



AHI BULLETIN

Why vaccinate?

The decision on whether to vaccinate (or not) should be determined by your knowledge of the disease risk on your farm coupled with professional advice from your local veterinary practitioner. Biosecurity measures such as avoiding purchase, double boundary fencing, avoiding shared equipment/facilities etc. can help enormously in lowering risks but they do not eliminate them

So what are the important aspects of a correctly applied programme? Firstly, decide on which diseases you need to protect against. Discuss this with your vet as they will be aware, not just of your herd disease history, but also of the risk patterns in the local area. The next step is choosing timing of vaccination. This is determined by seasonality of disease and recommendations of the vaccine



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completely. Equally vaccination may not prevent disease but a correctly applied programme can significantly alter the chances of disease spread if your stock became infected. Vaccination forms only a part of your farm biosecurity plan and should not be considered the sole component of the plan. It can result in enormous benefits on most farms however when appropriately applied.

manufacturer. Route of administration and dosage are again given on the product insert, but should be confirmed with your local vet if you are unsure. Obtain your supplies from a local legitimate supplier and always ensure you adhere to storage precautions when transporting, storing or using vaccines. Frost can seriously damage inactivated vaccines while both inactivated and live vaccines have a short in-use shelf life – so aim to use them

within one day's work. Always check the expiry date prior to use and protect vaccines from light. Record all administrations carefully so that you remember to boost at the correct time. Use a clean sterile needle for each administration or at very least change frequently.

Vaccines rarely provide lifelong protection, so it is important to read the package insert carefully and follow the guidelines on vaccine boosting. This may involve either of two aspects – some vaccines require a primary course of two doses – so the next vaccine booster may be due in a short time (3-5 weeks) while others vaccines have a single dose primary course with the next booster not due until 6-12 months later.

Are there any downsides to vaccination? Although uncommon, vaccination carries the risk of adverse reactions ranging from mild to severe. Vaccine efficacy can be interfered with by concurrent disease that lower immunity e.g. parasitism, nutritional deficiencies etc. Happily, regulatory authorities and vaccine companies ensure that rigorous standards are applied to ensure vaccines are of consistent quality, safety and efficacy.

In summary, plan your vaccination calendar with your local veterinary practitioner, ensure all of the above conditions are met concerning health of treated animals prior to vaccination as well as vaccine storage and use. There are many farmers in Ireland who have experienced first-hand the usefulness of vaccination.