



Guys Bike Ride

Well he made it! Last month Guy completed the Trans Cambrian Way, a 100 mile off road cycle route across Mid Wales over three days. So far he has managed to raise over £900 for the DPJ Foundation, a charity that supports anyone in agriculture in Wales struggling with mental health.

You can still donate this month at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/guy-tomlinson1

For more information about The DPJ Foundation, go to their website
www.thedpjfoundation.co.uk

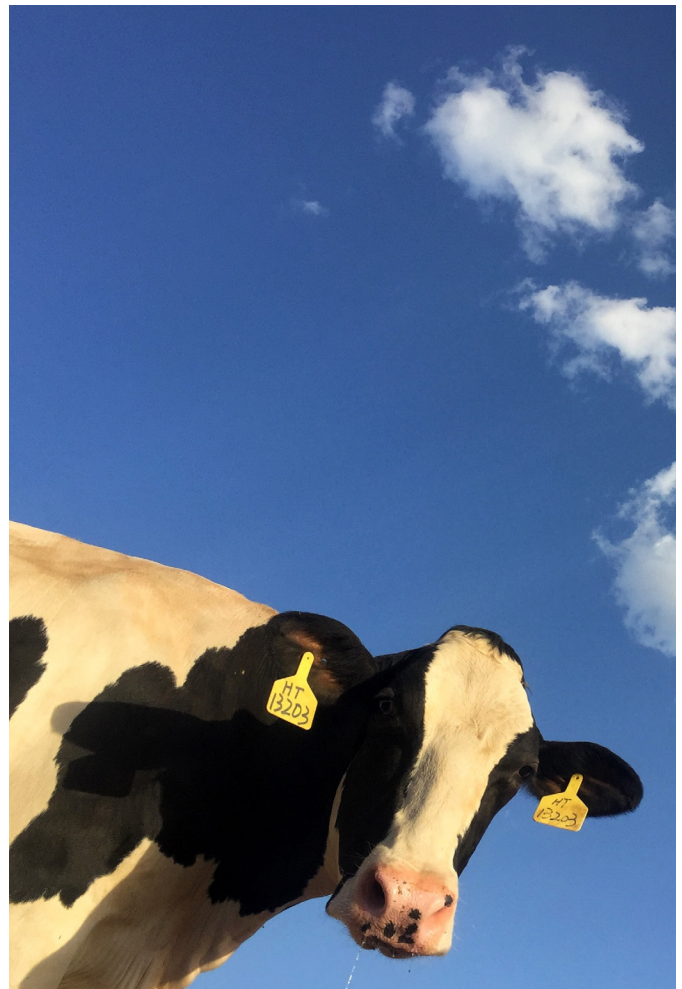
Johnes disease

Johne's disease is a chronic, debilitating, and irreversible disease of ruminants. Animals are usually infected within the first month of life when they encounter the bacteria *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis*. Infection is mainly caused by ingesting contaminated faeces from bedding and teats or from colostrum and milk. Much less commonly the disease can be acquired in the womb or later in life.

Infected animals will test negative for a variable period of time, usually several years before the disease progresses and they become infectious to others at which time they will usually test positive by one or more of the available diagnostic tests.

The most common route Johnes's disease is introduced into a negative herd is by purchasing infected replacement breeding stock. Other risk to consider are importing slurry from other farms and swapping colostrum between herds.

Scouring and rapid loss of condition are associated with the end-stage of the disease, leading to an increase barren rate. However, sub-clinical Johnes's can have detrimental effect on your herds performance. Johnes's test positive cows are twice as likely to have a cell count > 200,000 cells/ml and are twice as likely to have milk yields 25% below



their adjusted herd average. Johnes's disease costs can rise to in excess of 1-2p/ litre with higher disease incidences and these costs remain for a number of years until the disease is brought under control.

With Johnes's disease, the major costs come from increased susceptibility to other conditions and increased forced culling and the retention of cows that should otherwise be culled. Clinical Johnes's cases are just the tip of the iceberg.

NMR have developed new software to track Johnes's disease on dairy farms – Herd Tracker. This software enables us to assess the disease status in your herd by analysing patterns of new infection and infection pressure. This is essential to monitor the efficacy of your biosecurity measures.

For more information on controlling Johnes's disease within your herd please speak to one of our vets.



Preparing for suckler breeding

With the breeding season for next years spring crop now upon us we have created a checklist to maximise the efficiency of your herd by achieving a tight calving period.

- **Post calving metrichecks.**
 - Endometritis is an infection of the uterus lining and in suckler cows is often associated with assisted calving. The cow will often not show any signs of illness but can have a detrimental effect on her fertility. Endometritis increases the time taken to return to ovarian cyclicity and has been shown to reduce the conception rates.
 - Vaginal examinations should take place at least 3 weeks after calving and the treatment protocol will be determined by the appearance of the vaginal discharge
 - We recommend checking any cow that experienced a difficult calving, retained foetal membranes, gave birth to twins, had milk fever or mastitis at calving
- **Heat detection 3-4 weeks prior to the start of mating**
 - Monitoring return to oestrus activity is an important aspect in the breeding season – any cow not seen bulling could indicate reproductive issues
 - We recommend presenting these for an ovarian scan – common issues include ovarian inactivity and cystic ovaries
 - Heat detection aids such as scratch cards or kamars can be used to monitor bulling behaviours pre mating
- **Bull fertility test**
 - Sub-fertility is a common issue amongst beef bulls and will lead to an extended calving period and a higher percentage of barren cows
 - Leaving it to chance can be very costly

- We recommend yearly bull fertility testing as a lot can happen within a year!

- **Consider pelvic scoring replacement heifers**
 - Suckler replacement heifer selection is often done on appearance and family history, however, pelvic scoring is a proactive method to determine future calving ease
 - Pelvic scoring consists of measuring the pelvic canal across two dimensions, assessing these measurements can help us assess the future calving ease of the heifer
 - This is becoming increasingly popular method and has been proven to reduce dystocia amongst suckler cows.

For more details on performing metrichecks or any aspect of suckler breeding please contact the office to speak to one of our vets.

