



Dairy Herd Fertility

With the long, hot, dry summer, we have noticed a drop in dairy herd fertility in the practice. With many clients needing to buffer feed forage out at grass. As such now is the time to start planning for winter feeding and calculating whether there are enough forage supplies on farm to last over winter. Cows not receiving enough forage are not only at risk of reduced fertility but are also more at risk of developing gastrointestinal disease such as displaced abomasum; all costs that farms could do without this winter.

Reporting Abortions

Please remember that if a cow aborts, it is a legal requirement to report that abortion to the APHA.

Should you have a cow abort on farm please call **APHA Wales (0300 303 8268)** or **APHA England (03000 200 301)**. They will need to know the full eartag number of the cow, whether or not she was imported, when the abortion happened, if she is beef or dairy and if she is dairy, when her milk was last put in the tank.



Daleside

Veterinary Group

SEPTEMBER 2018

Oswestry Show

It was lovely to see everyone at Oswestry show last month.

It was a successful day. Congratulations to Harry Massey for winning the Daleside World Cup Penalty Shootout competition.





Lungworm

With the long hot summer we've had and now wet weather moving in, lungworm is a threat this autumn. So, we thought we'd do a feature on lungworm this month to give you some information about the disease and how to prevent it.

Despite preventative measures being available, outbreaks of lungworm remain high and we are seeing more and more outbreaks of the disease in the northern parts of the UK where it did not used to be a problem. There are several reasons for this. It can be difficult and costly to diagnose the disease as there is a lack of cheap herd level tests available. Knowledge on the build-up and maintenance of immunity in the herd is often not applied correctly; the vaccine is often not administered correctly. Gutworms and lungworms have very different epidemiology at pasture so designing control programs that target both parasites successfully can be difficult. Data also shows that lungworm has become a disease of adult cattle where it used to be a disease of young cattle in their first grazing season.

Lungworm is an expensive disease and is one of a few causes of significant deaths on dairy farms. Overall costs of an outbreak of lungworm have been

conservatively estimated at £140 per adult cow in the herd. This figure comprises the cost of milk drop, treatment, collection of dead stock, lab costs and extra inseminations. Milk drop as a result of lungworm burden averages at 40kg per cow per day; this makes up over 50% of the cost of a lungworm outbreak; so it is well worth preventing. Signs of lungworm include; coughing, heavy/fast breathing, milk drop and reduced exercise tolerance. Its generally spotted well when cows are brought in for milking. Typically, animals affected will stand with their neck stretched out and their tongue protruding. The disease can also cause sudden death. Whilst there are currently no data for lungworm prevalence in England and Wales, data from Ireland shows that 62.8% of bulk milk samples test positive for lungworm antibodies (i.e. exposure of herds to lungworm).

In order to prevent this disease, we need to understand the lifecycle of the worm and how cattle become infected. Firstly, 3rd stage larvae lie on pasture and cattle ingest them. These larvae are then able to migrate through the walls of the intestines of cattle and travel to the lungs where they go through several developmental stages before becoming adults. At around day 15 of infection, young adult worms start to migrate to the bronchi within the lungs and this can cause coughing in cattle affected. At around day 25 of infection, female adult lungworms are then able to produce eggs

Lungworm continued >

and lungworm is known for being able to produce lots of eggs. These eggs are coughed up by cattle then swallowed. Eggs hatch in the intestines of cattle into 1st stage larvae which are then shed in their muck out at pasture. It then takes only 1 week in the correct conditions for 1st stage larvae to develop into 3rd stage larvae which then infect cattle again. Interestingly, there is a fungus which grows on top of cow pats. This fungus has a chemical which makes 3rd stage lungworm larvae move up the fungus to a fungal spore box which will discharge and propel these 3rd stage larvae up to 10 feet away from the cow pat, therefore increasing the chance of ingestion by cattle.

A cow's immune system memorises lungworm in two ways in order to fight lungworm off. The first is to remember incoming larvae; this only lasts about 4 months. The second is to deal with adult worms; this memory lasts about 2 years. Therefore, the cows immune system lasts longer when exposed to adult worms. Huskvac (the vaccine against lungworm) contains larvae which have been tampered with so that they do not form into adult worms. The aim of Huskvac is to stimulate immunity in the cow to young lungworm larvae, whilst still allowing a safe and gradual exposure to lungworm out at pasture so that animals vaccinated with Huskvac can still develop long lasting immunity against adult worms. As such, it is very important that animals given Huskvac are NOT also given wormers as this will prevent the vaccine working effectively.

In all year round calving or in spring calving herds, Huskvac is best used on heifers in the second grazing season. This is because in the first grazing season, it



is advisable to use wormers to prevent gutworm burdens and Huskvac must not be used alongside wormers. When wormers are not used in the second grazing season, then Huskvac is the ideal product to use in heifers to protect against lungworm. It must be given in 2 doses, 4 weeks apart and it is safe to turn vaccinated animals out 2 weeks after the second dose. Huskvac is safe to use in animals from 8 weeks of age as well as in adult and pregnant animals. It is very important to consider the use of the vaccine in bought-in animals which have not previously been exposed to lungworm. Please speak to a member of the farm team here at Daleside if you would like advise on using Huskvac and how best to use it in your herd.

So, how can we test for lungworm? We can take faecal (poo) samples, bulk milk samples and individual blood samples. However, these all rely on adult worms being present and, therefore, will only show up positive from day 23 of the infection onwards; by which time, animals will already be sick. Therefore, it is important to look out for signs of lungworm, and when suspected, it should be treated.

Effective strategies to control both lungworm and gut worm can be difficult to come up with; as you can see from above there is a lot to think about, so please speak to a member of the Daleside Farm Team today for some advice tailored to your farm on lungworm control.



Grass Staggers

The wet weather and the sudden growth of grass (that green stuff which we've all forgotten even existed before the drought) may also leave cattle susceptible to grass staggers. Signs include sudden death, excitability, twitching muscles and a staggering gait.

Animals affected can also seizure or fit. If you suspect grass staggers in one of your cattle, contact the office immediately, as this is an emergency and requires treatment urgently. To prevent grass staggers, the diet of cattle should be adequately supplemented with magnesium. There are several ways to do this such as high magnesium licks, supplementing cake or adding magnesium salts to drinking water. Please speak to a member of the farm team if you would like to discuss what is best for your farm.

Allevinix Out of Stock

Allevinix has now stopped being produced. One of the ingredients has been banned for use in food producing animals.

However, there are several alternative anti-inflammatory drugs including a pour-on product containing flunixin which lasts 48 hours, has a 36 hour milk withhold and a 7 day meat withhold. Please speak to a member of the farm team today about a suitable alternative for your stock's needs.



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