CALWETON FARM

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER

Summer 2021

Dates for the Diary

Please contact the farm office if you would like any further information on any of these courses:

Hoof Trimming
8th July (East/Mid-Cornwall) and 9th July (Penzance)
with Spike and Neil Barrett

Ram MOT - Selection, Evaluation and Preparation
13th July at Dupath Farm, Callington
with Miranda

DIY AI Course (Full and Refresher Course)
28th-30th July (North Cornwall/North Devon)
with Spike

DIY AI Course (Full and Refresher Course)
28th-30th September (East/Mid Cornwall)
with Spike

Stamp It Out Summary

June saw the government-funded BVD "Stamp It Out" project come to a close. Launched in 2018, we enrolled 100 clients to the scheme and held our first of five farmer meetings that year.

Through a combination of youngstock blood screens and BVD test tags we identified ten herds with evidence of active BVD infection. The number of PIs (Persistently Infected animals) identified in these herds ranged from 1 to 23. Removal of these PIs has already resulted in tangible improvement in herd performance.

In herds found to be currently free of BVD, there has been an increased appreciation of how important it is to protect this status. The most significant action in this regard is often to check the status of any incoming stock.

If all herds screened for BVD, as is required in many countries, these pre-purchase checks would not be required. Stamp It Out may have come to a close, but BVD will not go away until we all take an active stance!

Welcome Charlotte!

Charlotte has recently joined Chrissy, Sheila, Hattie and Steph on the Farm Admin Team.

From a local farm herself she is looking forward to getting stuck in and meeting the clients!

In this edition

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vetPartners

Clinical Mastitis

5 Tips for Reducing Antimicrobial Use

Most dairy farms are already seeing the benefits of selective dry cow therapy. Here we focus on clinical mastitis - often the main contributor to dairy antimicrobial use.

1. Sampling; know your enemy!

It is good practice to sample every case of clinical mastitis. Take and freeze a sample before treatment (labelling it with cow number, quarter and date). If treatment fails or the mastitis recurs, we have a pre-treatment sample to refer to. Samples can be cultured and/or tested with PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction), increasing the chances of a meaningful result. Once we know what organisms are responsible for the mastitis, we can advise on appropriate husbandry changes and treatment. It may also guide decisions on drying off and culling.

2. Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)

NSAIDs (e.g. meloxicam, keloprofen) improve treatment success and reduce recurrence of clinical mastitis, even in mild cases. If not already doing so, discuss with your vet the merits of using NSAIDs in mastitis treatment.

3. Chronic mastitis and treatment failures

Discuss problem mastitis and high cell count cows with your vet. A few problem cows can account for a lot of antimicrobial usage. Has she had multiple cases this lactation? Has she not cured after treatment? These are the animals we may send off a milk sample for or they may be candidates for early drying-off or culling.

4. Injectable antibiotics in mastitis

There is little evidence to support the use of injectable antibiotics for mastitis. The only animals likely to benefit are those which are systemically ill (e.g. severe E.coli mastitis) and even then evidence for the use is limited. Treatments such as fluids (oral/intravenous) and anti-inflammatory drugs are of more benefit. If still routinely using injectable antibiotics for mastitis treatment, revise your protocols with your vet.

5. Vaccines

A multi-valent vaccine protects against E.coli, Staph. aureus and coagulase negative Staphs (CNS). For herds with significant levels of these types of mastitis, it can demonstrate a significant cost benefit by reducing the mastitis severity and decreasing milk losses.

There is a new vaccine that is proven to significantly reduce the incidence Strep. uberis mastitis. This is one of the most common forms of mastitis and can be responsible for recurrent or hard to cure cases.

Use of these vaccines should only be considered after assessment of farm suitability by a vet. Often milking routine and/or husbandry changes are required to get the full benefit from them.

Where do I start?

A good starting point is to complete an AHDB mastitis control plan for your farm. This is a wide-ranging farm audit concentrating on udder health that helps focus on potential problem areas.

Annual reviews of your health plan with your vet, as well as medicines courses such as Milksure, are important to ensure your team remain up to date with best-practice.

In summary, nobody wants to compromise animal welfare by denying cattle the treatment that they need. The latest initiatives are about thinking twice about the antibiotics we prescribe and deciding are they **necessary**, **appropriate** and **being used correctly?**

Antimicrobial resistance and residues in milk are a real concern for the reputation of the dairy industry. Acting now meets these concerns head on and also reduces the pressures on finances and time caused by high levels of clinical mastitis in a herd.

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CALWETON VETERINARY GROUP

Faecal Egg Counts

Now is the ideal time to get on top of worm control for your herd/flock. Not only are FECs a great way to monitor the parasite burden on your farm, they are also a great way to determine the efficacy of your wormer.

Sample technique is crucial to achieving accurate results. A fresh sample from a representative number of animals from each group (ideally a minimum of 10 animals) is needed. These samples can be pooled together in a sealed container and left into the office. We aim to get all results reported within 24 hours.

Timing of the sampling is also important. The ideal time to test is determined by the product you have used previously. This is outlined in the table below:

Wormer Used	Days Post Treatment
Yellow drench	7
White drench	10 - 14
Clear drench	14 - 16

Based on sample results and previous farm history we can offer farm specific advice and product selection (where required) to each individual farm/group of animals.

Is a Trace Element Deficiency affecting your herd?

While a trace element deficiency can have an acute clinical presentation, it can also be subclinical, showing as a general ill thrift and poor performance as well as poor fertility, increased neonatal losses and increased susceptibility to disease and sometimes death. A herd can have multiple or single deficiencies.

Copper

Primary copper deficiency is possible but it is more often seen when levels of sulphur, iron and molybdenum are high in the soil, acting as an antagonist to the copper. Soil and grass sampling can be a useful tool to assess the levels of each element. The most classic sign is the reddening of dark coats and discolouration around the eyes like spectacles. Deficiency has also been linked to poor fertility and reduced sign of oestrus.

Selenium and Vitamin E

Selenium and vitamin E are important antioxidants, used to prevent and repair cell damage. Most farmers will have heard of selenium and vitamin E deficiency in the form

of white muscle disease. This can be seen as stillbirth or weak calves that do not suckle, or in 1 month+ calves after increased exercise (delayed onset). Calves affected by delayed onset deficiency are usually bright and happy but can show signs of muscle pain and stiffness. Sudden death can occur due to the effect on cardiac muscles.

Iodine

Iodine is essential for stimulating metabolic rate. Deficiency can be either primary from low soil levels, or secondary selenium deficiency or from ingestion of brassicas and legumes which have a high level of thiocyanate and thiouracil. Iodine deficient animals can have a goitre and have signs of oedema (fluid collection) under the skin. General ill thrift, poor fertility and poor growth rates can also be seen.

Cobalt

Cobalt is required by ruminants for the synthesis of vitamin B12 in the rumen. Deficiency is usually through low soil level and can be further complicated by diarrhoea which interferes with absorption of vitamin B12. Signs can be non-specific and can include general ill thrift and poor appetite. This is seen much more commonly in sheep.

Investigating and treating a trace element deficiency

- Targeted blood samples at key times of the year
- Liver biopsy samples can also be taken
- Forage analysis is useful in conjunction with other diagnostic samples
- Any farm which is having issues with calf mortality, poor growth rates and ill thrift should consider investigating a trace element deficiency.

In general, we use slow release trace element boluses both to treat and manage deficiencies. There are many on the market and it is important to choose the right bolus for your herd. Please contact us on 01579 386132 for advice.

Fly Strike

With the weather starting to improve, there's no doubt that summer is on its way. Sadly this means that the flies will be out on force and we'll be seeing more cases of blowfly strike in sheep.

Traditionally, blowfly strike has been a problem between May and September, however, with the changing climate, lowland flocks can be at risk from as early as March up until December.

Blowfly strike starts with flies being attracted to the smell of a humid fleece caused by recent wet weather, infected wounds or excess faeces or urine contamination. Once on the sheep, the flies lay their eggs (250 per female fly!) on the damaged or soiled areas of fleece and the eggs hatch within 10-12 hours. Over the next 3 days the maggots enter the skin using enzymes to digest the flesh. This causes the fleece to become more humid and attracts more flies to lay their eggs.

What to look out for

- Signs of irritation, like tail and skin twitching, leading to inappetence, dullness and depression
- Foul smelling areas of moist, discoloured dark wool, especially around the back end, chest and shoulders
- Kicking of the hind limbs and tail shaking
- Maggots visible on the skin and in the fleece
- Skin sores

How to treat blowfly strike

- Remove dirty, contaminated fleece as soon as possible around the whole area of the strike – it may be larger than it looked to begin with!
- Wash the skin of as many maggots as possible and clean open wounds with clean tap/hose water or skin disinfectant such as dilute Hibiscrub or iodine
- Apply topical wound spray to affected areas of skin
- Use a fly strike treatment preparation (e.g. deltamethrin or cypermethrin as an active ingredient) as instructed on the label around the area of flystrike e.g. Crovect, Dectospot, Spotinor or Deltanil. CLiK products **do not** treat established strike
- If the skin had been broken or the animal is very uncomfortable give an anti-inflammatory
- If the animal is very weak be sure to provide supportive care such as electrolytes to drink
- Keep a close eye on flystrike cases for the next few days and if you are worried **contact your vet**.

Blowfly image courtesy of Dr Philip Scott and NADIS

How to prevent fly strike cases

- Examining flock regularly for signs of strike or increased fly presence – twice a day is recommended
- Crutching from early April
- Shearing
- Tail docking of lambs (may not be required if finishing lambs early)
- Controlling intestinal parasites and minimising diet changes to reduce digestive upsets
- Reducing fly numbers through:
  - rapid carcass disposal
  - rapid treatment of animals with Footrot/CODD
  - use of fly traps e.g. red top fly traps
- Chemical fly prevention treatment using one of the following before anticipated challenge:
  - IGR product e.g. CLiK, CLiK Extra or ClikZin that give 16, 19 or 8 weeks protection, respectively, by preventing larva from hatching
  - Cypermethrin pour on product containing product e.g. Crovect. Lasts 6-8 weeks
  - Plunge dip with a Diazanon dip. Gives 6 weeks protection – not young lambs
  - NB: withdrawal periods should be noted and none of these products are licensed for milking animals.

If you are concerned that flies may be posing a significant threat to animal welfare and economic losses on your farm, please contact us on 01579 386132.