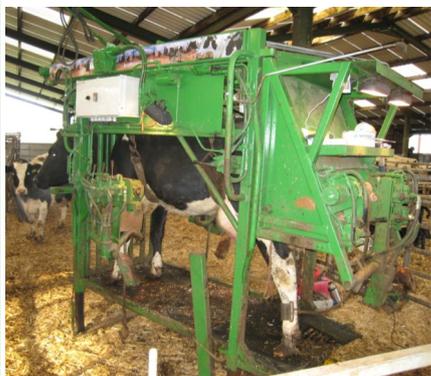


# April Farm News



## Cattle Lameness Seminar *'Do lame cows become thin, or thin cows become lame?'*

Academics in cattle lameness, vets in practice, and RABDF Gold Cup winning farmer Neil Baker presented information at a Cattle Lameness Academy in Somerset where there was discussion on new work on the role body condition score plays in lameness in dairy cattle. The question was posed...*'Do lame cows become thin, or thin cows become lame?'*



The digital cushion, also known as the fat pad, within the cow's foot is a support structure of connective tissue and fat found at the rear of the foot. Work has found that the thickness of the digital cushion is related to body condition score. Claw horn lesions (sole ulcers, WLD or sole bruising) are associated with digital cushion thickness, i.e. thinner cows had a thinner digital cushion and this meant more claw horn lesions, and so more lame cows.

Thin cows mobilise fat from all areas including the digital cushion. Prof Jon Huxley and his team have been looking in to the relationships between body condition score and lameness. They found that when a cow calves in with a BCS lower than 2 she is FAR more likely to become lame. Other work looked at cows mobility score data when they first went lame and found if they looked back 8-16 weeks prior to the lameness event the cows had a body condition score under 2.

Digital cushions do not fully form until the 2<sup>nd</sup> lactation and degrades with age, whilst older cows with a history of lameness develop bony growths on their pedal bone which can then apply pressure to the soft tissues and cause further lameness problems.

Inflammation plays a part as around calving all cows get some level of systemic inflammation. This can affect hormone responses, leading to insulin resistance, causing body condition loss, especially in high production cows. This body condition score loss could then be partly to blame for lameness in early lactation. We need to manage cows as effectively as possible to reduce risk at calving.

Treatment of lame cows with claw horn lesions is most effective when they are trimmed, blocked and treated with a NSAID, such as Metacam or Cronyxin. This combined approach helps to reduce trauma to the tissue as it heals, preventing excessive inflammation and physical pressure and reducing pain allowing the cow to cope better and recover quicker.



**Alex, Lynne and Clare**

### **Dates for your diary:**

DIY AI Course 18th-21st April

DAISY Club meeting 27th April

Health and Safety Training day Sedgemoor Market 28th April

RABDF Gold Cup Open Day Rushywood Farm, Haselbury Plucknett 25th May

Future Events include Grazing Meeting & Farm Walk.

***If you wish to come along please contact Thomas Slee at the practice .***

**Calf Scours** It has been a challenging winter for calves. The practice has dealt with a large number of pneumonia and scour outbreaks throughout the season. Weather alone is not responsible for a disease but the inclement conditions have certainly exposed the weaknesses in some systems.

When older animals are turned out, the opportunity arises to move younger animals to buildings where there may be less build-up of scour bugs. Thorough cleaning and disinfection can then take place of calf housing, with a good period of rest before using again.

Of course scour remains a risk all year round. Cryptosporidium remains the most frequently diagnosed cause of calf scour, and our practice is no exception. It can be controlled using the oral drench Halocur. This product is now available in a larger 980ml bottle for £125 ex. VAT.



**Oliver Tilling**

**Moo call** We can now supply MooCall calving sensors. This product was developed in Ireland and has recently been launched in England. The device is simply strapped on to a cow or heifer's tail when she is a few days from calving, then once calving begins, a text is sent to up to two phones on average one hour before the calf will be delivered. Give me a call or talk to your routine vet if you think this device may be of use to you—it could save you time, or a calf.



**Charlie Neale**

**TB Meeting** We had a meeting about TB control in West Pennard last month. It was very well attended and Paul Rogers, an XLVet practice partner from west Wales, talked about three key areas of control: TB testing of cattle, biosecurity with regards to wildlife; and finally Control of badgers. He identified that all three were essential for TB control. A farmer within the Dorset badger cull area shared his experience on the application process and managing a cull zone. His experience was very positive and has resulted in a lot of interest in this aspect. To discuss further please call your NFU rep or Spike to let us know your views.

**Paddy Gordon**



#### **Client feedback– Kexxtone Bolus**

Last year a client had a single cow who calved in far too fat and subsequently developed an LDA as she got further into her lactation. This was corrected with the (keyhole) laparoscopic approach and surgery was routine however she really struggled throughout the lactation and looked quite poorly for some time. After nursing on farm and clinical management from her regular vet she did thankfully get in calf again. As she approached dry off, her poor performance last year was decided as a suitable risk factor to justify Kexxtone bolusing.

The Kexxtone bolus is a slow release intraruminal bolus. The active ingredient shifts the microbial balance in the rumen to produce more of the glucose precursor propionic acid, increasing glucose delivery and ultimately increasing the energy available to the cow. This improvement in energy utilisation buffers dairy cows against the tendency to drop into negative energy balance during early lactation – the major cause of ketosis, which as we know can then trigger other problems such as displaced abomasums.

This lactation, not only has she had an uneventful transition period remaining in peak health, but also her milk production is above expectation, covering the cost of treatment. If you would like to discuss any aspects of using Kexxtone boluses on your farm please speak to your routine vet.

**Anna Patch**