



SPRING IS HERE, ALMOST.

- Robert Powell



Everyone is glad the rain has stopped, and the sun has started to show itself. I have seen lots of cows out grazing now and a few clients cutting silage. We have been busier with lambing's, calving's and Tb testing as you would expect for this time of year. We have also got going on the Animal Health and Welfare reviews which has been a great chance to do some on farm investigations, visits so far include trace element monitoring, A.I refresher and fertility investigations, mastitis and calf health.

This time of year commonly coincides with an increase in cows with left displaced abomasum (LDA). The transition period from 2 weeks pre calving to 4 weeks postcalving is the major risk period in the development of an LDA.

Feed intakes are depressed pre calving, and increase slowly after calving causing lower rumen fill, this can be combined with a reduced forage to concentrate ratio as the diet changes and an increased incidence in other diseases around calving such as milk fever and metritis. 80-90% of LDAs are diagnosed within 1 month of calving.

Higher LDA rates can be associated with high levels of subclinical ketosis. Risk factors for ketosis include; increasing age, higher body condition score at calving (BCS 3.25 and over), season of calving, previous lactation length and dry period length. High risk cows will benefit from a Kexxtone bolus 3-4 weeks prior to calving. LDAs are commonly corrected at the practice using the Laparoscope or using a toggle. Most farmers are very familiar with the correction of an LDA and corresponding antibiotics/pain relief, but the aftercare afterwards can be equally as important. A 2011 UK research trial took blood samples from cows diagnosed with an LDA. When a cow was diagnosed with an LDA another cow that was calved a similar length of time was blood sampled and the results compared. Cows with an LDA were lower in Magnesium, Calcium, typically dehydrated and more likely to be ketotic. These cows would benefit from 35-40 litres of oral fluids and electrolytes. An American trial also showed that cows with more severe ketosis had a better recovery rate when Propylene glycol was extended from 3 to 5 days. Targeted cows also had a higher ketosis recovery rate with 3 days Vigophos. Cows with fatty liver will also benefit from a Cholevite bolus.

Consideration for grazing cattle to reduce the risk of Mastitis and High SCC

Turn out can reduce your workload but can still present problems with mastitis and cell counts, in both milking and dry cows. To reduce the risk of dry cows developing mastitis in early lactation, or calving in with high cell counts, we recommend you only keep them in the same lying area for two weeks, then allow paddocks to rest for 4 weeks to control the build-up of bacteria on pasture. If the season allows (!), trying not to graze your milking cows too tightly and not leaving them in the same paddocks for too long will also minimise the chance of udder infections during lactation. The AHDB Mastitis Control Plan recommends not exceeding a stocking density of 100 cows / acre / day in a 2-week period.

Its important to make sure gate ways, high traffic areas , water troughs and areas under trees, where cows love to lye when it's hot, do not become too poached. Using hard core to improve drainage of problem areas and mending that leaky water trough can really help prevent grazing cows picking up infections. Before turnout, consider how you will manage flies, whether you use permethrin impregnated ear tags, topical spot on or pour on, it is important to get these treatments on early in the season.

Controlling flies is important so we reduce the risk of summer mastitis. Flies can act as vectors, spreading mastitis infections between cattle. If you do find you have a dry cow or heifer, with summer mastitis, its important to isolate her from the group for treatment to reduce the risk of spreading infection to more animals. We often see a higher fly burden in paddocks near wooded areas or water sources, extra vigilance when checking animals is important. In summary, even when turned out, dairy cows still need to have their environment clean and well managed to ensure we keep the risk of udder infections as low as possible.

- Bibby Thomas



The Vet Tech Team

Following on from our parasite meeting back in February we are now preparing for the fly season offering various treatments and preventatives for fly control. We had a lot of interest at our initial meeting which is now being followed up. All of which can be discussed on farm by your routine vet or by myself to suit your needs and requirements. Please don't hesitate to contact us for more information. Fly boards are in preparation and the fly buckets (new this year) are at the ready. We have had a particular interest and uptake in the fly parasites this year. All of which can be monitored and replenished as and when needed by our vet tech team fortnightly or monthly.

Disbudding has been busy with calving patterns changing and some clients block calving finishing for the season and others now starting. We have also had a couple of farms now using us weekly for rubber ringing. Plus, our regular quarterly udder singeing which helps keep your cows cleaner leading to more hygienic conditions leaving less scope for all kinds of infections especially mastitis and overall faster milking times.

- Jamie Cowling

Training course dates

NEW COURSES ADDED

Weds 21st June-
Foot Trimming training day Limited spaces

Thursday 6th July-
Intro to Calf Rearing
9am to 5pm

Weds 19th July-
Calving & Cow first Aid
11am-4pm

Thursday 17th August-
Mastering Medicines lunch and learn
11am-2pm

Wednesday 30th August-
Intro to smallholding
9am-5pm

Weds-Fri 20th/21st/22nd September
DIY AI Course
10am - 3 pm Limited to 6 spaces

Weds & Thurs 29th & 30th Nov-
Herds person certificate



How healthy are your herds feet?

We have been talking about cattle mobility a lot recently. The Shepton Top10 meeting showed as a practice we have made big progress in this area but how can you know what to priorities to continue to improve as a herd in this area?

A foot trimming records review and foot trimming skills check is a good place to start when trying to understand a herd's mobility and this is something that I am doing on farm as part of the government funded animal health and welfare pathway- health and welfare review. This is just one of the topics that we have been delivering on farms as part of this scheme.

Beyond this the Healthy Feet programme is a structured approach which will help dairy farmers make important progress towards diagnosing the problems, devising an action plan, and developing the skills necessary for long-term lameness control. I have recently completed the training to become a Mobility mentor. Mobility mentors facilitate the whole process and act as advisers to support working towards improved mobility on farm.

The approach is based around the 'four success factors'. These are: Low infection pressure, Good horn quality and hoof shape, Low forces on the feet – good cow comfort and cow flow and Early detection and prompt, effective treatment of lame cows. Your foot lesion type will determine which areas to focus the farms efforts on.

I delivered this programme on one of my routine dairy farms recently. Using the trimming records and looking at some feet, we established that digital dermatitis was the predominant issue at this time on this farm. We carried out a farm assessment including an assessment of the current footbathing regime and its effectiveness. Using the success factors most relevant to this farm; Low infection pressure and EDPET we devised a plan; a few actions which the farm had agreed would be achievable.

The action plan included: Increasing the frequency of foot bathing, changing the footbath chemical, using the footbath on farm with the best cow flow and prompt and effective treatment of individual cases of DD. Although it is still early days, the farmer reports that they are already observing an improvement in cases.

- Rosie Lyle

Neospora; Abortion in your herd?

- Alex Perkins

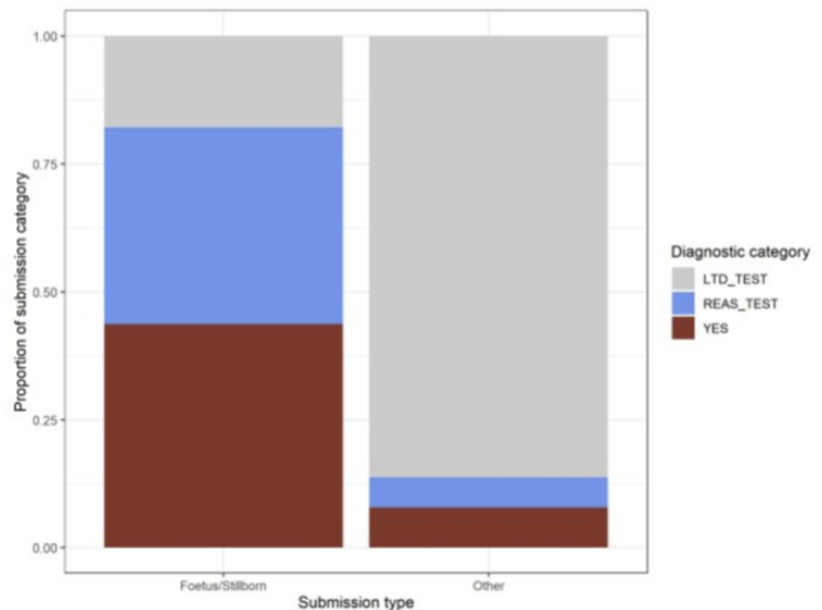
We wrapped up the series of Winter Discussion Groups at Pilton with a meeting on Neospora. It was great to have a mixed beef and dairy meeting at the Pilton club.



if you'd like to know more speak to your routine vet or contact the office if you would like a copy of the slides from the evening.

In the data sets looked at, 2018-2022, Neospora (23%) and Salmonella (25%) were the most commonly diagnosed infectious cause of abortion in dairy herds whilst the most commonly identified infectious causes in suckler herds were Neospora 13% and the opportunistic invaders bacteria Bacillus, Trueperella and fungi (combined 30%), but also a higher proportion of vaccinatable disease (IBR and BVD) caused abortion in suckler herds than dairy. Perhaps indicating the benefits of feeding suckler cows well preserved forage with no moulds and infectious disease screening, vaccinating for those diseases your herd maybe susceptible to.

We had two guest speakers joining Alex. Liz Nabb from APHA Starcross explained to us the importance of abortion diagnoses at the Veterinary Investigation Centre. We were able to see recent data gathered from England and Wales showing the various diagnoses found when we send aborted carcass into the post mortem centres, and, compared this to the diagnoses met when we send only samples, e.g. blood/milk. It was very clear to see that by proportion we can see that submission of whole carcasses, preferably with placenta, leads to around 45% diagnostic rate compared to <10% from postal submissions.



Alex spoke about the disease Neospora, and explained how its complex life cycle with cows as an intermediate host needs the dog to complete its life cycle and it is in the dog that the protozoa then form the infective oocysts which are shed out in the dogs faeces. The dog needs to have eaten infected cattle material, so; aborted calf, birth materials, placenta, or carcass remains to become infected. So whilst public footpaths and dog walkers are an important risk factor to control, our own dogs on farms and hunt hounds are shown to be much more likely positive.

Numerous scientific studies have shown that the European fox in the UK (Vulpes Vulpes) will not shed infective oocysts after eating infected cattle materials. They are genetically distinct from the dog family (Canis lupus) We also learnt that once it is on a farm the Cow to Calf route of transmission is incredibly efficient (upto 90%) meaning whole family lines can become infected.

We learnt that there are no treatments nor vaccinations for Neospora and so we are advised to control the disease and the introduction of disease onto farm with on farm management practices.

Eamon Watson from NML spoke to us about herd surveillance using milk testing both bulk and individual. We can test the herd using blood sampling too, more appropriate for our beef herds.

So how do we best control Neospora...

Dogs - All dogs must be prevented from having access to calving areas, carcase material and placentas. Access to pasture used for grazing and the production of forage should be kept to a minimum.

Placentas - Placentas from still born calves and carcasses of dead and aborted calves should be removed from the calving accommodation and paddocks as soon as possible to a secure location ready for removal by fallen stock contractors for incineration. This location should be inaccessible.

The Public - and their dogs must not have access to paddocks used for calving.

Feed Storage - Facilities including 'straights' and forage must be dog proof to prevent contamination by faeces. They should be vermin proof to prevent contamination by foxes, badgers, rats and mice.

Feed supplies - Suppliers of feed/forage should provide assurances that measures are in place to prevent contamination of feed by faecal material from dogs.

Added animals - If possible only buy animals which have been confirmed negative with two negative blood tests taken between 10 and 4 weeks before two calvings. This could include the pre-purchase blood sample.

Identify positive cows - Whole herd or individual tests. Speak to your vet for the best fit for your farm and timing of testing.

Cull infected cows - Expensive, depends on number, selective breeding do not breed replacements from these animals.

Embryo transfer - Ensure recipis are negative.



Meet Anna Hewison

Where are you from/where do you live now?

I grew up on a beef suckler, arable and Boer goat farm in Reading. I now live near Wells.

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Where/what did you study?

I studied Veterinary Medicine at the University of Nottingham.

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How long have you worked here?

I have worked at Shepton Vets for 8 months.

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What did you do before?

I was a student!

-

Why did you want to do this job?

I love being outside (whatever the weather) and working with both farm animals and farmers.

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What do you like best about it?

Helping to deliver new life into the world will never grow old!

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Favourite animal and why?

Goats because they have such unique personalities.

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Do you have any pets?

I have an 8 month old springer spaniel puppy called Pip.

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Favourite biscuit?

A chocolate digestive.

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Interesting fact about you?

I have just run the London Marathon!



UBOSTAR RED - Back in stock

20 packs and herd packs

CALCIJET 5 - In stock

available in singles or boxes of 12

KETOFIX - In stock

available in 2.5l and 5l sizes

PEN STREP - Availability

We have been made aware of supply issue that will disrupt our stock levels for approx 6-8 weeks. We do have alternatives available please check with your vet on what's the best alternative.

You can order medicines at any time via our Whatsapp service



07592307394

For more information on any of the above, please contact the Farm office

Emergence of flies has been later this year but when the sun finally shines, they'll soon be here causing nuisance and disease. These are our fly buckets and the refillable baits to go inside of them. They can be hung in areas that potentially get wet, and dead flies are contained.

Fly buckets in stock

