Daleside Veterinary Group

FARM NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2020

Beef Rearing And Finishing Meeting

One unwelcome consequence of a herd being shut down at a TB test is that farmers are then unable to sell calves.

This can quickly lead to the farm being overstocked with these unexpected animals so increasing the risks and costs of pneumonia and scours etc. Dairy units especially may be unused to rearing beef and bull calves. To address issues that farmers can come across in this situation we will be holding a meeting in the evening, Thursday March 26th to discuss ways to rear and finish beef calves and what buyers are looking for.

Locum TB Tester

A new face will shortly be joining the team to help with the TB testing workload.

Eva Leibig is a very experienced TB tester having spent the last few years working in and around Shropshire and the Welsh Borders. We are sure you will make her feel welcome.

Vaccinate against Lungworm pre-turnout - *or cough up later*

If you heard your cattle coughing at grass last autumn, this means they could have been harbouring lungworm burdens that compromise growth rates. Most lungworm cases are reported at the back end of the grazing season.

Unfortunately, lungworm larvae can overwinter on pasture and in carrier cattle to propagate infection year to year, which means cattle can pick up infection as soon as they are turned out in the spring. And if they do, it could be very costly.

It pays to vaccinate

Vaccination against lungworm is a no brainer. In severe lungworm outbreaks, growing cattle losses can average at £50-£100 per head. For beef suckler herds, calves are generally exposed to a continuous low-level challenge from adult cattle, who will be immunologically-competent. However, if the herd immunity declines, there is an increased risk of disease. Lungworm is unpredictable and best controlled through vaccination.

In the dairy herd, lungworm infection could easily cost you £140 per cow with lost milk production averaging 4kg per cow per day2 – and that's a conservative estimate – because you can also lose cattle to lungworm.

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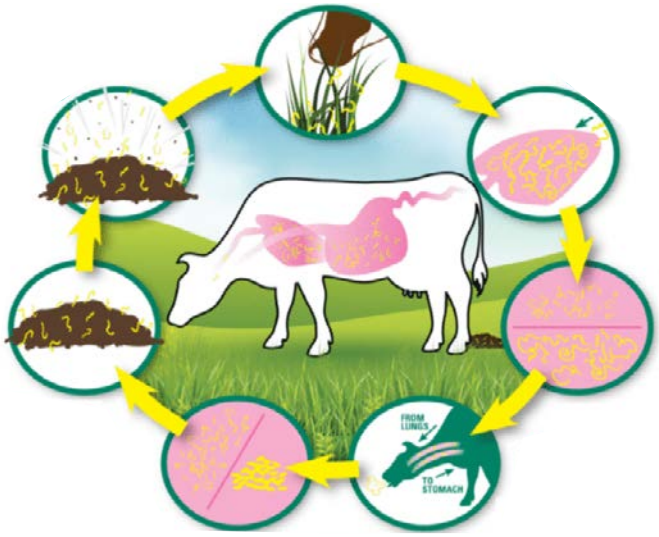
Home-reared dairy replacements tend to graze on a separate pasture away from the milking herd and are often treated with long-acting wormers, perhaps in both the first and second grazing seasons. When this replacement group enters the main herd, they have no immunity to lungworm and the risk of a disease outbreak at grass is very high. Lungworm is unpredictable and best controlled through vaccination.

Boost immunity through vaccination

Vaccination will boost the beef herd's immunity and lessen the risk of disease outbreaks, particularly if long-acting wormers have been used in the first one to two seasons at grass. BovilisÆHuskvac is a live vaccine, made from irradiated lungworm larvae, which are incapable of causing disease. For suckled calves, vaccination should finish two weeks before the calves begin to eat significant amounts of grass. Wormers should not be given until two weeks after the final dose of vaccine.

The vaccine allows a small number of lungworm from natural infection to complete their life-cycle, this means there is a continued development of natural immunity throughout the grazing season.



Over-reliance on wormers does not allow this natural boosting to occur.

Vaccination before the risk period with a course of BovilisÆHuskvac is the most reliable and cost-effective way of ensuring the development of immunity to lungworm.

Please contact the practice on 01978 311444 to plan your lungworm control strategies for this season and to order BovilisÆHuskvac

Remember to order your doses early as each animal will need 6 weeks from first dose to turnout.

Leptospirosos
Is your herd protected?

58% of non-vaccinating dairy farms and 22% of non-vaccinating beef farms test positive for exposure to leptospirosis. In the UK, two strains have been identified - Leptospira interrogans serovar hardjo and Leptospira borgpetersenii serovar hardjo.

In many cases, the underlying effects can go un-noticed but cause huge financial losses. These may include reduced milk yield, reduced fertility, weak calves and an increase in abortions. Leptospirosis also infects people, with cattle farmers at particular risk from the urine of infected cattle. This may result in protracted flu-like symptoms and, in rarer cases, liver and kidney failure.

Risk factors for leptospirosis in cattle include buying-in stock of unknown disease status, using a bull of unknown disease status, grazing near waterways and grazing with sheep.

Vaccination remains an important control measure and continues to be effective at reducing the incidence of clinical disease and the risk of infection. It is important that your herd is fully vaccinated before Spring turnout because at grass uninfected cattle are exposed to the urine of infected animals. Natural service also spreads leptospirosis so remember to vaccinate the bull.

Please contact the office on 01978 311444 to discuss testing and protecting your herd against leptospirosis