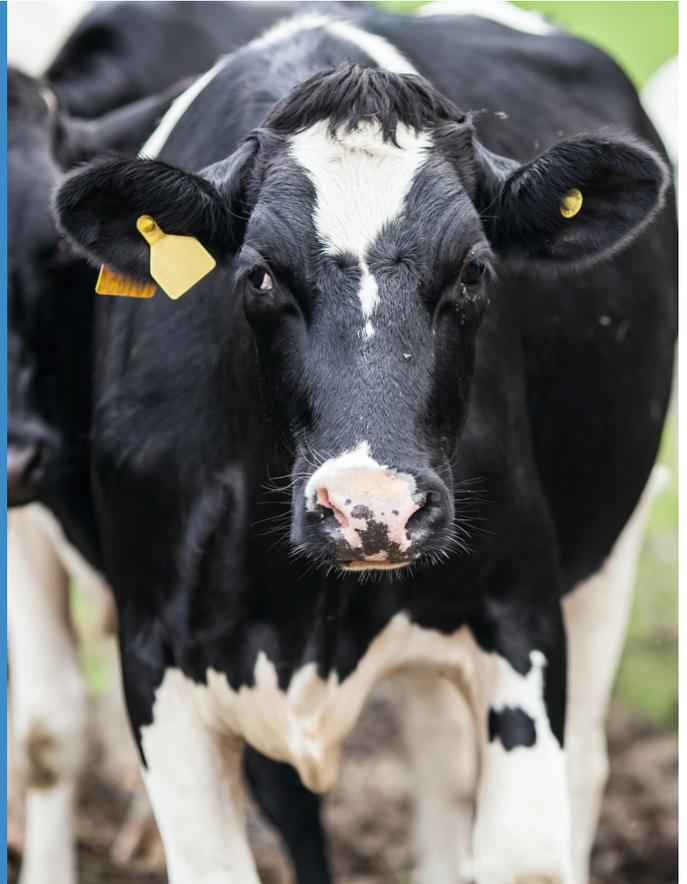


Case focus: Hypomagnesaemia

Hypomagnesaemia or Grass staggers occurs when the intake of Magnesium is exceeded by the output. Lactating cows are particularly at risk, the output of magnesium in milk is high and combined with the relatively low magnesium content in April/May grass clinical cases are not uncommon.



Rapidly growing grasses such as ryegrasses are very low in magnesium and this can be further reduced by fertiliser. Partly due to an increase in growth rate but also because potassium directly blocks the uptake of magnesium in grass. Slower growing forages such as clover contain much higher magnesium levels. Like most nutritional disease, the animals showing clinical signs are just the tip of the iceberg and its likely that many more will be affected sub-clinically.

Grass staggers symptoms include restlessness, staggering, excitable or aggressive, and convulsions.

Often animals may die before we see any signs as the progression is very quick.

As mentioned above, hypomagnesaemia can rapidly lead to death and therefore treatment must be prompt. A combination of calcium and magnesium can be given under the skin; however, care must be taken when administering magnesium as it can have fatal consequences if absorbed too quickly into the blood stream. The animal should not be moved during treatment but once responded to treatment consider moving the cattle off the pasture.

A combination of supplementation can be used for animals at risk. If you have any further questions or wish to seek advice about hypomagnesaemia, then please get in touch.

Medicine course

As restrictions are starting to ease, we are hopeful that later in the summer we can return to face-to-face courses. If anyone has an interest in signing up for the medicine training course for farm assurance then please get in touch, further details will be announced as soon as possible.

Bull Fertility testing

Sub-fertility in stock bulls is a common problem and can have a dramatic effect on the fertility of your herd. A fully fertile stock bull running with fifty healthy cows can achieve a 90% pregnancy rate after a nine-week mating period. But almost one in three stock bulls currently fail to achieve this target. This means fewer cows get in-calf, leading to an extended calving interval and more barren cows. In dairy herds, the cost of an extended calving interval can vary from £2-£5/cow/day over the target calving interval. For suckler herds, later born calves are at a huge disadvantage, they are smaller at weaning/housing and so likely to be smaller and worth less when sold as stores. Calving late will not only impact your calves but will also have a negative effect on the cow's fertility due to a reduced rest period between calving and breeding, it can easily spiral into a vicious cycle resulting in yet more barrens.

We can carry out bull breeding soundness examinations to identify infertile and sub-fertile bulls before the breeding season to tighten calving patterns and maximise the pregnancy rates of our clients' herds. The testing is best performed 4-6 weeks prior to the mating period so Spring Calving Herds need to act now. All stock bulls



should be tested including new arrivals. This examination should form part of the annual health checks of both beef and dairy herds.

Gwaredu BVD funding extended

Many of you will have already taken advantage of the Gwaredu BVD youngstock screen often done on your TB test. The funding has now been extended until the 31st of December 2022. This extra funding also includes PI hunt funding should we uncover a possible PI on the youngstock screen. Make sure to mention this to a vet on your TB test or contact the practice for further information.



Gwaredu BVD



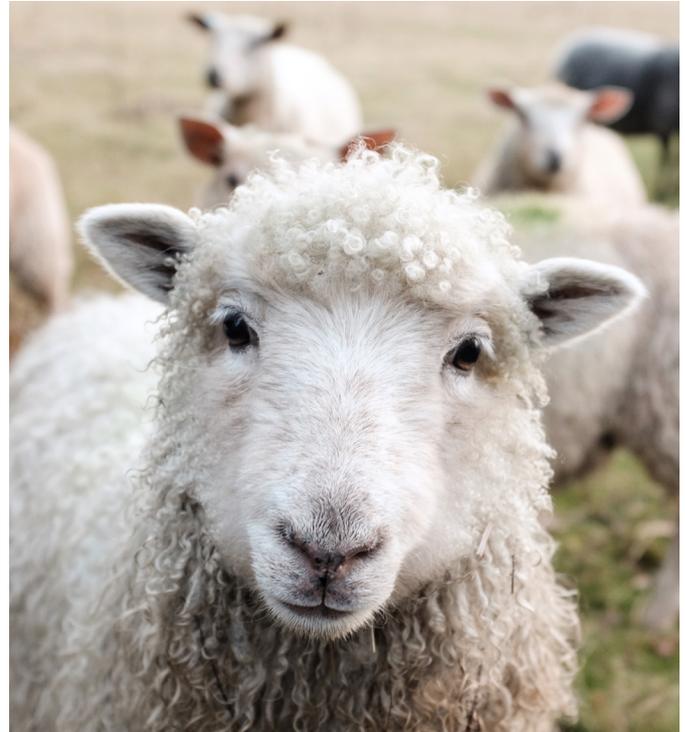
Teaser Rams

Tupping may seem like a long way off yet, but it's worth planning ahead to ensure you are well prepared.

Vasectomised or Teaser Rams can be very useful to help encourage ewes to start cycling before the Rams are put in. This can help start ewes cycling earlier, and achieve a more compact lambing period. Ewes must be kept well away from the sight or sound of rams before introducing the Teaser Rams. Teaser Rams can then be introduced at a ratio of 1 teaser : 50-100 ewes for 14 days, before introducing the stock rams at a ratio of 1 ram:20-30 ewes.

The ideal candidate to use as a Teaser Ram should be fit and healthy with good feet, teeth and strong libido. Shearlings often make good candidates as they are young, so are likely to be able to work for a good number of years but have matured enough to have good libido.

If you are interested in vasectomising rams to use as Teasers, the procedure should ideally be done at least 6 weeks before using them to allow enough time to ensure they are not fertile. Speak to one of the farm team for more details.



Cattle Abortion Investigations

Cattle abortions are an unwelcome event, and are worth investigating as there are many potential infectious causes.

As a brief reminder, it is a requirement to report any cattle abortions in:

1. Beef cattle
2. Maiden dairy heifers
3. A herd that has had any other abortions in the last 30 days

In these scenarios, APHA will cover the cost of a visit for us to take samples to rule out Brucellosis. This does give us the opportunity to also investigate other potential causes. The aborted cow should be isolated until negative Brucellosis results are returned. For further advice speak to one of the farm vets.

