

# Bovine Abortion

Abortion in cattle is a significant cause of reproductive wastage. It is also costly, as a single abortion in a dairy herd is estimated to cost around £630. Some abortions are due to infectious diseases several of which are zoonotic e.g. Leptospirosis.

Sporadic abortions occur in any herd but once the incidence exceeds 3%, or several abortions occur in close succession, further investigations should be carried out to try to determine the cause, in order that control measures may be introduced.

The diagnosis rate in bovine abortion is generally low even when the foetus and placenta are submitted.

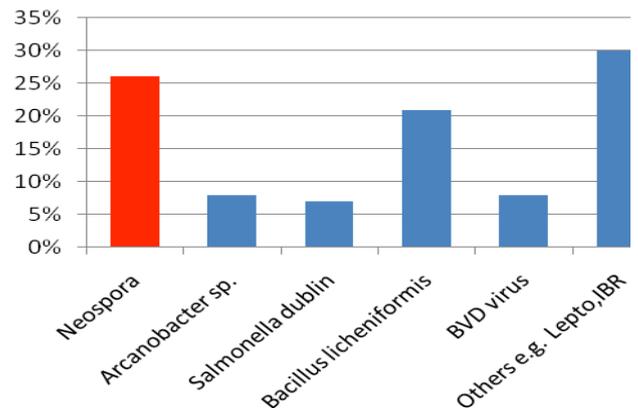
The causes of abortion can be divided into non-infectious and infectious.

## Non infectious causes of abortion include:

- Physical- trauma, insemination, twinning
- Nutritional- Iodine deficiency, Vit E/Selenium deficiency.
- Toxic-plant poisonings.
- Genetic- CVM in Holsteins, Bulldogs in Dexters.

Infectious causes of abortion are diagnosed with the following frequency:

## Diagnosis of cattle abortion



## Neosporosis

Neospora caninum was first recognised as a cause of abortion in cattle in 1989 and is now the most commonly diagnosed infectious cause.

Abortions in cattle caused by Neosporosis have the following characteristics:

- There are no clinical signs of illness in cattle that abort.
- Most abortions occur between 5-7 months of pregnancy.
- Contamination of cattle feed with Neospora eggs passed in dog or fox faeces are a major source of infection.
- Vertical transmission of disease from infected cows to their calves is the main way of transmission of infection in UK cattle.
- Repeat abortions from the same Neospora infected cow are common.



### Control of Neosporosis

- Consider culling infected cattle.
- Only breed from uninfected stock for replacements. Any known Neospora infected cows can be bred with a beef bull.
- Pay particular attention to hygiene at calving- dispose of any aborted calves, afterbirths etc. promptly. These all present a potential source of infection to dogs and foxes.
- Protect feed and water sources/troughs from contamination by dogs.
- Test to exclude other causes of abortion as dual infections are possible.

### SEASONAL REMINDERS:

- **Huskvac**  
 Still the most reliable and cost effective way of achieving a **lifelong** immunity to Lungworm!



- **Leptospirosis**  
 Spring is the best time for annual boosters for Leptospirosis.

