



## Neospora

*Neospora caninum* is a parasite that infects cattle and is a very common cause of abortion in cattle in the UK. Dogs are hosts to the parasite, becoming infected by eating infected placentae, foetuses, calves or wildlife. The parasite multiplies in their intestine and oocysts are passed in faeces and can survive in the environment for many months. After being eaten by a cow the oocysts multiply and then become dormant within tissue cysts.

At this stage there are no ill-effects on the cow, which continues to appear healthy. The danger comes during pregnancy when the parasite can re-activate and travels to the placenta and unborn calf.

### Clinical signs

- Abortion between 3 and 9 months pregnancy
- Abortion storms can occur when infection is introduced to a herd for the first time
- Still birth or premature calves
- The birth of a healthy, but infected, calf which may go on to abort during its first pregnancy and remain infected for life
- The birth of a calf showing signs of nervous disease, however, this is uncommon

### Transmission

Infection can arrive on farm by several routes:

- Via purchase of an infected cow
- Via recently infected dogs contaminating stored feed or the environment

Cattle become infected by the parasite by two routes:

- Horizontal infection where pregnant cow ingests oocysts from dog faeces contaminating the environment e.g. in food or water
- Vertical infection where organism crosses the placenta from an infected cow to its unborn calf. This is the most common route.

### Impact

- **51% of British dairy and beef herds<sup>1</sup>** are thought to be infected by neospora
- Annual cost for average 120 cow dairy herd estimated at **£3,000 per year<sup>2</sup>** through calf losses as well as reduced milk production and additional breeding costs

1 – Farmers Weekly

2 – CHecS

# Protect your herd!

## Neospora Accreditation Scheme

Add value and protect your herd by joining the Premium Cattle Health Scheme

Join today for 50% off Annual Membership in your first year!

### Benefits of Joining

- As a member you benefit from preferential testing rates to keep costs down
- Results are emailed directly to you and your vet simultaneously, for easy integration into your existing herd health management
- Our specialist vets are also available to discuss test results and action plans
- Advertise your stock as **Neospora** accredited at auction or for private sales and be listed on our **online database** to help market your stock and achieve higher prices
- Protects your herd by following biosecurity guidelines

### How the Accreditation Scheme Works:

- Follow the **CHeCS** rules and conditions for testing, stock management and biosecurity
- Annually test all female animals over 2 years of age plus any females between 1 and 2 years of age which are intended for breeding and any purchased females
- Risk Level system used to identify higher and lower risk herds (explained below)
- Members can also become accredited for **BVD, Johne's Disease, IBR** and **Leptospirosis**
- Certificates are issued to show herd health status

### Risk Levels

**Level 1:** Three or more consecutive clear annual herd screens (lowest level of risk)

**Level 2:** One or two consecutive clear annual herd screens

**Level 3:** The number of positive animals does not exceed 5% of the herd eligible for testing

**Level 4:** More than 5% of eligible animals identified positive at the most recent test

**Level 5:** These herds may be carrying out a testing programme, but are not adhering to the mandatory requirements of the programme (highest level of risk)

### For more info please contact:

SRUC Veterinary Services, Greycrook, St Boswells, Roxburghshire TD6 0EQ

Tel: 01835 822456 Email: [pchs1@btconnect.com](mailto:pchs1@btconnect.com)

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



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