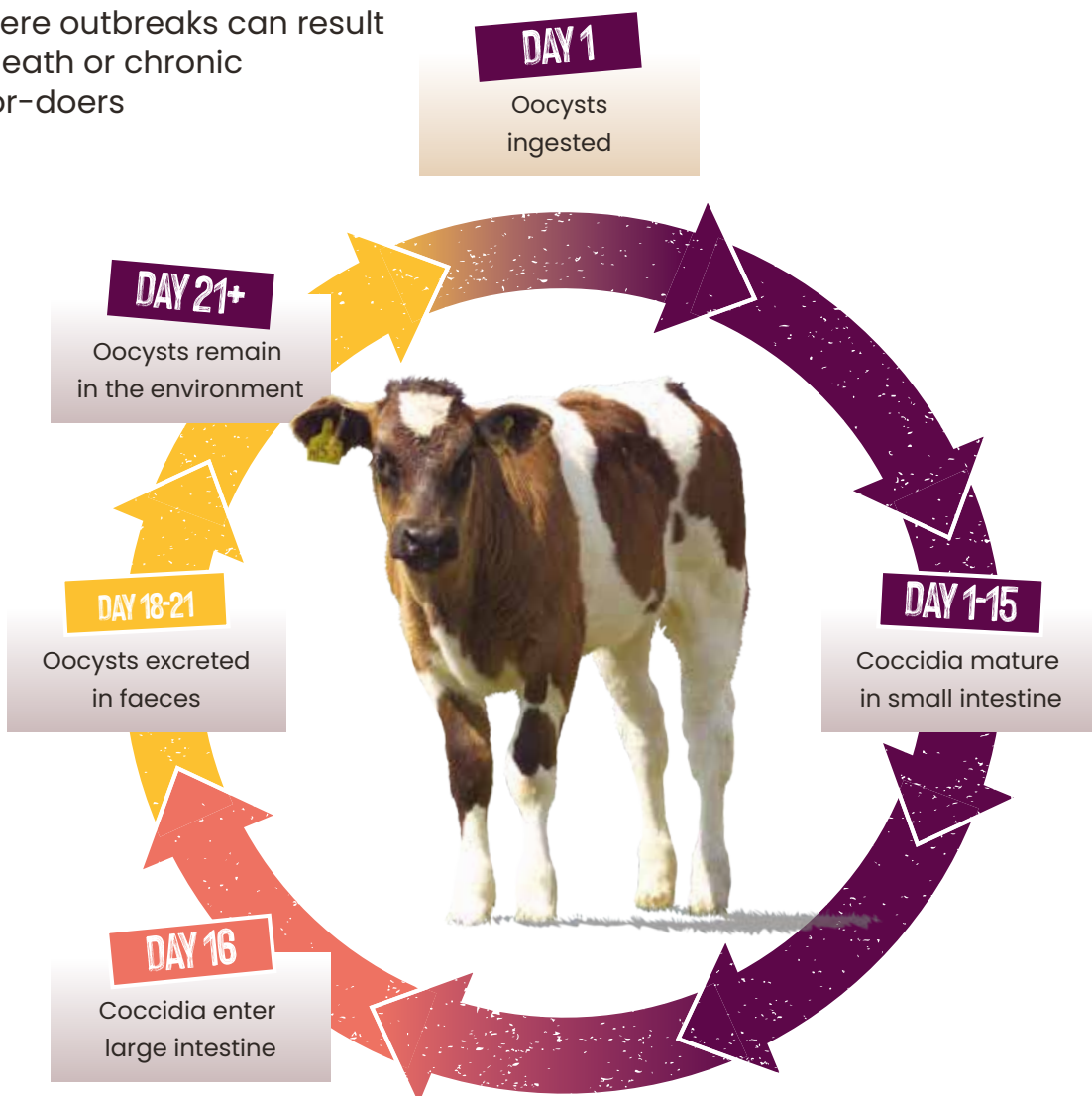


Coccidiosis



Introduction

- Coccidiosis is an increasingly common cause of diarrhoea in young calves
- Animals ingest coccidia from the environment
- Disease occurs anywhere from 12-21 days after ingestion
- Significant gut damage is caused by the parasitic infection
- Affected animals scour, sometimes with blood and will be seen straining
- Weight loss can be significant
- Severe outbreaks can result in death or chronic poor-doers





Causes

- Coccidia are a common parasite, present on most farms
- Disease occurs when young calves are exposed to high numbers of the parasite
- Infection is passed from animal to animal through contact with infected faeces
 - Poor disinfection of pens between batches of calves
 - Overcrowding of pens
 - Insufficient or poor quality bedding
 - Grouping calves of different ages in the same pen
 - Using pens on a continuous basis
 - Allowing animals to contaminate feed or water with faeces (e.g. forage being fed on the floor or concentrates being fed from low level troughs)

Impact

- Reduced weight gain
- Treatment costs
- Longer time to either finishing or first calving
- Increased mortality rates and culls in severe outbreaks
- Increased likelihood of suffering from pneumonia

Prevention

- If you think Coccidiosis is affecting your cattle – discuss control with your vet
- Once you have seen a case of Coccidiosis you are too late – the damage to the gut has been done
- Reduce the risk of young calves coming into contact with infected faeces:
 - All-in, all-out calf pens with good hygiene in-between batches
 - Prevent faecal contamination of forage and concentrate portion of the diet
 - Isolate animals with severe clinical signs (they will be contaminating the environment)

SUMMARY

- Very common problem with significant losses
- Prevention essential as treatment is too late