



Newsletter April 2024



Welcome

Whatever your politics or creed, I think we can all agree that the weather is rubbish (O.K. some may use stronger words). Hang on in there, you're doing well despite the circumstances and the one thing about local weather, we're all in it together. We at the vets are here to help as much as we can. We endeavour each spring to have a spare vet in the surgery to have discussions with clients over the phone or over the counter, but often field work drags us away. Saying that, this year due to two unfortunate injuries, we do have a vet most of the time in J36 ready to discuss your problems so please give a call.

Mark Stott

Included this month

- **Treatments for Watery Mouth**— Charlotte Chapman
- **Re Think Cattle Worm Control**— a summary from the meeting.
- **Keep going with Sucklers** — Sarah Harker
- **News and Diary Dates**

Treatments for Watery Mouth During Lambing Time



We may sound like a broken record on this subject but our approach to watery mouth management has been a conversation I have had many times in the practice this lambing time. Generally clients are looking for alternatives for Spectam Scour Halt which was removed from the market last year. The reality is resistance to antibiotics on farm is happening now, so it is essential that we keep them working not only in livestock but also to minimise the risks of crossover resistance to antibiotics used in human healthcare.

Nevertheless, we understand how challenging it can be to deal with the prospect of an outbreak of watery mouth on your farm, especially this year! After a run of dryish springs, this season so far has been horrific in terms of weather. However, we can only ask that where antibiotics are dispensed for the management of a watery mouth outbreak on farm, please take this as a precautionary measure and only use them when it is deemed absolutely essential. When it comes to treating watery mouth remember it is a disease caused by a bacterial overgrowth with secondary endotoxaemia (toxins in the blood) seen in colostrum-deprived lambs.

Continued...



Animal Health and Welfare Pathway—Simple to apply, quick to pay out. £522 Beef, £436 sheep, £372 Dairy. Please don't miss out! <https://apply-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-review.defra.gov.uk/claim>



Treatments for Watery Mouth During Lambing Time—continued..

We recommend the following to reduce the risk of watery mouth; some of this can be implemented this lambing time and others can be reviewed again before another lambing season:

- Ensure ewes have adequate body condition scores and correct nutrition pre-lambing.
- Think about the 5 Qs of colostrum management; **Quality, Quantity, Quickly, Quantify, sQueaky clean**
- Ensure lambs receives 50 ml/per kg of bodyweight of good-quality colostrum as soon as possible; that is for example 250ml for a 5kg lamb
- Ensure lambs receive a total of 200 ml/kg within the first 24 hours of life; that is for example 1000mls for a 5kg lamb.
- Maintain a good level of hygiene particularly in lambing pens

After lambing time it is always useful to do a flock health and ewe nutrition review, please take it as an opportunity to speak to us because it will likely be rewarding in terms of improved productivity, animal welfare, reduced medicine use and reducing costs.

Charlotte Chapman

Rethink your Cattle Worm Control this Season

We need to rethink cattle parasite control, was key message from Colin Mason from the SRUC disease investigation centre in Dumfries, at our joint meeting last month with Dalehead Vets. The North of England and Scotland may have the perfect climate for growing grass, but this also makes us the lungworm capital of Europe, if not the world. Warmer, wetter weather all year round is ideal for all cattle worms to thrive, so we need our control options to work. It is vital that we learn from the sheep industry and avoid ploughing into a huge wormer resistance problem.

- For all parasites, exposure is needed for cattle to build immunity (which they are quite good at). Half of diagnosed lungworm cases are in adult cattle.
- Traditionally lungworm outbreaks were seen Aug/ Sept/ Oct but as winters get warmer, we are now seeing disease in Nov / Dec.
- **Do not tolerate ANY COUGHING in groups of youngstock.**
- Test muck samples for diagnosis and treat early. Once treated an animal needs to remove all the dead worms from its lungs, the more worms the bigger the job. The recovery phase in bad cases can take months.
- The farming system has a huge impact on challenge and control, for example, paddock grazing forces more ingestion of infectious larvae.
- Don't lose sight in housed cattle, worms remaining in the lungs can cause pneumonia and larvae can over winter in the cow's lymphatic system, reactivating in spring.
- Lungworm vaccination declined when pour on products were launched as farmers opted for this cheaper and easier option.
- Wormer treatment failures are being seen and investigated regularly. This may be due to resistance in the worms themselves or misuse of products (correct dose for weight/ placement on animal).
- Vaccination gives the cattle a good start with immunity before they are turned out, however this relies on natural exposure throughout the season to boost the vaccine. Worming regimes in a vaccinated group should focus on stomach worms, leaving the animals immunity to deal with the lungworm.

The COWS website has some excellent up to date advice - <https://www.cattleparasites.org.uk/>

Hopefully the weather will dry and up a bit and cattle can be turned out this year but before they do, please have a discussion with one of our team to check you are making the most of the control options available.



Keep going with Sucklers!

We might have been saying it for a long time but “they will need us one day.....” For those of you that enjoy what you do and have a farm from which to do it, now might be the time to keep going.

It's been noticeable as I've driven round my calls this spring just how much land and how many farms are drifting away from full production. An older generation are winding down, payments for trees and rewilding are tempting others, and who can blame them. Landlords are making choices that give tenants little long-term security so many of those that do want to farm are finding it increasingly difficult. Suckler cows seem to continue to decline but as prices for beef cattle in the marts strengthen, is there a void for the enthusiastic to fill?

Farming beef cattle isn't always fun or profitable but if some areas are addressed, stress can be minimised and returns maximised. Breed selection should be appropriate to farm type and availability of labour etc. Pedigree or show cattle requiring high levels of stockmanship and management can be emotionally and financially rewarding, but risks, costs and losses higher. Maternal traits should not be neglected and a cow needn't look like a show cow herself but calve naturally, every year and milk well to maximise saleability of the calf. Pursuit of the best end product drives some to bull and cow choices that risk difficult calvings. If the value of the end product doesn't balance the cost, losses and emotional toll of getting it, then it's not sustainable long-term. This brings to mind a memorable quote I heard recently - "It's not what you make, it's what you don't spend".

Good handling facilities are essential and jobs more likely to get done safely, quickly and with a successful outcome. TB tests, vaccination and worming treatments, calvings and caesarians etc are all less daunting with the right set-up. Tying in with this, don't tolerate wild cattle. Choose breeds or individuals within breeds that are easier managed.

Culling policies need to be realistic as profitable herds cannot carry passengers. Every animal needs to earn its keep so take into account fertility, temperament, lameness and other health issues to name but a few.

Purchased feeds represent a major cost with homegrown grazing and forages the cheapest way to feed your herd. Analyse these to allow you to maximise their value. Selection of breeds and individuals within breeds that utilise forages maximally are important for profitability.

A healthy herd creates less work, less losses and more profit. A proper plan to limit diseases such as scour, pneumonia and lameness should be drawn up and seen as a valuable part of farm management rather than a pointless paperwork exercise. If I had to pick one disease to control before all others, it would BVD. I haven't space here to explain my reasoning but strongly advise vaccination!

My optimism is perhaps misplaced but I do feel that many of the challenges of sucklers can be mitigated with thought and



planning. On 25th March, a press release from DEFRA finally acknowledged that food production needs to remain the primary purpose of farming, limiting SFI applicants to taking no more than 25% of their land out of direct food production. We might have been saying it for a long time but “they will need us one day.....” For those of you that enjoy what you do and have a farm from which to do it, now might be the time to keep going.

The National Beef Association are holding the 2024 Beef Expo at J36 NWA on Saturday 27th Of April 2024. We'll be there with a stand so for those who can please come along for a chat.

Sarah Harker

The Future is Bright with Vale YFC



It was an absolute pleasure last month to speak to Vale of Lune YFC on issues at lambing and colostrum management. Some excellent questions for Sarah, Sol and Charlotte, potentially helped by the launching off fun sized Mars Bars into the audience! Thank you for being such an attentive group, the farming future is in good hands in the Lune Valley.

Stay Strong !

For those of you who are lambing, have full slurry pits and cannot see an end to this constant rain, please keep going you are not alone! Things have to dry up sometime.



Happy 21st Birthday Ruby



If you visited J36 on a certain Vet Techs birthday last month it may not have gone unnoticed that Ruby was celebrating her 21st Birthday! Her FGV themed cake from the family is definitely worth a mention too! Happy Birthday Ruby from all of the team.



Teat Sealant Training

To add to our Vet Tech repertoire our team have been fully trained on drying off and teat sealing cows with Iain McCormick who is a Vet for Zoetis the makers of Orbesal. This is

another job that can be taken off your hands and our team can ensure the required meticulous hygiene standards.

Dates For Your Diary



Emergency Resuscitation Training with Arnside and Silverdale First Responders

Monday 22nd April 2024, 12pm—2pm at our J36 practice meeting room.

What happens in those first few minutes after a heart attack is so important to the results of the outcome. This is a free of charge course, open to all that could one day help you save a life.

Please phone the office or e mail linda@farmgatevets.com to book your place.



NBA Beef Expo, Saturday 27th April 2024 at the Rural Auction Centre (J36)

Please come and visit our stand, free event admission

<https://www.nationalbeefassociation.com/beef-expo/>



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