

Newsletter February 2019

VACCINATION NOW AGAINST LUNGWORM

Feedback from cattle farmers during the 2016 grazing season suggests lungworm (husk) disease outbreaks are becoming more prevalent and unpredictable. An independent survey last year found that 40% of 202 dairy farmers interviewed had heard cattle coughing at grass.

More concerning was the age group spread for the lungworm incidence. As might be expected, half the disease outbreaks were reported in dairy youngstock during their first grazing season, but 40% occurred in second season grazers, and even 38% in adult cattle.

This suggests animals are not developing lifetime immunity to this debilitating disease anymore. Nearly two thirds of the lungworm cases (60%) were reported in the autumn and just over half (54%) in the summer (some farms reported cases in the summer and the autumn).

Planning husk control strategies for youngstock prior to their first grazing season makes sound financial sense. Relying on wormers alone doesn't really allow the animal to develop its own natural immunity.

Lungworm infestation occurs as a result of infection with the worm *Dictyocaulus viviparus*. Cattle develop it after eating grass contaminated with infective larvae. Once in the gut, the larvae migrate through its wall to the lungs, where they begin laying eggs after several weeks. A spell of mild, wet weather can create a sudden, dramatic increase in lungworm populations which can be very harmful, even fatal, to any stock that have little or no immunity. Bovilis® Huskvac is a live vaccine, made from irradiated larvae, which are incapable of causing disease.

For dairy calves, vaccination should be completed at least two weeks before the calves are turned out to grass. For suckled calves it should finish two weeks before the calves begin to eat significant amounts of grass. Wormers should not be given until two weeks after the final dose of vaccine.

The vaccine produces a very good immune response against disease but it does not prevent all worms from natural infections completing their life cycle. This allows for the continued development of natural immunity, which often fails to occur where there is an over-reliance on wormers. Vaccination with a pre-turnout course of Bovilis® Huskvac is the most reliable and cost effective way of ensuring the development of immunity to lungworm.



Please contact the practice to plan your lungworm control strategies for this season.



Cows at risk for Johne's Disease

As all dairy farmers are aware, most milk buyers have now set targets for the reduction of Johne's disease in herds, and it is now a mandatory requirement to carry out testing. The milk testing has a sensitivity of approximately 55%, meaning that 45% of the time a positive cow can appear negative and therefore fly under the radar. This low sensitivity can provide problems, and cows that have Johne's disease can continue in the herd (and possibly have calves) without appearing positive on the test.



If you milk record with NMR or CIS, and have given FarmVets SouthWest access to your data (you will need to sign a consent form), we can analyse all your results through a programme called Interherd+. Through this programme we can provide you with a list of all heifers that are yet to calve and join the milking herd that have come from a Johne's positive cow and are therefore at a much higher risk of carrying Johne's disease.

We can also provide a list of any milking cows that have come from mothers that have tested positive, whether they are still in the milking herd or not. This can allow for pinpointed management decisions such as breeding those higher risk cows to beef, or possibly culling decisions.

If you would like to access this service simply call the office and we can arrange for the analysis and give any advice you may require.

Funding for BVD Control! Seize the opportunity for BVD Control today

As mentioned in previous newsletters, and subsequent to further interest from farmers who were unable to attend previous meetings as regards the BVD Control funding available from SAC, we will be holding another BVD Cluster Meeting for farmers who wish to enrol on the scheme.

This meeting will take place in Sedgemoor Auction Centre on 6th March at 2pm. Funding available includes funding for lab testing and vet visits. The whole scheme will be outlined in the meeting.



Calf Health Meeting: Calf Scours & Neonatal Calf Care

This on-farm meeting will focus on new born calf health, especially calf scours. Although aimed at suckler cow systems, it will be of value to any farm rearing calves in the very first few weeks of life.

Free to Beef Club members (annual fee applicable), £40 to all other attendees. Wednesday 27th February 2pm sharp, kindly hosted by Mr and Mrs Heal, Knighton Farm, Stogursey, Bridgwater TA5 1QD. Places are limited so please phone the office to book.



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