FarmVets SOUTHWEST

FarmNews

Modern approach, traditional values

Newsletter May 2019

Why IBR is an Important Disease to Control in your Herd

IBR is a hidden disease in many beef and dairy herds, but one that can prove costly. Because many symptoms of IBR infection are not specific to IBR, herds can be unknowingly infected, and suffering both production losses and risk of clinical disease in naïve animals.

What is IBR?

IBR is the common name given to disease caused by a highly contagious virus called Bovine Herpes Virus 1 (BoHV-1). BoHV-1 affects cattle of all ages and can cause a variety of clinical signs.

BoHV-1 is endemic in the UK with infection present in 96% of dairy herds and 73% of beef suckler herds. Following infection in a naïve animal (one not previously exposed to the virus) the virus becomes dormant, so even though the animal can recover from the infection, it becomes a lifelong carrier of the virus. Subsequent stress can result in the virus re-activating, and the animal starting to shed virus, which can go on to infect other animals in the herd. This is how, even in closed herds, the virus can remain within the herd and continue to cause problems.

Symptoms

BoHV-1 most commonly causes upper respiratory tract disease, with animals developing a fever and eye and nasal discharges. In adult breeding stock it can also cause abortions Animals which are latently infected, i.e. those which are carrying the virus, have been shown to yield less milk, and may relapse during times of stress and start shedding the virus, risking disease in other animals within the herd. Stressful events can include changes to housing, diet, pregnancy or illness.

Identifying IBR in a herd

In a dairy herd, testing a bulk milk sample for IBR antibodies is a useful way of determining a herd's IBR status. Blood testing for antibodies is used in beef herds to confirm IBR status, and blood testing in dairy herds will confirm the infection status of individual animals.

How is it spread?

Latently infected animals can start shedding the virus during periods of stress. Infection can be spread either directly through nose to nose contact, through the air over short distances, through contact with contaminated equipment or clothes or through infected semen. In dairy herds, heifers are often exposed to the virus for the first time when they calve down and enter the milking herd, so this represents a key risk period *(**article continues overleaf**.....)*

Huskvac: Important

Do NOT use long acting wormers or sustained release boluses at Huskvac vaccination until at least two weeks after the second dose of Huskvac.

Why do you need to control IBR? (continued from page 1)

With our current volatile market conditions, it's important farmers are maximizing production. Controlling diseases like IBR helps avoid unpredictable disease outbreaks and helps maximise production. Although latently infected animals may not always show symptoms, the underlying cost of IBR can be significant. One study found that uninfected cows yielded an extra 250.9 litres/lactation compared to infected cows. Another study showed an even greater impact, with uninfected cows producing an extra 2.6kg/day, equating to 793 litres/305 days lactation. This represents a margin over purchased feed gain of up to £174/cow for uninfected versus infected animals. The impact of clinical disease in naïve animals is more obvious, with costs arising from treatment, dramatic loss of production whilst the animal is sick, and possible deaths. The Responsible Use of Medicines Alliance (RUMA) Targets Taskforce have also set targets for livestock farmers to reduce antibiotic use. Using vaccines to control disease in both adult and youngstock plays a key role in both keeping animals healthy and reducing antibiotic use.

Control

Deciding which vaccine programme to introduce will depend on which pathogens you need to protect your calves against, length of protection required and how quickly you need the protection to take effect. There are a number of vaccines available which can be used to control infection. These can be conventional or marker vaccines, and live or inactivated. Choice depends on the particular farm situation, age of animals and disease threat.

Funding for BVD Control

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 farmer who wish to enroll on the scheme.

This meeting will take place in Sedgemoor Auction Centre on ***22nd of May at 2pm***. **Funding available includes funding for lab testing and vet visits.** *The whole scheme will be outlined in the meeting.* We would therefore ask those that have an interest, or would like to find out more, to contact the practice.

May Bank Holiday Opening Hours

Our offices will be shut on Monday, **May 6th** and Monday, **May 27th**.

Drugs can be collected from our Sedgemoor Office by appointment only
(there will be a charge if the vet has to come to the office)

Find us on: facebook

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