

# THREE RIVERS VETERINARY GROUP

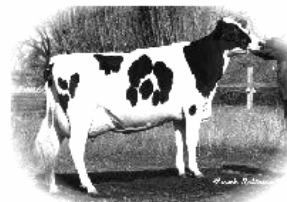
## FARM ANIMAL PRACTICE

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## CATTLE PRACTICE

### May 2009 NEWSLETTER.



**The current hot dry spell of weather will temporarily reduce the gut-worm larval challenge, but this means that when the weather breaks there will be a peak of larval hatching and disease risk – the pre-patent period is 3 weeks so treat as soon as possible after this time.**

### Reducing the Threat of Summer Mastitis – Some Action Points.

Summer mastitis is a disease of the dry cow period and is caused when the sheep head fly (*Hydrotaea irritans*) irritates the teat ends. This allows bacteria such as *Streptococcus dysgalactiae* to invade the udder, followed by *Arcanobacterium pyogenes*. Both bacteria are normally present on healthy animals. However, the sheep head fly has also been shown to spread *A. pyogenes* among cows. Studies have shown that 60% of cases occur in the front quarters because it's thought tail swishing keeps flies away from the back teats.

The measures you can take to minimise the threat of summer mastitis are:

- Dry off with a broad spectrum antibiotic tube and use Orbeseal afterwards to seal the teat.
- Start early (and continue regularly) with pour-on fly control – Butox Swish is the best product.
- Keep dry cows away from damp and wooded grazing areas

Traditionally summer mastitis is seen between late July and early September with a big peak of cases in August – hence its other name: August bag. Affected cows are often sick with a raised temperature and are frequently seen standing away from the rest of the group. They may also stop grazing and lose some condition.

Other signs include a hot, swollen quarter with flies clustered around the teat end, which means there is frequent kicking.

The sheep head fly doesn't like going indoors, so housing dry cows is one control option. Failing that, make sure that dry cows are in open, windy paddocks without thistles, nettles or long grass which can cause further teat damage. It's important to maintain teat condition as well. Smooth skin has no cracks and crevices for bacteria to colonise.

Contact the practice to discuss your dry cow management in more detail.

### Clostridial Diseases in Cattle.

The wide range of clostridial diseases are as much of a threat to cattle as they are to sheep and are probably the cause of a large proportion of the unexplained sudden livestock deaths that most farmers experience.

Clostridial disease in cattle is being more widely reported as a cause of sudden deaths. Black Disease is due to a clostridial infection in the liver which occurs secondarily to liver fluke. The rise in liver fluke infestation is one of the main reasons why black disease, in particular, is becoming more prevalent.

Clostridial bacteria are widely distributed in the environment on many cattle and sheep holdings. They exist in soil, rotting vegetation, decomposing plant and animal matter, surface water and spoiled feed – in

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addition to being present in the gut and other animal tissues. However, disease only occurs when a trigger factor causes these clostridial bacteria to multiply rapidly. This may vary from a muscle bruising injury to a dietary change or other disease challenge such as liver fluke infection that may be affecting the animal.

The most well-known clostridial bacteria is *C. chauvoei* – the cause of blackleg, which is familiar to many cattle producers. Blackleg tends to occur in younger animals from 6 to 24 months of age with most cases occurring at grass.

Other clostridial diseases include bacterial redwater, caused by *C. haemolyticum*, which is found on wet, marshy land or on pastures after floods. There are, however, up to 10 different clostridial bacteria that can cause problems and stock losses.

Vaccination is the ONLY way to control clostridial infections. The good news is that with the launch of the new Bravoxin® 10 broad-spectrum vaccine, effective disease prevention for all 10 strains is available. The Bravoxin 10 broad-spectrum vaccine actually costs very little, particularly when set against the cost of dead animals. For example, saving just one replacement heifer worth £1,000 would save you enough to vaccinate the replacement animals required for a 100 cow herd for 15 years!

### **Effective Control of IBR.**

Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR) is caused by a Herpes virus that continues to be widespread in UK cattle herds. Recent bulk milk and blood screening of a nationwide sample of herds revealed 72% testing positive for the virus – a situation that compares poorly with other EU countries, such as Holland, where exposure levels are reported to be below 10%.

Once exposed to the IBR virus, cattle remain carriers for life. Unlike other significant diseases such as BVD and Johne's, IBR remains dormant in the animal until stress factors such as calving, stock movements or extremes of weather trigger recurrence of clinical signs of the disease. Once symptoms appear, an affected animal can shed large quantities of the virus from the airways and nose, which means uninfected herdmates will always be highly

vulnerable to infection. The IBR virus can also survive in the environment, further increasing infection risk.

The cost of this disease is potentially enormous. Studies have shown that, for dairy herds, IBR infection can depress milk yields by 173 litres per affected animal. But that's only the tip of the iceberg – growth rates in replacement heifers and beef cattle can also be severely depressed. In addition, animals can die from IBR, easily pushing losses into the £1000s for some herds badly hit by a disease outbreak.

With a disease like this where the potential financial losses are so great, vaccination is a must. Disease prevention is quite straightforward, with a dose of live IBR marker vaccine able to be administered intra-nasally or intra-muscularly from two weeks of age.

Disease-free accredited status is not yet required in the UK, but many of our European competitors are well down the eradication track. However, as disease-free accreditation may yet arrive in the UK at some stage in the future, the recent switch to marker vaccines – which allow you to identify those animals with antibodies due to vaccination as opposed to natural infection – makes sound commercial sense for UK cattle producers in the longer term.

### **Flies – Treat Early.**

Just two house flies could potentially produce 64 million offspring in a summer, which shows how important it is to treat early! Flies, as well as being a nuisance to stock and farm staff, also spread a number of diseases such as Summer Mastitis and New Forest Eye. Regular applications of a proven fly control product, such as Butox SWISH, starting before flies become a significant problem will minimise the threat they pose to you and your stock.

### **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.*