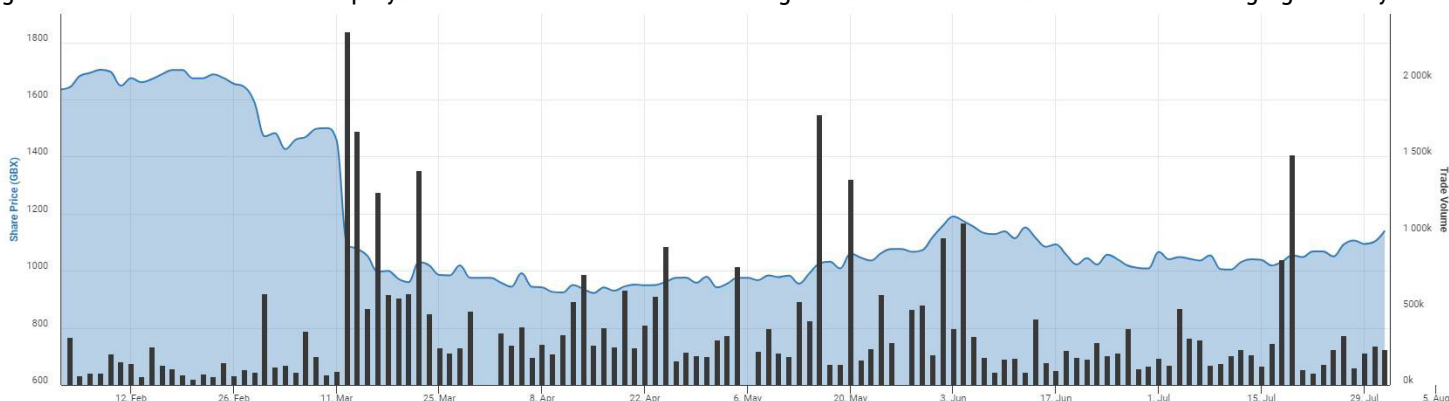


A word from our Directors - Charlie Neale

Earlier this summer I attended the XLVets AGM in Gloucestershire, a little further North than my usual comfort zone. As a preface to the following segment, I will just briefly summarise what XLVets is: It is a group of independently owned practices, run by like-minded individuals that work together to give us “strength in numbers” whilst at an individual practice level being fully owned and ran how we deem fit.

Amongst the usual topics discussed at an AGM there was a substantial segment about the Competition and Markets Authority review of veterinary practices and their fees, which has been well followed by the media. Our CEO Andrew Curwen has been following this very closely and so far, what we have learned is that the focus is heavily aimed at corporately owned practices looking to monopolise regions and therefore control prices offered to anyone in that area. The result of this investigation being launched has been the value of some of these companies' shares plummeting, as can be seen in the graph below, and as a further knock-on some of these companies have been laying off substantial numbers of employees!



It is safe to say that at Shepton we don't hold the same business values as these companies and as a result continue to grow our business to better serve our clients.

<https://sheptonvets.com/our-values/>

We look to provide a transparent service and value the feedback that we get from yourselves on how we can improve. Consequently, we anticipate being largely unaffected by the CMA review, but hope that as an independent practice we can have our voices heard, to show that our industry can operate well without corporatisation. One of the ways this message gets heard is by yourselves spreading the word, and when we hear that this positivity has been spread (whether by a new client joining on this basis, or our practice or team members being nominated for awards) it brings everyone a huge boost in what continues to be a challenging industry.

Haemonchus alert



Recently we have seen a massive increase in confirmed Haemonchus cases in our area in both sheep and goats.

Haemonchus contortus is a blood-sucking worm seen during the warmer months.

Sheep and goats of ALL ages are effected.

Signs include sudden death, poor growth and condition, pale gums and eyes, and bottle jaw.

Unlike other gut worms, infected animals often have NORMAL pelleted dung.

Call us on 01749 341761 if you're concerned about Haemonchus in your flock, or bring us in some dung samples for testing today – free worm egg count kits are available from the practice!

Would like to learn how to safely & successfully AI cows?

Join us for our

APHA Approved DIY AI Course

Wednesday 23rd to

Friday 25th of October 10am-3pm

We use a combination of classroom theory and on-farm practical sessions during this 3-day course. Charlie delivers our classroom-based sessions on day 1, with the help of our training cow. Rosie then take delegates through the on farm practical sessions of days 2 and 3 with real cows in a real-life environment to build confidence of the classroom learnings and apply those skills practically with real cows

Completion of this course leads to a licensed AI certificate.

Lungworm. What is it ? How do we treat it? How can we prevent it? - Rob Powell

What is lungworm?

Lungworm (Husk) is a parasite of the respiratory tract caused by *Dictyocaulus viviparus*. Lungworm is widespread in the UK but more common in wetter parts of the country such as the Southwest. Lungworm is picked up from cows eating Lungworm larvae from pasture.

What signs do I see?

Lungworm was traditionally seen more from August onwards but with the wetter summers of recent years we have been increasingly getting reports in July. Clinical signs for younger animals are widespread coughing, difficulty in breathing (dyspnoea) and death of severely affected animals. Adult dairy cows may cough in the milking parlour with reduced yields and occasional cases of secondary pneumonia. The severity of outbreaks in adult dairy cows will be related to the challenge and previous exposure/immunity of these cattle. First season grazing animals on permanent or semi-permanent pasture are the highest risk animals on most farms as the lungworm challenge overpowers their limited immunity. Disease mostly affects calves from dairy cows or autumn born suckler calves. Spring born suckled calves that graze with their mothers may experience some mild coughing but do not suffer as severely as they gradually develop immunity as the amount of grass in their diet increases.

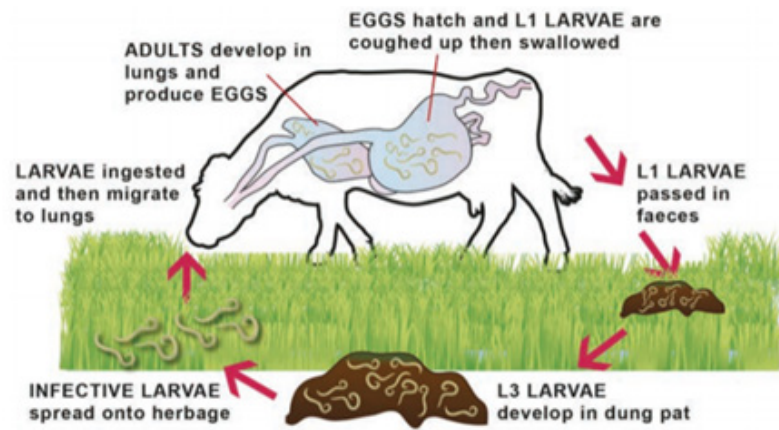
Lungworm life cycle. Source COWS (Control of Worms Sustainably 2014)

Lungworm larvae are susceptible to drying. In areas/seasons with higher average rainfall larvae may survive longer. Wet weather also promotes the release of Lungworm larvae from the dung pat. Wet summers and high stocking rates are therefore risk factors.

Treatment

Affected youngstock should be treated as early as possible because severely affected animals do not respond as well. Cattle can also look worse after treatment as dead or dying larvae block the airways of the lungs, increasing coughing and respiratory rate. Calves with a secondary bacterial pneumonia will need antibiotics and Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory treatment (NSAIDs). Treated cattle should be removed from infected pasture and transferred to clean pasture. If clean pasture is not available, you should speak to your vet regarding using a wormer which provides protection for an extended period.

Treatment of adult cows should be discussed with your vet on a case-by-case basis depending on the severity of the outbreak. Worming milking cows may stop them coughing but may stop them developing immunity and these cattle may require further treatment. In some herds it can be advisable to selectively treat individual animals or groups such as 1st lactation heifers.



Prevention

In herds with no history of Lungworm it is important that Lungworm is not bought into the herd with purchased cattle. Purchased cattle should be isolated and wormed as per your herd health plan (HHP).

In herds with endemic Lungworm, it is worth discussing management at your HHP. The best way of preventing lungworm in first year calves is vaccination with the lungworm vaccine. Healthy animals should be vaccinated over 8 weeks. Two doses are given at an interval of 4 weeks and calves grazed two weeks after.

Long-acting wormers or regular worming can be effective in preventing Lungworm in first grazing animals. This is however not typically recommended as we can then get outbreaks of Lungworm at the end of the first grazing season, in second season grazing animals or adult cows that have built up no immunity.

Summary

Lungworm can be a severe problem on high-risk farms if not managed properly, this can result in a reduction in growth rates, milk drop or even deaths. A control plan should be tailored to your farm at the HHP with measures to ensure the sustainable use of wormers and that meat and milk withdrawal periods are followed correctly.

ALL CLIENTS PLEASE NOTE

From January 2025, all farm invoices will be sent via email. Please ensure that we have the correct email address on your account by emailing: farm.animal@sheptonvets.com. Those already receiving invoices by email do not need to do this.

If you cannot receive emails and need to continue to receive invoices in the post, then please give the office a call and let us know.

Thank you for your support

We have seen some farms in particular experience real outbreaks of bad eyes in cattle, some youngstock, but also cows the last few years.

It can be incredibly labour intensive to treat and is known to reduce production, being such a painful condition, animals are less likely to eat optimally.

So, what do we know, and what can we do better?

The most common disease of eyes in cattle, known as Pink Eye, New Forest Eye, or IBK (Infectious Bovine Keratoconjunctivitis) often presents as running eyes, clouding of the surface of the eyes, ulceration of the surface of the eye, photophobia, which may look like animals hiding in the shed, under trees and or keeping their eyelids shut. The eyelids being kept shut are also a sign of eye pain and so is an important early indicator. Severe and established cases do not respond quickly to treatment and may progress to the eyes perforating and causing permanent pain and blindness, in which case, the best solution is to operate to remove the abnormal eye and allow complete healing.

Typically, we think of IBK being caused by either *Moraxella bovis*, however we now know that other pathogens may be implicated, *Moraxella boviculi*, *Mycoplasma bovis*, IBR virus and, in fact, Silage Eye, the next most common disease of the cow eye, is caused by *Listeria* bacteria. Which bacteria causes the infection matters for treatment and management decisions to help control the disease in your herd.

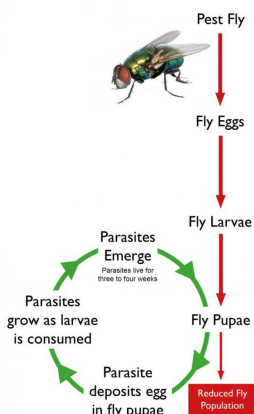
For routine treatment prompt and early treatment with one of the eye tubes is effective. We stock Orbenin Eye Ointment, a licensed product with zero withdrawal for milk and meat (at the end of treatment). Remember any off license treatment or tube will require standard withdrawals of 7d Milk and 28d Meat. One treatment is often effective, though it can be repeated (on license) at 48hrs (cattle) and 72hrs (sheep). Half a tube is used per eye (cattle) and, if the animal has only one infected eye, it may be advisable to treat both eyes to prevent cross infection. In such cases, it is better to treat the uninfected eye first to prevent transferring infection via the tube nozzle.

What else can we do to prevent the spread of IBK?

- Remove the affected animals from the group and treat separately, e.g., remove from affected group outside and treat indoors.
- Ensure adequate feed and water space provision to prevent transmission at feed/water face. Recommended MINIMUM feed space requirements 75cm/cow, recommended Water trough space 10cm/cow, this ensures cattle aren't bunching too close and passing bacteria between them at the feed face.
- Prevent crowding and bunching, this maybe in housing and will require thoughts to ventilation and cow comfort. Or, at grass, cows will crowd under trees for shade. Does the field have sufficient shade cover for the cows to spread out? If not, maybe the cattle would be better housed? If not, practical this is definitely an indication to bring affected individuals' home for treatment to prevent spread.
- Effective fly prevention and control is imperative. Effective fly control relies upon starting early, prevention is key. Spot/Pour on products, fly tags, natural repellents such as garlic or beeswax preparations can all be effective but starting them prior to the fly population peaking is important. The flies you see represent only 15% of the local population.

If it is a problem you've seen for housed cattle or cattle bunching in the milking parlour daily take a look at our fly parasite and fly board service, the Vet Techs deliver, targeting fly areas and fly breeding grounds keeping the numbers down before they prove a problem.

<https://sheptonvets.com/post/2024/06/03/w-e-can-help-reduce-fly-numbers-and-the-irritation-they-cause/77>



What can we do to improve success?

- It can really aid treatment and management decisions to know which pathogens are at play in your outbreak on your farm. So, we are increasingly recommending swabbing several cases before treatment. We can send this to our local lab where we can then identify which bacteria are at play. Costs start at Approx £40, in some cases where we believe there may be *Mycoplasma* on farm, we may request an additional culture which does add a further cost.
- We can inject local antibiotic and, where appropriate, anti-inflammatory into the eyelids to create a localised secretion of topical treatment to the eye which will last longer than eye ointment.
- We are starting to try out a vaccine used in the States to prevent IBK. This has been licensed for use in the USA for some time and many producers have great success with repeat use. The scientific papers are equivocal for stopping disease, however, anecdotally there does seem strong evidence to reduce severity and improve outcomes.

For some of our producers this has been enough to get them started and at a cost of apx £1.80/dose it presents a considerable saving compared to days fetching cattle from grounds to sort through and treat, often repeatedly, let alone the drop in growth or production. The vaccine can be used at the start of the at-risk period, it lasts about 5 months after a single dose and can be given to all animals over 5 months old. It is a special import product (SIC) as such not a stock item, so if you think you would be interested consult your more regular vet and we can discuss it with you.

Medicine delivery notice

With our ever-increasing demand for deliveries and the addition of the Wells surgery collection point, please note that all delivery requests need to be with us by 5pm the day before your scheduled delivery.

Wells order requests need to be requested either the day before or by 9am the day you require the collection
WhatsApp medicines ordering number: 07592 307394

Come and find us
on the 18th August at
the Mid Somerset Show

We are next to the main ring. We are looking forward to seeing you there



July's Calving and Down Cow First Aid Course

July saw a great group of 5 delegates all working, running and relieving at farms in our area come for our Calving and First Aid Course.

Eager to gain experience calving cows, how to spot what isn't normal, how to work safely and effectively alone. The course runs through the theory of a calving cow followed by practice of several common mispresentations found in difficult calving scenarios with our calving simulator.

The afternoon session focuses on the theory of caring for a down cow including a practical session looking at IV injections and the safe delivery of oral fluids.

The whole group left the course able to correctly place a head rope, in the normal presentation but also the tricky head back. And with confidence in their new skills, and the ability to identify when there is a need to pause and call for a further assistance.



Bring your Tups to Shepton Vets so that we can check they are fit for purpose for the upcoming breeding season!

TUP testing day

Friday 23rd August 11am-4pm

We will give your tups an overall health assessment and test their semen to evaluate its quality. The information gathered from these assessments will enable us to tell you if your tups are fertile and ready to perform their jobs effectively!

Avoid a poor scanning percentage, prolonged lambing windows and the subsequent negative effects this has on your farm's profitability.

Testing costs £70 for the first Tup and £30 for each additional animal with no visit fee.

Booking is essential, please remember to book your place with the office.

VET TECH ROUND UP

The number of new calves appearing on farms had quietened down temporarily but now calf numbers are increasing again as early autumn calving gets going!

Part of my role this time of year involves trying to help reduce fly populations on farms. While out on my vaccine round, I am distributing our fly boards, parasites and fly buckets, all of which have been extremely popular this year.

The most popular fly control product we offer is the fly parasites. We scatter the parasites in areas that are deep bedded or have a regular buildup of standing manure. The parasites hatch, and begin targeting fly pupae, which they then eat and lay their own eggs inside the pupae. These eggs then hatch new parasites, and the cycle is repeated again and again. The result is less flies being hatched on farms.

If you are interested in any of our fly products or tech services, please contact the farm office and we will do our best to help you!

- Jade Sealey



For clients needing a vet any time of day or night, call:
Farm 01749 341 761
365 days a year, 24/7 emergency service provided by our own team of vets.

Office Opening Hours Monday-Friday: 8am - 5:30pm
Saturday : 8:30am - 12:30pm
farm.animal@sheptonvets.com
Call: 01749 341 761