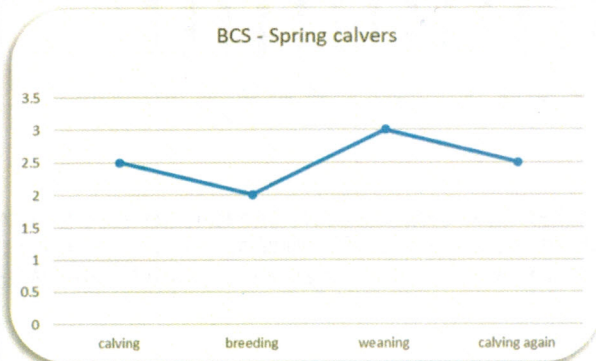


Newsletter October 2020

Body Condition Score (BCS) management in Suckler cows

Eoghan McAlonan

Now is an ideal time to **pro-actively manage Body Condition Score (BCS)** in our spring calving suckler cows. Target BCS at weaning is 3, which allows a reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ a BCS point over winter meaning we get our cows to calve at BCS 2.5. This is the ideal score for sucklers to calve, ensure low levels of dystokia (hard calvings), good quality colostrum and early resumption of cyclicity for next breeding. It has been shown that suckler cows in poor BCS (less than 2.5) take longer to return to cyclicity. Often our "heifers" (1st lactation cows) have had a tough 6 months and are below ideal BCS. These heifers should be weaned 1 month early which should ensure a gain of $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point before housing. The aim of every farm's heifer management should be to calve down a second calver at the start of the breeding season. For this to happen she must be managed effectively in the preceding years and the outcome should be a cow calving in the ideal calving window, year on year. Conversely some older cows may be higher than ideal BCS. If they are higher than BCS 3, they should not be weaned until at least a month after the main herd. Even if they are only producing small amounts of milk, the energy required to do this will help stop her gaining excessive weight which then leads to a big dystokia risk next spring.



Pasteurella in Lambs

Cormac White

As we firmly move into Autumn months we are coming to the time of the year when we typically see sudden deaths in lambs from Pasteurellosis. The bacteria that causes Pasteurellosis lives in the tonsils of lambs. Disease and subsequent death caused by this bacteria is precipitated by stressors allowing the bacteria to multiply in the respiratory tract. This is an entirely PREVENTABLE disease through the administration of the *Heptavac P* Vaccine in the appropriate manner to all lambs. Once lambs are over 3 weeks old the protection they receive from vaccinated ewes colostrum wanes and they should be administered two doses of *Heptavac P* 4 weeks apart; and where incidence of Pasteurella is high a booster should be repeated 2-3 weeks prior to seasonal outbreaks. Despite the availability of affordable vaccines Pasteurella along with clostridial diseases are still predominant causes of death in lambs at this time of year.

42Kg Lamb @ 208.8p/Kg LWT *(Based on ADHB Market figures for 16th September) = **£87.70**

Dose per lamb 60-70p (£1.20 course of 2 doses)

How many lambs could you vaccinate for the cost of 1 dead lamb?! You do the maths!

Please remember to continue to fill in your lamb losses chart 2019/2020 and hand these in to your nearest office or to any of our vets on farm.

Lungworm Warning!

We have seen a number of herds afflicted with substantial lungworm burdens in the last few weeks. Lungworm can lead to serious secondary disease so please take note of any coughing cattle and speak to a Vet today.

New Dairy Benchmarking Group

Thomas Crosby

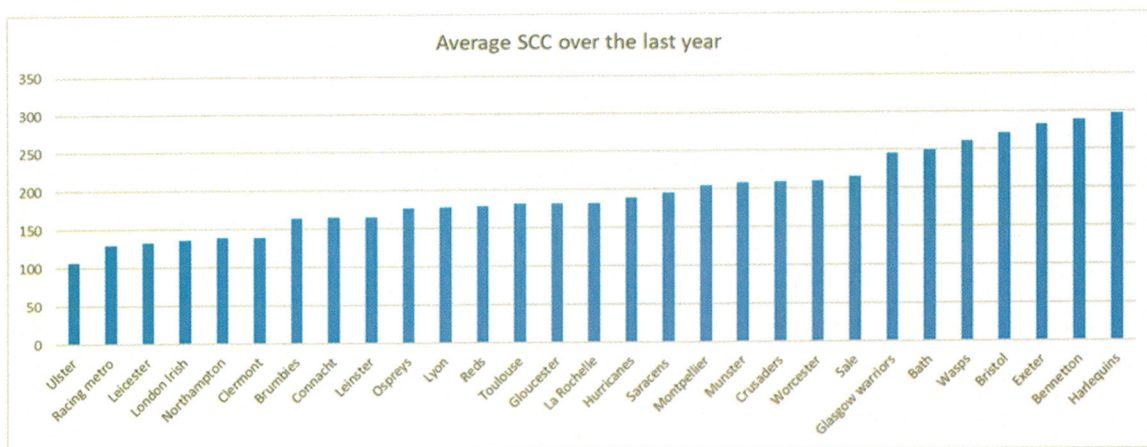
We are planning to start up a new working group at FarmVets SouthWest with our dairy clients. The intention of this group is to work together with farmers to help improve all aspects of running a dairy farm more efficiently, whilst monitoring and comparing progress with fellow local dairy farmers. This will help to give our farmers a realistic and achievable goal to work towards, rather than relying on an arbitrary 'national average' target that won't necessarily apply to their personal farming practices.

The topics we are hoping to cover over the first year include:

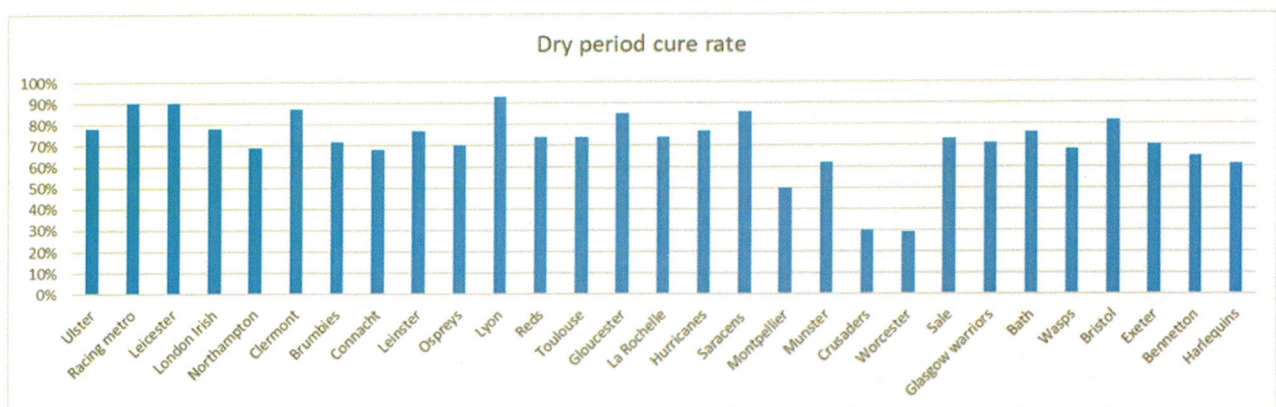
- Mastitis and cell count
- Fertility
- Disease control
- Replacement youngstock management



Mastitis and cell count will be the first meeting topic, so we have formed some example graphs of the sort of thing we will be looking at, giving comparisons between farms in a completely anonymous way. If you milk record regularly with NMR or CIS and have given us access to your data, **you will be one of the farms included in these graphs!**



The chart above shows the average somatic cell count of all readings taken over the past year. Beneath we have a chart showing the percentage of cows that entered the dry period with a high cell count (>200,000 cells/ml) and calved in with a low cell count over the last year. It is important to note that just because you are doing the best in the group in one aspect does not necessarily mean you will be doing the best in another!



If you would be interested in joining our new dairy benchmarking group (or would like to know which farm you are on these graphs), please phone the office and register your interest with Tom. If you regularly milk record with NMR or CIS but have not given us access to your data and would like to join the group, that can be easily arranged so please do not hesitate to call.

Congratulations Holly!

Congratulations to Holly and her partner Dan on their new addition, James Joseph, who was born in August. We wish the family all the best!

