

XLVets is a novel and exciting initiative, conceived from within the veterinary profession aimed at supporting UK agriculture as it faces challenges in the 21st century.

We are a group of farm animal committed veterinary practices, and as such our policy is to work together, alongside commercial research and manufacturing companies, to share best practice on advice and disease prevention initiatives so providing the first point of call on health management and consultancy advice and facing up to the plethora of current on-farm consultancy advice other than from the veterinary surgeon. We are interested in the development and creation of markets for the economic advantage and support of our clients' long term future and prosperity.

The aim of the group is to put veterinary surgeons at the heart of their clients' farming enterprises, offering independent and high quality advice alongside other specialist advisers. We are dedicated to the survival and growth of the livestock farming industry and wish to work with like-minded, committed professionals.

**We are constantly seeking cost-effective preventative medicines and consumables and looking to advise on best practice.**

**Our primary aims are 4 fold:**

1. To be a primary source of on-farm advice and the central co-ordinating consultant for other farm services for our clients.
2. To be committed to the sharing of current best practice advice to our clients through direct XLVets newsletters and client training, associated with our own high levels of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
3. To be highly competitive in the health and medicines market with not only Prescription Only Medicines (POMs) but also re-establishing the vet as a primary source for on-farm Pharmacy and Merchants List (PML) and other medicinal and consumable products supported by impartial professional advice.
4. To improve our own efficiencies and reduce our costs by economies of scale over a wide range of practice needs and requirements.



For further Information, please contact your local XLVets Practice.

[www.xlvets.co.uk](http://www.xlvets.co.uk)

Committed to UK Farming  
**EXCELLENCE IN PRACTICE**



# FACT SHEET 19

**CAMPYLOBACTER FOETUS VENEREALIS**

[www.xlvets.co.uk](http://www.xlvets.co.uk)

Ideally all replacement breeding stock, both heifers and bulls, should be virgins (which can not, by definition, be infected).



#### Signs of infection

In the cow, the organism lives in the anterior vagina and cervix. From here it can invade the uterus causing an endometritis and early embryonic death or later abortions.

The classic signs of infection within a herd would include a slight, cloudy vaginal discharge about ten days after serving, irregular and abnormally long inter-oestrus intervals and abortions at between five and seven months of gestation.

Usually, given time, an infected cow will mount an immune response and eliminate the infection. This usually takes five or six months but occasionally may take longer. In some cases however, the endometritis and the damage that it causes may be so severe that the cow remains infertile and barren.

In the bull, the organism lives in the folds and crevices of the prepuce where it can persist for life.

#### Diagnosis

Diagnosis of *Campylobacter foetus venerealis* within a herd is not always easy. Definite confirmation of infection can only be obtained

by culturing the organism from either preputial or vaginal washings. However, due to the delicate nature of the organism, false negative results may be obtained. An alternative method of diagnosis is to demonstrate specific *Campylobacter foetus venerealis* antibodies in samples of vaginal mucus.

For reliability of results, samples from a dozen or more cows are required, which makes testing expensive.

Once the presence of *Campylobacter* within a herd has been confirmed options for its control or elimination are limited. There are no licensed vaccines against this disease in the UK. If the organism can be isolated, autogenous vaccines can be produced but vaccination will only allow the disease to be controlled, and not eliminated from the herd.

The only way of possibly eliminating this disease from an infected herd is to cull the bulls and then to use AI instead of natural service for at least three years.

#### Biosecurity

So, given the problems that *Campylobacter foetus venerealis* can cause, and the difficulty



in eliminating it from an infected herd, great care should be taken to prevent its introduction.

Ideally all replacement breeding stock, both heifers and bulls, should be virgins (which can not, by definition, be infected) and should only be sourced from reputable suppliers who will guarantee this.

Since replacement bulls are not normally virgins, they should be subjected to a thorough sheath washing using an antibiotic solution on three consecutive days in an attempt to ensure that they are not carrying *Campylobacter foetus venerealis*.

Certainly, the use of hired bulls should be avoided. If, however, this is not possible, then sheath washing as described above becomes even more important.

ENSURING A HEALTHY HERD MEANS HAVING A PLAN IN PLACE TO KEEP CAMPYLOBACTER OUT...

# Campylobacter *foetus venerealis*

The organism *Campylobacter foetus venerealis* is one of the many potential causes of bovine infertility and abortions. It is transmitted from cow to bull to cow at serving. Over the past few years, its incidence has been rising, particularly in beef suckler herds, because of a greater reliance on the use of hired bulls and because of a lack of basic biosecurity precautions.

