

Trans Cambrian Way Challenge

On the 9th of May, Guy will be taking on the Trans Cambrian Way challenge. It involves cycling 100 miles off road, across Mid Wales from the English border to the West Wales coast over three days, with about 3250m of elevation!

He will be raising money for a great charity, The DPJ foundation. The DPJ Foundation is a Welsh mental health charity to support those in agriculture and rural communities with mental health problems. There are three main strands to their work: Support through specific local counselling, Awareness through social media discussing mental health, Mental Health Awareness training.

If you would like to donate, you can do so at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/guy-tomlinson1.

I'm sure the support will be greatly appreciated by Guy and the DPJ foundation. For more information about the work carried out by the charity please visit their website www.thedpjfoundation.co.uk and follow them on Twitter (@dpjfoundation) and Facebook (The DPJ Foundation)

Good Luck Guy!



Ubroseal meeting

We are hosting an evening meeting at 7.30pm on Monday

25th April at Wrexham Rugby Club focusing on selective dry cow therapy and teat sealant use. There will be the opportunity to gain confidence with correct teat sealant infusion technique. We will also discuss selecting cows for antibiotic plus sealant dry cow therapy, or teat sealant only at dry off. If you would like to attend, please let us know by the 20th of April at the latest.

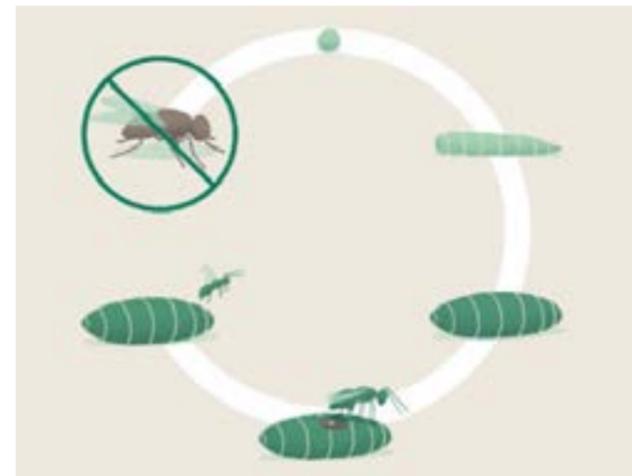


Fly Control - Parasitic wasps

Flies cause a serious nuisance to both livestock and humans. They are known vectors of disease, costing the livestock industry thousands in control methods as well as through production losses due to decreased milk yields and growth rates.

During the summer a female fly can lay up to 1000 eggs within 10 days. This rapid life cycle means that an infestation of nuisance flies can happen extremely quickly therefore it is important to gain control early on in the season. Numbers within the fly population are represented by a pyramid where the youngest life stages are the most abundant, meaning that even when a small number of adult flies are visible, a much larger number of larvae and eggs are already developing on the farm.

The Biowasp is a parasitic mini wasp which controls flies in and around livestock units without the use of insecticides and chemicals. The Biowasp naturally controls flies by targeting fly pupae in and around farm buildings with straw bedding or where dry manure is present. They target the housefly (*Musca domestica*), the lesser house fly (*Fannia canicularis*) and the stable fly (*Stomoxys calcitrans*). These 3 species represent about 95% of the nuisance flies present on the farm.



They work by drilling a small hole inside the pupae of a nuisance fly, where they lay their eggs. These eggs will develop into a mini wasp larvae, which will feed on the contents of the fly pupa. A new mini wasp will grow inside the fly pupa about 3 weeks after parasitisation. Once a fly pupa has been parasitised, only mini wasps can hatch from it, breaking the life cycle of the fly whilst increasing the population of the beneficial organisms.

After assessing the farm yard to identify high risk areas for fly eggs we can set out a plan, and even come out to release the Biowasp larvae at the relevant times through the season. For more info speak to one of the farm team.



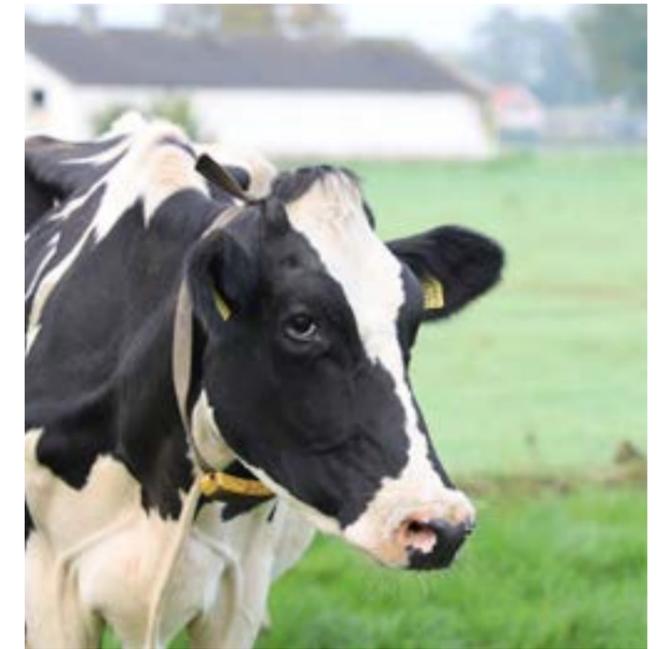
Grass staggers

Turnout is finally here and may have been for a couple of weeks for some of you, but with it comes new challenges for the cows. Cattle don't have the capacity to store magnesium and so there is a need for a continuous supply, however, only about 30% of the magnesium consumed is absorbed through the rumen and certain factors can reduce this further.

Lactating cows are most at risk after turnout onto lush spring grass following winter housing, with most cases occurring within the first 2 weeks. There are several factors which reduce magnesium absorption in the rumen after turnout.

- Spring grass high in potassium
- Pasture treated heavily with nitrogen fertiliser and potash
- Muck spreading on pastures

Often the cows will be recumbent with muscular spasms and convulsions. This very rapidly leads to death due to respiratory failure and cows are frequently found



dead due to the quick progression of the condition. Grass staggers can often be suspected based on the clinical presentation of a dead animal surrounded by churned-up ground as a consequence of fitting.

Suspected hypomagnesemia should be treated without delay with magnesium under the skin. A fitting animal will likely require a vet visit to sedate and control the fitting. Low magnesium often goes hand in hand with low calcium and so milk fever treatment is also recommended. The affected animal should be treated where she is and only transported to a more suitable environment when she is stable.

Should an incident occur, to prevent any further cases the herd should be moved off the high risk area onto alternative pastures. The addition of hay in the short term can be beneficial, as it stimulates rumination and salivation and therefore aids magnesium absorption. Supplementary magnesium can be provided in the form of licks, boluses or can be provided in the drinking water.

If Grass Staggers has been a problem on your farm in the past or for more information on preventative measure, speak to one of our vets.

