

THREE RIVERS VETERINARY GROUP

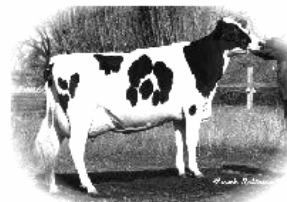
FARM ANIMAL PRACTICE

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CATTLE PRACTICE

JANUARY 2009 NEWSLETTER.



Happy New Year to everyone.

Bovine Tuberculosis (TB).

Unfortunately we have a TB 'hot spot' in North Suffolk. TB lesions from positive cattle at a routine TB test have been found at post mortem. At present DEFRA are not sure where the infection originated from, however the situation is serious.

We have persuaded DEFRA to test the surrounding farms earlier than their usual timetable in order to assess whether the infection has spread.

It is quite possible that the current 4 yearly testing interval in our area will be decreased.

In TB infected areas all cattle must be *privately* tested prior to movement from farm to farm. The test results are valid for 60 days.

Pre-movement TB testing in our area is not a legal requirement at present, but our advice would be - *'don't allow any cattle from other holdings onto your premises unless they have passed a TB test within 60 days.'*

Ingenity parentage verification.

Birth registration under EU rules must be made within 7 days of the birth of the animal or 7 days after the animal has been tagged. Great Britain adopts the latter rule, giving producers the maximum 20 days in which to tag their animals and a further 7 days after that to register the birth and apply for a passport. There is no scope to extend the deadline beyond 27 days unless parentage is verified using DNA testing according to the BCMS.

The only way to apply for a passport for an animal that's missed the official 27 day deadline is to prove parentage using DNA profiling. Samples must be taken by a vet (hair or blood can be used) for analysis and must prove a genetic match if a passport is to be issued by the BCMS.

Ingenity from Merial Animal Health is competitively priced. The laboratory charges for mother and daughter are £35 + vat, some other laboratories charge up to £60 + vat. Pedigree breeders looking for parentage verification alone i.e. a single sample pay just £20 + vat.

Melamine contaminated Soya Expeller.

Some of you may be aware that Melamine contaminated soya expeller (what remains after the oil is extracted) has been identified in England. A contaminated consignment was distributed during the first week of November. The product has been traced and recalled, however there remains a possibility that other contaminated products have not been identified. The reason for the adulteration is financial – melamine powder is used to increase the nitrogen content of feed when the protein content is poor.

There is probably a degree of rumen degradation but it is well absorbed and once absorbed it is not metabolised and is excreted through the kidneys relatively unchanged. Toxicity in animals results from kidney and bladder stones and male animals are at risk from obstruction of the passage of urine. Further information on food safety can be obtained from the FSA website.

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Bluetongue Vaccination.

Not one case of Bluetongue BTV8 was reported in the UK during the summer of 2008 (except those in imported animals from Europe). This is a testament to the excellent uptake of vaccine in East Anglia and a poor summer which did not suit the midges.

France didn't fare so well, it saw 20,000 cases of Bluetongue in 2008. Vaccination in France was only compulsory in some areas and the vaccination roll out plan was not as good as ours (yes we do some things better in the UK).

So we should be very satisfied with the results of 2008 but complacency in 2009 could allow this devastating disease to establish itself in the UK. There is likely to be a strong challenge from the Continent should weather conditions be favourable and vaccination in 2009 is essential. Vaccination should be carried out in early spring before the midges become active and it must be fitted in with all the other routine vaccinations and treatments prior to turnout. We have the advantage this year in that all the cattle vaccinated last year with two doses of vaccine will only require a single booster this year.

Other strains of Bluetongue including BTV-6 and BTV-1 have been imported into the UK (Lancashire). These strains are just as severe in sheep; in cattle they cause abortion and other symptoms which affect production. So it is important not to import cattle and sheep from France even if it is legal to do so.

There is a choice of vaccine available now and we will be sending out further information in due course.

Environmental mastitis.

We have seen a surge in environmental mastitis this winter; mainly due to damp straw which was baled in a moist state this year and the damp atmospheric conditions during the first part of the winter.

Whilst Strep uberis is a perennial problem, the level of E.Coli infection has increased dramatically. E.Coli causes mastitis with a variable degree of severity; most cases are mild but more severe cases often occur and some strains cause per-acute, toxic mastitis which is invariably fatal.

Straw, sawdust and waste paper are all excellent bedding materials for cow comfort but they have the disadvantage that they are organic and therefore create an ideal environment for the organisms to grow.

Sand is ideal in that it is comfortable and inert; however it has disadvantages with regard to disposal.

None of the environmental mastitis organisms like dry conditions and various products have been used to remove moisture from the lying areas. An area which is often overlooked is the ventilation of the cattle buildings themselves. Cows produce a large amount of moisture from urine, faeces and their breath and if the water vapour is removed efficiently from the building this means there is less to deal with in the cow's environment.

Lime can be used in cubicles; however it can also be irritant to the teats. Specialist absorptive products are available such as Dri Li plus, Ny-San-Dry and Stalosan F are better products and are applied twice a week to the rear half of the cubicle.

Stalosan F can also be used in straw yards at 50gms per square metre twice a week using a hand applicator.

Pre-milking teat preparation is a crucial area for the prevention of environmental mastitis, because many of the infections become established by milking contaminated teats. Pre-milking teat disinfectants can be very effective and should be considered when the environmental challenge is high.

Liver Fluke treatment.

Routine treatment for liver fluke in our area is essential at housing for all young stock and adult cattle, (dairy cows have to be treated routinely at drying off to avoid milk withdrawal issues). A further dose during the second half of the winter is recommended to remove any fluke that may have survived the first treatment and to cut down pasture contamination next summer. With Bluetongue vaccination to fit into the calendar this year it would be a good idea to give the second fluke treatment in January/February. Farms with a high challenge should treat their cattle again in May/June. We still have discounted prices on Trodax and Closamectin available.