

THREE RIVERS VETERINARY GROUP

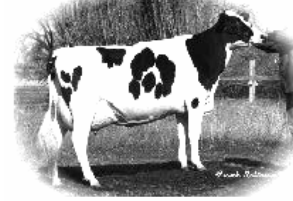
FARM ANIMAL PRACTICE

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CATTLE PRACTICE

APRIL 2009 NEWSLETTER.



Turn out is not far away now, hopefully you are managing to fit in all the vaccinations, there is some new information regarding Bluetongue vaccination in this newsletter. If you need any further advice please contact us.

Grass Staggers - High Risk this

Spring.

There have been a number of predictions that the risk of hypomagnesaemia (grass staggers) may be high this spring. The increased risk is due to the steadily rising levels of potassium in early grass, especially if there has been any slurry application on the land.

It is important to increase the level of magnesium supplementation and because magnesium cannot be stored in the body the required intake must be fed every day. Good levels of salt intake help to improve magnesium absorption.

Huskvac.

Supplies of Huskvac have been a bit patchy over the last month. However new batches of vaccine are due in this week and there should be no more problems. Apparently some of the reason for the short supply has been due to a very high uptake with a lot of farmers going back to lungworm vaccination. This is good news because lungworm vaccination has always been the best and most effective means of lungworm control.

Bluetongue vaccination – Some

Recent News.

The protocols for the use of Bovilis BTv8 are constantly evolving as new evidence becomes available. Here is some of the latest information:

- To help to plan your initial vaccination program – the 3 week period between the

first and second doses can be extended to between 20 days and 28 days.

- Intervet now say that you can give Bluetongue vaccine at the same time as **one** of the following vaccines but not two of them:
Bovipast RSV, Bovilis BVD, Leptavoid H, Heptavac P, Heptavac, Bravoxin10.
- Goats, alpacas and Camelids – revised recommendations are an initial course of two injections followed by an annual booster prior to the risk period (i.e. March to May) – a six monthly booster is not now necessary.
- If you require 50 dose bottles at the Defra subsidised price please order as soon as possible as stocks are getting low.
- 20 dose bottles have just come back into stock and can now be ordered.

Liver Fluke.

The incidence of liver fluke continues to rise and requires increased vigilance. If you don't currently have the problem on your farm then please test your cattle regularly. A faeces sample from at least 10 animals mixed thoroughly together and submitted as one sample should be tested from each group of cattle. Each mixed sample should be a double handful in size, in a nice clean container please! Dairy farmers can submit bulk milk samples for liver fluke antibody testing.

For those farms which have liver fluke infection all cattle (except dairy cows which are treated at drying off) should be treated in the autumn and spring. Farms with severe

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infection should also treat their cattle mid-summer.

Leptospirosis Vaccination.

Spring is the best time to protect your stock against Leptospirosis, don't forget to vaccinate your replacement heifers as soon as possible after 5 months of age. If you don't know your herd status with regard to Leptospirosis then free laboratory testing is available for both beef and dairy herds please contact us for details.

Counterfeit Animal Medicines.

Counterfeit farm animal medicines have been seized after being found in the UK; they had been ordered illegally via the internet. The counterfeit operation was quite sophisticated and the labels and boxes containing the drugs were well printed with company logos etc. The products within the bottles were extremely sub-standard and contained contaminants that could be a risk to the food chain.

Swift action by the authorities has hopefully stopped this source but they are being manufactured outside the UK and so it is difficult to prevent. Please make sure all your medicines come from approved sources.

Minimising the impact of uterine infections

Uterine infections are important in both dairy and beef herds. These infections are often underestimated in beef suckler cows but the use of bulls rather than AI means that the potential for spread of infection is greater.

Your cows may look healthy and be cycling normally, but on average a cow with endometritis takes 32 days longer to get pregnant. There are 11 more days until her first service, and she needs 1.92 services per conception compared with a normal cow which only requires 1.28.

Endometritis is an infection of the uterus lining (also known as 'whites' or 'dirty' cows) 14 or more days after calving which prevents an affected cow from getting back in-calf. Using Kingshay figures, which suggest that every day over the target 365-day calving interval costs up to £4.90, it is clear that endometritis is an expensive infection.

Although all cows experience some level of uterine infection after calving, some will clear up naturally. Some, however, are more likely

than others to see this infection persist and develop into endometritis. The key risk factors include difficult calvings, a dead calf, milk fever, retained placenta and twins.

Delaying treatment can result in a poor treatment response and waiting for infection to show itself as the typical vaginal discharge is already too late and this approach misses at least half of affected cows. Instead, check all cows before 30 days after calving or at least pick out the 'At Risk' cows for a routine vet check. Early detection means early treatment which not only works better, but is also cheaper in the long run.

Early treatment using Metricure® has been shown to reduce the number of days to conception by 13 compared with untreated animals. In addition the use of a prostaglandin injection at the same time gives an even faster response.

The use of Reprocine injection (5ml into muscle) as soon as possible after calving in the 'high risk' cows for retained placenta is also beneficial. Reprocine aids the expulsion of retained placentas in the following cases:

- Twins.
- Difficult calvings.
- Induced calvings.

If you require any further information on how to reduce the effect of uterine infections on the fertility performance of your beef or dairy herd, please contact me.

2008 – Butox Swish effect.

There was an interesting effect from the high use of Butox Swish in last year's Protection Zone. Farmers and vets noted no cases of summer mastitis or New Forest Eye on farms which had started their monthly applications of Butox SWISH early (before vaccinating with Bovilis® BTV8 in May).

The use of Butox Swish early this year even in vaccinated animals is recommended for the overall control of both flies and midges.

Butox Swish – Special Prices.

Butox Swish - controls flies for 8 weeks and midges For 4 weeks:

250ml - £14.13 (8 cows).

1 Litre – £46.73 (33 cows).

2.5 Litre - £103.89 (83 cows).

12.0 Litre plus applicator - £415.54 (400 dose pack). *All prices excluding Vat.*