

Responsible use of antibiotics on beef & sheep farms

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Responsible use of medicine in agriculture (RUMA) Targets



Beef and sheep sector targets:

- 10% reduction in the use of antibiotics between 2016-2020
- 50% reduction in the use of highest priority critically important antibiotics between 2016-2020

Antibiotics on beef and sheep farms



What are the main reasons that there may be irresponsible antibiotic use on beef and sheep farms?

Beef

- Treatment for calf health problems
- Treatment for pneumonia

Sheep

- Whole flock treatments to reduce watery mouth and joint ill in young lambs
- Routine blanket use to avoid abortion, where vaccination should be used instead
- Excessive use to treat uncontrolled lameness in a flock

What can farmers do?

Develop a herd/flock health plan with your vet

- Review your vaccination, management, disease

Hygiene and husbandry

- Well ventilated buildings/sheds
- Clean buildings and equipment

Stress

- Minimise stress from physical factors and control disease which affects the immune systems (eg BVD in cattle)

Nutrition

- Ensure every lamb/calf suckles adequate good quality colostrum
- Balanced diets allow the immune system to work properly

Biosecurity

- Source animals from high health status herds/flocks

Be proactive rather than reactive!



Beef - Pneumonia and calf health

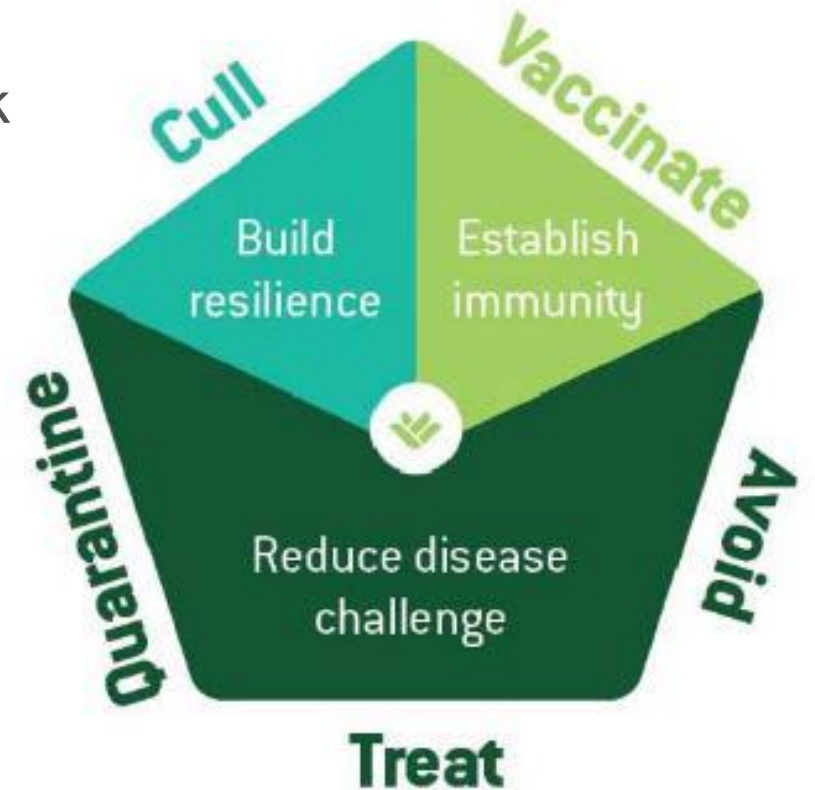
Some practical steps to reduce antibiotic use in calves:

- Ensure sufficient intake of good quality colostrum quickly after birth
- Vaccinate – according to herd health plan
- Assess housing conditions to ensure:
 - Clean
 - Draught free
 - Sufficient ventilation and stocking density
 - Clean, dry and sufficient bedding
 - Humidity levels below 75%
- Work with your vet to identify disease or deficiencies in youngstock which may affect their immune systems
- Reduce stress
 - At weaning
 - From temperature variances – use calf jackets if cold

Sheep - Lameness

Adopt the **Five Point Plan** to reduce lameness within the flock

1. **Avoid** spread of infection (eg gateways)
2. **Treat** individuals quickly and effectively
3. **Quarantine** bought-in sheep
4. **Cull** persistent offenders
5. **Vaccinate** to protect against footrot



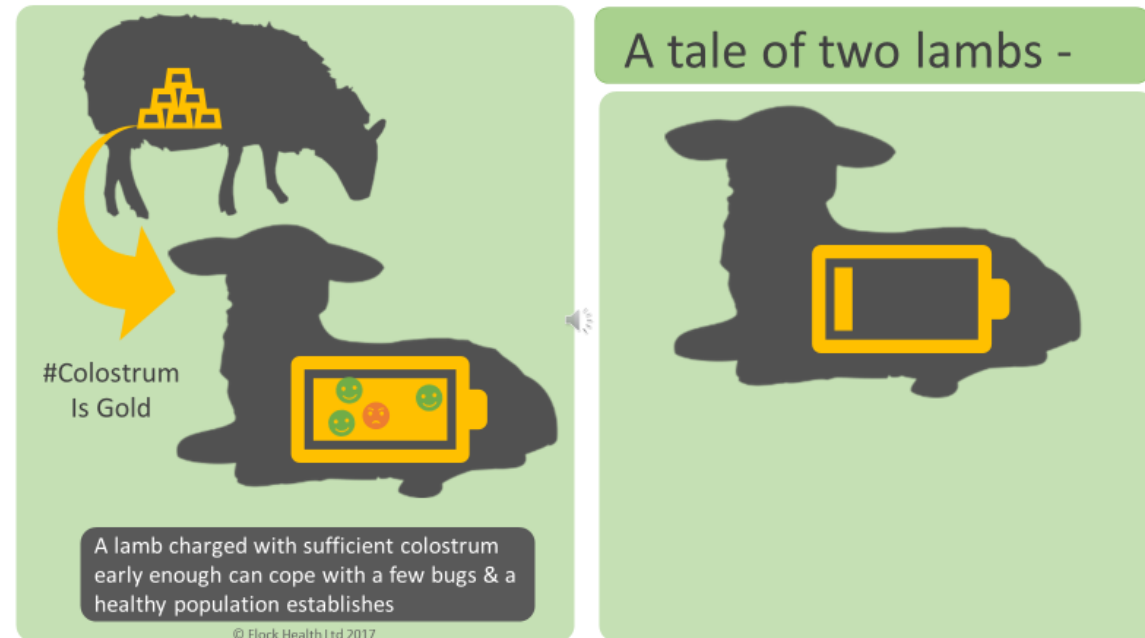
It is always right to treat a lame sheep quickly with an effective antibiotic but we need to reduce numbers lame in the first place. Do this by planning ahead, preventing the spread of disease (by quarantine and culling) and protecting ewes by breeding for resilience and vaccinating



Sheep – Watery mouth and joint ill

Some practical steps to reduce antibiotic use for watery mouth and joint ill in lambs:

- Ensure sufficient intake of good quality colostrum quickly after birth from ewes fed a well-balanced diet
- Practice good hygiene - clean and disinfect equipment
- Minimise stress of new born lambs
- If lambs are indoors ensure housing is:
 - Draught-free
 - Clean and dry
 - Has sufficient bedding available
- Turn-out lambs as soon as possible
- Ensure lambs have sufficient shelter outside



[Click here for the animation to work](#)



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