

# Newsletter Summer 2017

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#### **TB News**

We would like to thank our clients for their cooperation in re-arranging tests due to vet injury; by August we should be back to full strength. Please help our staff book in your two required visits with the vet for any private testing, by contacting us well in advance of expected sale or movement dates.

Defra and APHA are currently reviewing the edge area policy with regards to TB testing intervals around breakdowns. Currently contiguous herd testing on neighbouring cattle is used at the discretion of APHA vets when new TB breakdowns are confirmed.

# Belvoir Vale TB Group – are you on the mailing list?

This farmer led group has now been meeting for almost 12 months and is loosely based on the Vale of Belvoir area. It is designed to help beef and dairy farmers in the area get to grips with the bTB situation. Having accurate and The proposals are to formalise this so that all herds within a 3km radius of a confirmed breakdown are then subjected to 2x whole herd tests 60 days apart in order to prevent TB becoming endemic in an area. As these tests are not planned and occur at short notice they can be difficult to organise. Therefore some edge areas with the highest number of breakdowns have requested planned 6 monthly whole herd testing as an alternative. Defra staff have attended several meetings in the area to ask farmers opinions on the matter with likely changes to be confirmed for 2019.

A member of

easily understood information on the incidence of bTB; understanding risks and bio-security and the incidence of the disease in the wildlife population can help develop our understanding, share knowledge and experiences; while also getting information and practical help.

### The next meeting is on:

Thursday 2nd November 10.30am Friarswell Estate office Wartnaby, near Melton Mowbray The meetings are open to all beef and dairy producers and. If you are not receiving our mailings please contact Alice Clayton on **01572 824250 or email her at alice.clayton@nfu.org.uk** to get your name on the list.



# **MIKE UPDATE...**

Contrary to popular belief, Mike is not just sunning himself by the pool with a beer! Here is an insight into what he has been up to:

Part of what Mike is doing in Africa is working alongside **The Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust, Victoria Falls Anti Poaching Unit and The National Parks Department of Zimbabwe.** 

Poaching around Victoria Falls is sometimes commercial in nature with elephants being shot for ivory or buffalo or giraffe for meat but a common problem is snaring.

Mike joins the team where they dart various animals that have a snare around them, remove and dress the snare wounds.

Here are a couple of pictures that Mike has sent through to us in the last month.





# **BOVINE ISCHAEMIC TEAT NECROSIS (ITN)**

## Bovine ischaemic teat necrosis (ITN) is a new and emerging disease in dairy cows.

At the moment, the cause of the disease, the prevalence and the risk factors are all unknown. Worryingly, there are anecdotal reports of herds with up to 20% of heifers affected and there is no known effective treatment for this disease.

Ischaemic teat necrosis presents as a dry, dark red to black area on the skin at the base of the teat usually on the inside aspect (see figure 1). The lesion may extend down the teat towards the teat end and/or up on to the skin of the udder.

These lesions are highly irritable to the cow and can cause her to constantly lick her teats until she has removed them from self-trauma (see figure 2).

Once the teats have been lost the cow is often culled on welfare grounds therefore leading to economic and food security worries. The lesion appears to be mostly confined to the skin and does not affect the glandular tissue that would give rise to mastitis. Mastitis may however occur due to an inability to milk the affected quarter.

As the aetiology of bovine ITN is currently unknown, research into this disease is essential. Only by understanding the aetiology of ITN might we be able to mitigate the risk involved with this disease. Thus far, research has suggested there might be an infectious cause which may enable control methods akin to those used for mastitis that prevents exposure to infection reservoirs.

Current suspicion is that there may be involvement of the digital dermatitis (DD) *Treponema* spp. bacteria however there is a desperate need for further research. Given that so little is known about bovine ITN, a study is currently being undertaken at the University of Liverpool so please contact us if you have any suspicious lesions and we can then report it to them.





Figure 1: ITN Lesion on the right hind teat before self-trauma has occurred. There is a dry, dark red to black area on the medial aspect that is centred on the base of the teat and extends both down the teat and up on the skin of the udder.

**Figure 2:** The udder of a cow that was constantly licking her teats. She has removed 2 teats herself and has the same lesion on the medial aspect of a 3rd teat.



# **FEVER TAGS**

The challenge of consistently detecting sick cattle is a large task for any size operation. Finding key personnel who have the ability to recognise early symptoms of depression is an equally large task.

Cattle fever is typically the first sign of Bovine Respiratory Disease (BRD), manifesting 24-72 hours before visual signs, depressed appetite and dehydration become apparent. **Diagnosing fever** early in the disease process will lead to effective and timely treatments, thus reducing the effects of costly disease management. By continuously monitoring your cattle's temperature in an undisturbed state, you can create a straight forward and uncomplicated process to identify challenged cattle or

cattle that require further diagnosis

The integrated software learns the typical temperature activity of the animal and only alarms if the temperature remains high over a six-hour period and has proven 95% accurate in research trials.

"The animal's temperature will go up and down, but will not drop below 39.7C if it has a respiratory infection," said Mr Farrow.

Once the cow or calf has had a high temp for six hours, a light flashes on the tag to alert the farmer. The flashing light continues for six hours, after which point the device reverts to monitoring the temperature every 15 minutes.

However, if the temperature remains above 39.7C, the tag will continue flashing, so even if it first begins flashing just after the final evening checks, it will still be flashing the next morning if the temperature has remained high. Research also showed 75% of animals with flashing tags went on to develop clinical signs of disease.



For further information please contact Harriet at the practice!

# UPDATES TO RED TRACTOR FARM ASSURANCE HERD HEALTH PLANS

### **New Standards Coming into** Practice

As of 1st October 2017 the Red Tractor Assurance standards are being strengthened in a few areas. They have told XL Vets that over the coming months, all Red Tractor producers will be made aware what is required of them to demonstrate they continue to meet the standards.

Details of these changes are now live on the Red Tractor website and many of you may have already received a new set of standards, including the topline changes, in the post. Some are detailed below:

### **Animal Medicines**

#### Dairy:

Medicine records must provide an annual collation of total antibiotic used on farm, either from an up to date medicines book or prescription data from your account with us. This must be reviewed annually by a vet.

#### Beef & Lamb:

A recommendation has been added that the highest priority critically important antibiotics are only used as a last resort under veterinary direction. These would include Fluoroquinolones (e.g. A180, Baytril, Marbox) and 3rd/4th generation Cephalosporins (e.g. Naxcel, Excenel, Cobactan).

#### Both:

Animals sold farm-to-farm that are still within a withdrawal period for a medicine must be accompanied by a withdrawal period declaration.

### **Other Dairy Changes:**

#### **Colostrum:**

Health Plans need to include a documented colostrum policy to ensure youngstock are receiving adequate colostrum. It's recommended that the quality is also tested. Speak to one of the vets if this is something you want to start doing and we can supply colostrometers if needed.

**Quaternary Ammonium Compounds** (QACs): Cleaning chemicals, udder and hoof care products must not contain QACs as it can affect cheese production. Maximum residue limits have been revised.

#### Other changes affecting both Beef, Lamb and Dairy **Biosecurity:**

#### Silage Storage:

Year-Round Tethering:

Farm Map:

#### Water:

#### **Rodenticide Use:**



# Sheep

### **Controlling Sheep** Lameness

Scald (interdigital dermatitis) and foot rot are the 2 most common causes for lameness in sheep and can become a real problem pre-tupping. The active bacteria causing these is Dichelobacter nodosus, this bacteria usually gains entry into the feet due to damage to the interdigital skin by moisture or trauma – most commonly seen when ground is wet and warm or there is lots of long stalky pasture.

#### At grass, lambs appear to be at greater risk than ewes - however housed ewes can also get problems if bedding becomes wet and warm.

It is important to treat lameness as a contagious issue as spread occurs from infected to non-infected sheep via the pasture/bedding. Therefore taking any opportunity to separate and treat lame sheep when moving the rest to clean ground (free of sheep >3 weeks) is crucial.

#### **Economic Impact**

The prevalence (percentage of affected sheep on any day) of footrot is estimated to be 8-15 per cent in UK flocks. This is likely due to failure of treating lameness appropriately – wrong treatment choice or not treated soon enough. Economic impact appears to be mainly the result of lost production not treatment costs.

It is critical to ensure sheep lameness issues in the flock are controlled before tupping as pain and infection result in decreased feed intake, leading to decrease body condition scores and reproductive failure due to poor conception rates.

### Scald **Clinical Signs**

Interdigital dermatitis (scald) causes severe lameness – this reduces grazing and if not treated quickly can result in weight loss. On exam of the foot the interdigital skin becomes red and swollen and may be covered with a layer of white exudate generally there is no underrunning of the hoof wall or sole of the foot.



#### Treatment

Importantly no foot trimming is needed for treatment of scald. The most effective

treatment is using oxytetracycline sprays for individual animals, however if a large group are affected using a 3% formalin footbath with sheep allowed to stand in clean dry area afterwards allowing feet to dry can provide good control. Foot bathing usually needs to be repeated at weekly or two weekly interval during the risk period to prevent further cases or recurrence. Generally sheep should become sound within a few days of appropriate treatment.

### Footrot **Clinical Signs**

This is commonly a progression from untreated scald with deeper bacterial infection. Sheep become none weight bearing on affected limbs – if both front feet are affected the animal may be found to be grazing on its knees and can develop sores. There is swelling and moistening of the interdigital skin with infection spreading to separate the sole and hoof horn of the inner hoof wall.

Further separation of the sole continues and may extend to the outer hoof wall. There is also a characteristic foul smelling discharge due to necrotic (dead/rotting) horn. In severe cases the whole hoof capsule may be shed. If infection becomes chronic the hoof can become misshapen and overgrown, which can lead to further trapping of dirt and infection.

Note - It is very difficult to differentiate between

severe foot rot and contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD) so a vet exam is often required as treatment efficacy differs between them.



#### Treatment

Foot bathing alone is not an appropriate treatment for foot rot – instead an injection of long acting oxytetracycline (e.g. Alamycin LA 300) into the muscle together with cleaning of interdigital space and aerosol spray.

Footrot must NOT be trimmed as this actually delays healing – also contaminated hoof shears are a frequent source of infection to other sheep.

Recovery from lameness should occur in a few days, however it may take longer for the lesions to heal – approximately 10days. Affected sheep must be isolated with other sheep undergoing similar treatment. If cases do not respond to oxytetracycline the vet should be called to investigate.

#### **Prevention/Control and** Genetics

Foot bathing can be used as prevention but facilities must be clean with area to dry off to allow time for formalin solution to dry into feet. Weaning is a good time to work on infectious lameness control by separating lame sheep to one group, then foot-bathing and moving ewe and lamb groups to clean pasture.

**Culling** – The bacteria is known to be spread by persistent carrier sheep which often show repeated bouts of lameness and a poor response to treatment. Repeat offenders should therefore be culled on a 3 strikes approach to reduce infection pressure across the flock. To do this requires accurate treatment records and identification.

#### Quarantine – All purchased stock should be guarantined for one month and examined for footrot/CODD before introduction into the main flock. Foot bathing is advised at this time. It is possible to select for sheep that are more resistant to footrot. Estimates from many countries indicate that resistance to footrot in ewes is heritable at 10 - 20%. To do this treatment

records should be accurate and replacement ewe lambs selected that have not had footrot.

#### Vaccination

#### **Previous natural infection does** not lead to immunity against

footrot. Vaccination therefore relies on the immune response created by repeat boosters. If using footvax it is recommended that all sheep are vaccinated to limit future environmental contamination. A great time to start vaccinating is pre-tupping with a single dose of vaccine, which may be boosted

four to six weeks later if significant levels of disease still remain in the flock. Subsequent doses should be administered before risk period such as housing.

## **Ram MOT & Fertility Testing**

Up to 30% of rams may be subfertile, meaning they get fewer ewes in lamb and take longer to do so. This can be hugely costly as he will affect the performance of all the ewes he runs with. Even if multiple rams are used in a group, an infertile dominant ram can stop the other fertile rams from working. The fit and fertile ram can serve 80-100 ewes in 3 weeks, allowing a higher ratio of ewes to rams than is generally used. Furthermore a sub-fertile ram can badly affect your lambing percentage with knock on effects on lambs sold per ewe and in turn profits.

A breeding examination of all rams 10 weeks before tupping gives time for problems to be corrected and replacements purchased if necessary. Sperm production takes 6 weeks to recover after a problem, therefore it is crucial to test them early.

10 weeks pre-tupping – All rams must be checked either by yourselves or the vets, as unlike bulls, most ram fertility issues can be identified by the following thorough examination.

#### Things to check: (teeth/ toes/testicles)

- 1. Starting at the head, check teeth to ensure he can eat well and maintain body condition whilst serving.
- 2. Check for any wounds as pain and inflammation will affect semen quality.
- 3. Body condition scoring rams should be score 3.5 at the start of tupping, too thin and they may not manage to serve all the ewes, too fat and they may have less libido and excess fat in the scrotum which can decrease fertility.
- 4. Check feet and joints for any sign of lameness as this is a common cause for reduced service.
- 5. Testicle size varies with age, breed and time of year but as a guide should be over 34cm for ram lambs and 36cm for mature rams.
- 6. Check for any lumps or soft areas in the testicles – these may indicate infection or abscesses. The testicles should feel as firm as a tensed bicep.
- 7. Check the penis to make sure it moves freely in the prepuce and there are no signs of trauma.



Central bar is cursor for

If any abnormalities are discovered a semen sample can then be taken to give more information on amount of semen produced and viability. Please speak to one of the vets for further information.

# **SMALLHOLDERS CLUB UPDATE**

In June, we held our first Smallholders Club meeting at the Uppingham Practice. The evening included a presentation on parasite control in cattle and sheep for the coming months and also an opportunity for clients to learn more about the club.

It was great to meet so many clients owning a variety of species and we hope those who've signed up found the evening a good opportunity for general discussion.

Membership costs £50 per year and includes four quarterly meetings and newsletters. Our aim is to provide informative evenings, focusing on a variety of topics to help build on knowledge and skills, as well as an opportunity to discuss any veterinary queries and questions.



# **SMALLHOLDERS CLUB MEETING** "Synchronisation in Sheep"

### Wednesday 6th September 2017 at 7.30pm, Venue TBC

An evening to discuss the practical application of synchronisation in sheep and presentation from Kat Baxter, Veterinary Advisor from MSD about the products available to help tighten your lambing period.

A buffet and drinks will be provided.

Smallholder Club Members please contact Robyn Oram at the Melton Branch to book your place

Tel: 01664 567481 | Email: robyn@rutlandvets.co.uk

# **FLOCK HEALTH PLANNING**

When used properly flock health visits and plans help to review productivity and loss areas of your flock. It can highlight areas of success as well as areas that may require some improvement or altered approach. Key areas covered include lambing data analysis, common infectious diseases, parasite control, guarantine and foot care plan. It involves on farm discussion with your vet to gather information about current procedures and to review if any

improvements or specific areas that could be targeted for the coming year. Individual flock health calendars can be created to act as a reminder of what needs to be done throughout the year. Farm Assurance Schemes generally require these health plans to be completed. With the valid concerns over anti-biotic resistance and future use we also need to complete these reviews annually to continue prescribing for your animals. We

# **MARKET HARBOROUGH BRANCH VPS DAYS**

Thursday 14th September – 10-2pm

New for the 2017 parasite season we are holding monthly open sessions at the Harborough branch with Paul Uglow Farm Animal SQP.

# **STAFF NEWS**

Kirsty Black, our Vet Tech, has sadly left us. We now have Robyn, who many of will know from phoning the practice, who will be going out on farm to replace Kirsty. We are also employing another person to work alongside Robyn. Her name is Mollie Paggett and is having a gap year from vet

school to come and join us, she is due to start at the end of August. Please phone us if you want to use their services.

We have a new vet starting in mid August. Zoe graduated from Bristol University this summer and is joining us straight from vet

will therefore be getting in touch over the next few months to organise these visits but please contact the Melton branch on 01664 567481 should you wish to get vours booked in earlier.



Whether for sheep or cattle, if you require advice on diagnostics, management or suitable treatments to get the best of your parasite control plans please call in!

#### **Discounted Faecal Egg Counting service** available - bring in your samples!!

Selection of VPS products available at competitive rates – see Pre-tupping offers.

> school. She is keen to be involved in all aspects of farm work. She has had plenty of experience on farm including milking goats and water buffalo. We will introduce her formally in the Autumn newsletter.



# **PRE-TUPPING VPS OFFERS**

Product	Details for use	Dose Rate	With- drawal	Pack size	Price Ex VAT
Triclafas 5% drench for sheep	Triclabendazole drench for control of all stages of liver fluke including early-immatures. Equivalent product to Fasinex 5%.	1ml/5kg	56 days	2.5L 5L	£38 £66
Levacide LV drench (Yellow)	Levamisole drench for control of adult and developing roundworms.	1ml/10kg	21 days	1L 2.5L	£24 £40
Parafend 2.265% drench (White)	Oxfendazole drench for control of roundworms and tapeworm	1ml/5kg	10 days	2.5L 5L 10L	£22 £35 £60
Noromectin 0.08% drench (Clear)	Ivermectin drench for control of adult and inhibited larval roundworms	2.5ml/10kg	14 days	1L 2.5L 5L 2x5L	£14 £28 £46 £79
Cosecure boluses for sheep	Glass matrix bolus providing continuous release of copper, cobalt and selenium for up to 8 months in sheep ideally given 3 weeks pre-tupping.	1 bolus/ ewe >30kg	0	50 bolus	£45
Cose-I-cure boluses for sheep	Glass matrix bolus providing continuous release of copper, cobalt, selenium and lodine for up to 8 months in sheep.	1 bolus/ ewe >30kg	0	50 bolus	£52



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# **Summer 2017 Newsletter**

Farm Veterinary Solutions 1-3 Kings Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE13 1QF Tel: 01664 567481 Email: info@farmvetsolutions.com Web: www.farmvetsolutions.com

# Emergency Contact 01664 567481

