



**Daleside**  
Veterinary Group

# FARM NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2020

## Team News



### Nichol Fisher

We are very pleased to be welcoming Nichol as a permanent member of the farm vet team from mid September. Nichol is an experienced farm

vet, having worked in farm practice as well as at Leahurst Farm Animal Practice, part of Liverpool University. Although she has enjoyed her time at Leahurst, she has missed the pace of general farm practice and the volume of cases which this brings. She is interested in all aspects of livestock health and is keen to get stuck in to work on farm.

Outside of work Nichol loves spending time with her dogs, who are keen members of a regional Flyball team.



## Farming Connect Clinic Funding

There is a new round of Farming Connect funding for animal health clinics available until the New Year. There is up to £250 available per farm, if you are registered with Farming Connect. The funding can be used to carry out animal health investigations such as infectious disease investigation, nutrition and metabolic investigations, bull and ram fertility testing, worm egg counting. For more details speak to one of the farm team.

## Medicines news - Alamyacin LA withdrawal periods

There has been changes to the withdrawal period for Alamyacin LA. The meat withdrawal periods have been extended, and the cattle milk withdrawal period has reduced, as follows:

OLD WITHDRAWAL PERIOD		NEW WITHDRAWAL PERIOD	
Meat & offal:	Milk:	Meat & offal:	Milk:
Cattle - 31 days	Cattle - 10 days	Cattle - 41 days	Cattle - 8 days
Sheep - 9 days	Sheep - 7 days	Sheep - 24 days	Sheep - 7 days
Pigs - 18 days		Pigs - 20 days	

## Gwaredu BVD Scheme Extension

The Gwaredu BVD testing scheme was due to come to an end this month, but it has now been extended until March 2021. This allows us to continue doing an annual youngstock screen of 5 cattle from each management group between 9-18 months old at the herd TB test. This helps us assess the BVD status of your herd. Then if there are signs of active infection in the herd there is further funding available to carry out a PI hunt, looking for persistently infected carrier animals in the herd. The funding for this PI hunt has also been extended until December 2022.

Clara Valderrama, a final year veterinary student at the Royal Veterinary College is carrying out a survey to assess the impact of BVD on the health of beef herds in Wales. She is carrying out a study on coinfection with BVD in Welsh beef herds. We would appreciate if you could take a few moments to fill out a short survey. All information will be held securely and personally identifiable information will be kept separately from any herd information supplied. <https://forms.gle/EApCca6LV3wJEFYH6>



# Implanting Embryos in Repeat Breeder Cows

Fertility and poor conception are common reasons for culling cows. Implanting an embryo can be a cost-effective way to get a cow in calf. Cows that are suitable to consider for embryo implantation are ones that cycle regularly, have had several services and not held in calf. We use a beef cross embryo which, when implanted 7-8 days after the cow is served improves the chances of the cow getting in calf. We would expect to get on average 50% conception rate even in these repeat breeder cows. This can be an effective way of keeping a cow in the herd and avoiding the need to cull her, particularly if you have got a limited number of heifer replacements, are increasing cow numbers, or have lost cows from the herd due to TB. We are running a 'No Win No Fee' offer on the implantation fee until the end of 2020. So, if a cow does not become pregnant from an embryo implantation, we would only charge the cost of the embryo and drugs, without the implantation fee. If the cow becomes pregnant, we would charge the usual implantation fee as well as the cost of the embryo and drugs. For more details, speak to one of the farm team



to become ketotic, at risk of a left displaced abomasum (LDA) and reduced fertility in the subsequent lactation.

Milk fever occurs when a cow's blood calcium levels become low due to the sudden increase in demand at calving and lactation. A cow will struggle to take in enough calcium in her diet to meet this sudden increase in Calcium demand, so has to rely on releasing body reserves, but this can take 2-3 days to occur. The key to prevent milk fever is to manage the diet so the cow's body is already primed to release body reserves of Calcium before calving.

The mineral balance in the diet in the last 3 weeks before calving is particularly important to reduce the risk of milk fever. The balance between positive charged ions (or salts) and negative ions in the diet is key to manage milk fever risk. This Dietary Cation Anion Balance, or DCAB needs to be as low as possible. Unfortunately grass and grass silage tends to have a high positive DCAB value. Grass from fields that have high levels of Potash in the soil (likely if spread with slurry or high Potassium fertilisers) has a particularly high DCAB value. So, grazing dry cows on grass, particularly young fast-growing grass is likely to lead to milk fever problems. Finding a way to feed dry cows the lowest potash forage you have available, and supplement transition cows with the right minerals and salts is essential. This can be done by feeding a small amount of dry cow concentrate or blend with appropriate minerals. This also helps the rumen adapt to being fed concentrates before calving. Adding salts such as Magnesium Chloride to drinking water can also help reduce the DCAB value. But it doesn't taste that good, so care needs to be taken not to add too much as it will decrease water intake. You must also ensure that no other sources of water are available, otherwise the cows will drink this other water and not get the minerals.

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## Milk Fever

The average incidence of milk fever in UK dairy herds is estimated to be around 7-8%, but it can be much higher in some herds especially around this time of year, where dry cows have spent the summer grazing.

You'll all be aware that milk fever causes muscle weakness, and a cow may appear wobbly or twitchy, which can then progress to a down cow unable to get up. This usually occurs between 48 hours before calving to 48 hours after calving. However the clinical cases are only ever the tip of the iceberg in a herd. For every clinical case of milk fever there will be many other cows that have subclinical low calcium levels around calving. These cows won't necessarily show any outward clinical signs, but will be much more likely to retain their cleansing, be slower calving, are more likely to develop endometritis (whites) and have a reduced appetite after calving. All these things make these cows much more likely

