

THREE RIVERS VETERINARY GROUP

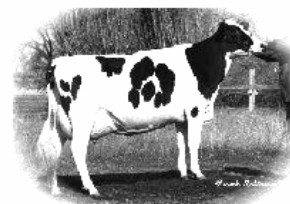
FARM ANIMAL PRACTICE

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CATTLE PRACTICE

APRIL 2011 NEWSLETTER.



It is now exactly a year since we changed our practice structure and ceased equine work to concentrate on farm animal practice. It's been a bit of a rough road in the livestock world but we remain optimistic about the future. The importance of food supply must not be forgotten in the current economic climate! However above all we enjoy our work.

Grass Staggers - High Risk!

There have been a number of predictions that the risk of hypomagnesaemia (grass staggers) may be high again 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.

Nutritional requirements for late pregnancy in spring calving beef cows.

As cows approach the calving period their energy requirements increase rapidly and it is important to improve the quality of food intake at this time to meet these needs. This will ensure that the calves are strong and have a good suck reflex and the dams have good quality colostrum to feed them.

There are three main reasons for the rapid increase in energy demands immediately prior to calving:

1. The increasing requirements of the calf.

In the late stages of pregnancy the calf increases in size and therefore it requires more energy. In addition the rate of growth of the calf increases each day. So a cow in the late stages of pregnancy is supporting a 40Kg calf PLUS the calf has a daily liveweight gain of 0.7Kg per day. Three months earlier the calf

would have weighed 7 Kg with a daily liveweight gain of 0.35 Kg per day.

2. A gradual build up of colostrum.

At the time of calving a beef cow will have approximately 10 litres of colostrum in her udder which will have been produced over the past week at a rate of 2 litres per day (4% fat 15% solids)

3. Increase in udder and teat size and tissue.

This is mainly an important energy requirement in maiden heifers.

A bad year for fly transmitted diseases ahead??

Some entomologists are suggesting that there could be a major fly problem this year; this is predicted from climate and population studies. This could mean that new forest eye and summer mastitis infections may be a higher risk this year.

There are three main ways in which fly populations can be reduced on farms:

1. Reducing fly numbers.

The key to success in using insecticides is to start *early* in the year when fly numbers are fairly low. The more flies you kill at this time the fewer eggs will be laid with a reduction in fly numbers from July/August onwards.

2. Grazing management.

Flies breed in wet sheltered areas where there is shade and protection from the wind i.e. near trees or a copse. So place your dry cows away from wet areas, streams, dykes and wooded areas. Also avoid keeping stock near muck heaps.

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* ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS CERTIFICATE HOLDER IN CATTLE HEALTH AND PRODUCTION

3. Teat protection.

Orbeseal Dry Cow is an internal teat sealant which protects against summer mastitis. This is regularly used in dairy cows but can be used in beef cows too. However, if you have not used the product before you will need some advice from us.

Liver Fluke.

The incidence of liver fluke continues to rise and requires increased vigilance. Even if you don't think you have liver fluke on your farm still test your cattle regularly. The disease slowly builds up in the herd and if you wait until clinical signs appear the infection will have already caused severe economic losses. A faeces sample from at least 10 animals mixed thoroughly together and submitted as one sample should be tested from each group of cattle (including youngstock). 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 known infected pastures should also treat their cattle in mid-summer to cut down the level of challenge.

If you have not treated your cows this winter; don't allow them to contaminate your pastures or suffer due to liver damage – ***treat them now!***

What to do with barren autumn calving sucklers?

Before turn-out is a good time to check your autumn calvers are pregnant, so that you can make decisions about their future.

In recent times cull prices have been better in the spring than the autumn, which on average amount to a 65 Kg loss in value. The cow may gain this over the summer months but you have to feed her etc.

Weaning a calf at turnout to cull the barren dam would reduce its weaning weight but within 2 months after the calves have been weaned there would be no difference in liveweight or condition.

Should you transfer barren cows to the spring calving herd?

- Only if the cow is young.

- Only if you are confident re her future breeding potential – ask the vet at PD time, to appraise barren cows for ovary/uterine issues.

- If the cow has a heifer calf at foot it will need to be weaned at turn out to avoid it being mated with the stock bull.

- Keeping the cow runs the risk of her becoming too fat at calving next spring – so diet is important.

- If the cow has a male calf at foot then it can be run with the spring calving herd and the energy required for lactation will help to control body condition.

As a general rule keeping barren cows tends to produce more problems than it cures.

Bull testing.

Are you confident about your stock bull(s) fertility levels? Bull fertility is too high an economic risk to take a gamble with.

We can test your bull's fertility for you which, if done before the planned breeding period, can prevent loss of time, money and a protracted calving pattern.

Butox Swish - controls flies (8 weeks) and midges (4 weeks).

Now proven rainfast!

250ml - £14.63 (8 cows).

1 Litre – £45.35 (33 cows).

2.5 Litre - £85.95 (83 cows).

12.0 Litre plus applicator (400 cow pack) £299.50 ***All prices excluding Vat.***

Ivermectin Pour-On .

For lungworm and gut worms:

2.5 litres Enovex at £42.69 + VAT!!!

Closamectin Pour-On.

NB There is a 60 day milk withdrawal.

Treats cattle for liver fluke (adults & immatures), gastrointestinal roundworms, lungworms, lice, mange mites.

Dose rate - 1ml per 10 Kg body weight.

1 litre: £123.44 + Vat.

2.5 Litre: £207.27 + Vat.

5 Litre: £410.97 + Vat.

Trodax Injection.

Treats liver fluke only – can be used with pour-on wormer.

The pack contains 2x500ml which contains enough for 66 x 500kg cattle (or 111 x 300 Kg) - **£142.29 + Vat.**