONS SEEN DURING HOUSING

- Navel ill
 - Joint ill
 - (Meningitis)
 - Nutritional Scour
- 0-4 wks old
- Pneumonia
 - Salmonella
 - Coccidiosis (and Crypto)
- 4-7 wks old



2. **BENEFITS (WHEN HOUSED) -** improving health issues

- Short total housing period
- Calf ages similar so protocols easier to follow and no mixing of ages
- Less opportunity for disease to build up in calves and in the environment
- Group pens only used for one batch of calves and usually filled in one day

















3. CHALLENGES (OUTDOORS)

- Weather
- Nutrition
- Eye Problems
- CCN
- Coccidiosis (*E. alabamensis*)
- Worms (especially *Nematodirus*)

The last 2 become more of an issue on a rearing unit like this (no 'clean' pasture).



4. **BENEFITS OUTDOORS** (of being tight calving)

- Grouped by weights so all very similar when it comes to feeding and treating (group sizes up to 80). The groups weights are kept constant by moving individuals around.
- Faecal monitoring works well
- 'Metaphylactic' treatment works well

(breeds used puts less pressure on GR)





Take home messages:

If we start off with a clean and dry environment, good management can keep problems to a minimum.

Keep in touch with your vet to discuss issues however small and work as a team to develop a plan going forward.

Always aim for zero losses !

THANK YOU