

Are rabbits a source of *Cryptosporidium parvum* infection for calves?

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Cryptosporidiosis is caused by the protozoan parasite *Cryptosporidium*. It is of medical and veterinary importance worldwide with the main clinical symptom being profuse watery diarrhoea. *C. parvum* is one of the main causes of enteric disease in young calves and lambs. Little research has been done to explore the transmission of the parasite to calves, although it has been assumed that dams, wildlife and water could be part of the process. The main aim of this study is to investigate the potential sources of infection for young calves. Samples have been collected from 38 calves on a Scottish dairy farm from birth to 6 weeks of age in order to determine which *Cryptosporidium* species are present. Results will show which species of the parasite are present in these calves over the 6 week time period along with future plans to examine alternative transmission routes. Samples which have been taken from 307 rabbits located on farm fields in Scotland have also been tested for *Cryptosporidium* species to see if rabbits could be acting as a potential transmission route to calves. Results will show which species of *Cryptosporidium* were present in the rabbits and preliminary genotyping results.