



Farm Veterinary Solutions

Spring Update

2024

Welcome to our first newsletter as Farm Veterinary Solutions Ltd.

"We hope that you have all had a good Easter and that the lambing/calving period is going well. Hopefully, by the time of reading, it will have stopped raining and the ground conditions improved ready for turnout!

"Generally, the high volumes of forage preserved last year—although not great in quality for milk yield—seem to have kept beef and sheep animals in good body condition through the extended housing period. As always, we have seen some new and recurrent challenges so far this Spring. Schmallerberg has been affecting some individual flocks quite severely. High rainfall and leaching last year has led to more trace element deficiencies. As well as this, the wet conditions have made it very difficult to muck out yards frequently enough, with a resultant increase in fresh cow environmental mastitis. Overall though, we're very pleased to say that trends in responsible use of antibiotic usage has continued across the practice.

"The whole team are now looking forward to the next few months, shaping our future as a stand-alone farm practice. Since I joined the practice in 2015 as the first farm-only clinical vet, it has been brilliant to see the farm team develop alongside wider changes in the farming industry. At this stage, we believe the separation of FVS will allow further succession and recruitment of vets and support staff with a passion for farm work. In turn, allowing us to continue developing the services required by our farmers in the future.

"As with any changes, we understand there may be some short term inconvenience that occurs, particularly whilst merged small and large animal accounts are sorted out. Please rest assured all of your small animals will continue to be registered for treatment with your specific Kings/Rutland practices.

"Please do get in touch should you have any questions or concerns by calling the practice or email farmteam@farmvetsolutions.com or client-care@rutlandvets.co.uk for small animal queries."

Max Hardy
BVSc MRCVS

Director of Farm Veterinary Solutions Ltd.



We have an exciting new service in planning for you!

PHARMACY VAN

Coming May 2024

Updates to follow!



Subsidised Abortion Testing

We once again have access to subsidised toxoplasmosis and EAE blood testing for ewes from MSD and Ceva.

Research has shown that the biggest impact on a flock's productivity is from reproductive failure, neonatal disease and mortality.

Subsidised testing is available for all clients to help understand what may have contributed to any losses and reproductive failures this lambing period. The aim is to pre-empt problems for next year and implement vaccination programmes where necessary. Laboratory testing fees will be covered by the pharmaceutical companies.

If you have an abortion rate of **2% or more**, testing is essential. Blood samples are taken from 6-8 unvaccinated ewes who have aborted. These are then tested for toxoplasmosis or enzootic abortion, or both! Positive results suggest that vaccination should be considered. With consent, results collected will be used for further research to help us understand these diseases better.

This is an extremely beneficial scheme for farms who currently do not vaccinate and do not know their disease status. Please contact the practice to discuss your situation further with a vet.

Key Performance Indicators in Beef Herds



Now that spring is upon us, it is going to be a busy few months for all. Whilst it can be hectic, it also provides a great chance to record information to allow us to review how the calving season has been. We can measure the success of a beef suckler herd with a range of factors called Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These can cover fertility, growth rates, carcass quality, financial and health of your herd.

There are increasing pressures on financial margins within the beef suckler industry. Assessing and reviewing your herd's performance is going to be key to maximising these margins with the aim to improve the sustainability of the herd. We can use the KPIs to set targets for your enterprise and set specific goals for your own herd to be regularly reviewed. This will also change which KPIs are most important to you and which areas we want to focus on most.

The Beef Suckler KPIs cover largely fertility information as this is normally the most important area of performance. This includes the number of animals put to the bull, the number of calves born and over what period of time.

Other areas include:

- Growth—focuses on the daily liveweight gain of calves
- Health—replacement rates and antibiotic usage
- Financial—cost per kilo per animal per day

This data will be collected using a form to provide all the information we should need that you can request from us. The data can then be compared to industry targets and from one year to the next to identify areas we can look to improve or evaluate any changes made previously. To get the most out of these KPIs, the information we collect needs to be done regularly and accurately.

We will be holding our first Beef Meeting on 1st May. The topic of discussion will focus on KPIs in beef suckler herds and discussing the advantages further. The evening will also be combined with a talk from CEVA about fertility. This will cover the importance of fertility in the suckler herd with potential problems we may encounter and how we can overcome these to get the most out of your cows. The meeting will be held in the evening at Melton Market with more details to follow. To book your place please contact the farm office, 01664 491266, as places will be limited.



Freddie Watchorn
BVM BVS MRCVS

| Key Performance Indicators | Performing well | Room to improve | Review performance | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Age at first calving | 23-24.5months | 24.5-30months | 30-36months | |
| Cows/heifers calved in first six weeks | 85-70% | 70-50% | 50-35% | |
| Herd replacement rate | 14-16% | 16-19% | 19-22% | |
| Calves alive 24 hours after birth | 105-95% | 95-85% | 85-80% | |
| Calves weaned | 102-94% | 94-84% | 84-80% | |
| Daily liveweight gain - Weaned calves | 1.6-1.2kg/day | 1.2-1kg/day | 1-0.8kg/day | |
| Herd efficiency | 60-45% | 45-35% | 35-30% | |
| Full economic cost of production | Per calf weaned | £600-650/hd | £650-800/hd | £800-1000/hd |
| | Per liveweight kilo of calves weaned | £2.00-2.25/kg | £2.25-3.00/kg | £3.00-4.00/kg |

(Above) AHDB Key Performance Indicators for Beef Suckler Herds. The table lists the main KPIs to consider with their industry targets. How do you compare?

Please do get in touch if you would like us to help you look into your own KPIs further to improve your sustainability.

Date for the Diary!
Meeting Topic: Beef Suckler KPIs and Fertility
When: Wednesday 1st May 2024—Evening Meeting
Where: Melton Market
Join Freddie from FVS and CEVA to discuss the advantages of KPIs and the importance of fertility in the suckler herd.

Grass Staggers

(Grass tetany / hypomagnesemia)



Grass staggers is a condition of sheep and cattle, caused by low body levels of magnesium. It is most commonly seen in lactating animals fed on lush pasture during spring and autumn when grass growth is rapid.

Clinical Signs: The condition presents with a sudden onset. The most common clinical signs are: muscle spasms, tremors, bellowing, high muscle tension, seizures and sudden death. Animals are often found recumbent and thrashing around with their eyes rolled, bounding heart rates and their heads thrown backwards. Less severe cases may present as twitching and aggression. Any sudden deaths may present with signs of a struggle (e.g. churned up grass).

Cause: Magnesium levels in the blood are poorly controlled in ruminants and rely on consistent dietary intake. Disease occurs when magnesium is low and requirements are high. Magnesium assists with the regulation of nerve activity—low magnesium causes overactivity of nerves and muscle contractions. When is staggers high risk to your flock or herd??

- Over peak lactation; high levels of magnesium are lost from the body in the milk
- Poor energy supply in feed; reduces the body's capacity to utilise magnesium
- Grass only diets; provides little magnesium, especially when grass growth is rapid in the spring and autumn
- High potassium and nitrate levels reduce magnesium availability—common in fertilised pasture; including slurry
- Low sodium on pasture reduces the uptake of magnesium in the rumen
- High moisture content of pasture reduces the uptake of magnesium



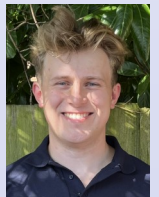
Diagnosis: A presumptive diagnosis can be made based on clinical signs alone. This is often then confirmed by response to treatment. Laboratory diagnosis of low magnesium levels is possible - blood sampling live animals or, in the case of sudden death, sampling fluid from the eyeball.

Treatment: Acute cases are usually treated with a calcium solution containing magnesium, injected slowly in the vein (Calciject 5), as well as a subcutaneous magnesium injection (Magniject 9). Response to treatment is usually seen over the following hours, but may need repeating. Prognosis in clinical cases is poor. Focus should be on reducing the risk in the rest of the group.

Prevention: After a clinical case, consider providing magnesium supplementation to the rest of the group. Magnesium flakes added into the water supply is the easiest form of supplementation. This is often supplied in bags to place in water troughs for a slow release. Please speak to one of our vets if you would like to discuss alternative options.

Top Tips for reducing the risk of hypomagnesemia.

- Be aware of reduced feed intakes—i.e. reduced grazing in bad weather.
- Feed animals sufficiently at peak demand.
- Delay the use potassium or nitrate fertiliser on pasture until later in the year.



Jim Bennett
BVM BVS MRCVS

MV / CAE

(Maedi Visna / Caprine Arthritis and Encephalitis)

MV and CAE are iceberg diseases. This means that usually, by the time issues and clinical signs are seen, there is already an extensive problem on farm. MV is specific to sheep and CAE is specific to goats.

Both are viral diseases that have a very long incubation period—it can be several years before the disease becomes clinically apparent. MV and CAE are considered to be wasting diseases. It tends to become more noticeable in older animals that are often included in the cull animals inadvertently.

⇒ MV can also present as mastitis cases that do not resolve or recur each year with a high proportion of the flock affected. It will also show as reduced conception rates and increased ewe and lamb mortality.

⇒ CAE in goats can also present as varying degrees of lameness as it can cause severe arthritis. In kids, it can also cause neurological signs.

Transmission: Disease is spread via nose to nose/mouth contact; blood contamination (dirty needles); infected colostrum/milk.

Diagnosis: Blood testing is the only sure diagnosis for either disease.

Treatment: Unfortunately, there is no treatment or vaccine available for either disease and it is ultimately fatal.

Prevention is key! Culling positive animals is the only sure treatment. Maintaining a closed flock can help prevent transmission, alternatively, source replacements from MV/CAE accredited flocks only. Always maintain good stock boundaries between neighbours.

Jess Hulse
BA VetMB MRCVS



Discounted Monitoring Programme

Our primary external laboratory offer an affordable flock/herd screening scheme for the testing of MV and CAE.

The scheme enables discounted detection of disease, as well as allowing promotion of sheep and goats at sales as being low risk of having MV/CAE*. *when scheme rules followed correctly
With no annual membership fee and minimal testing requirements we highly recommend considering this scheme for non-accredited flocks and herds.

If you wish to discuss any of the topics raised in the Spring Update, please call the office on 01664 491266 to speak to one of our Receptionists, SQPs, Vet Techs or Vets.

VPS Products– Spring Deals 2024

| PRODUCT | USE | ADMINISTRATION | WITHDRAWAL | PRICE (ex VAT) |
|--|--|--|---|--------------------------------|
|  Enovex Pour-on | Ivermectin pour on for the control of adult and inhibited larval stage roundworms, mange mites and sucking lice in cattle. | Pour-on 1ml per 10kg | Cattle Meat—28 days Milk— >60 days | 2.5L—£30 |
|  Eprizero Pour-on | Eprinomectin pour on for the control of adult and inhibited larval stage roundworm, mange mites and lice in dairy cattle. | Pour-on 1ml per 10kg | Cattle Meat—10 days Milk—0 hours | 2.5L—£140 5L—£200 |
|  Tauradour Pour-on | Doramectin pour-on for the control of roundworms, mange mites and lice in cattle for up to 5 weeks. | Pour-on 1ml per 10kg | Cattle Meat—35 days Milk—do not use | 1L—£75 2.5L—£120 5L—£190 |
|  Chanaverm 7.5% | Levamisole (yellow) drench for control of roundworms in sheep and cattle. | Oral drench 1ml per 10kg | Cattle Meat—20 days Sheep Meat—20 days | 5L—£90 |
|  Endospec SC 2.5% | Albendazole (white) drench for the control of roundworms, tapeworms and adult liver fluke in sheep. | Oral drench See pack info | Sheep Meat—4 days | 2.5L—£35 10L—£65 |
|  Dectomax Injection | Doramectin injection for the control of roundworms, mites and lice in cattle and sheep. | Cattle 1ml per 50kg Subcutaneous inj Sheep 1ml per 33kg Intramuscular inj | Cattle Meat—70 days Sheep Meat—70 days | 200ml—£65 |
|  Noromectin Drench | Ivermectin (clear) drench for the control of adult and inhibited larval roundworms in sheep. | Oral drench 2.5ml per 10kg | Sheep Meat—14 days | 1L—£18 2.5L—£35 5L—£49 |
|  Ectofly | Cypermethrin solution for the treatment and prevention of blowfly strike, ticks and lice in sheep. | Topical Administration See Pack Info | Sheep Meat—8 days | 2.5L—£55 5L—£85 |
|  Ovivac P-Plus | 4 in 1 clostridial and pasteurilla vaccine for lambs from 3 weeks of age. Two doses given 4-6 weeks apart. | Subcutaneous inj 2ml | Sheep Meat—0 days | 100ml—£58 500ml—£240 |

To place an order or for more information, please call 01664 491266



Emergency Contact: 01664 491266

Email: farmteam@farmvetsolutions.com

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