

Congratulations Charlotte and Lara

Last month Charlotte completed the Delamere Race For Life, and Lara took part in the Tough Mudder Challenge.

A substantial amount of money was raised for Cancer Research UK, thank you for any donations received and well done both!



Medicine deliveries

Our free medicine delivery service runs twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays. If you would require a drop off then please let us know the afternoon before. We can't guarantee we will be able to deliver orders received on the morning. Thank you

Spring Calving Pre-mating checks

With the 2023 calving season finished for most of our spring calving herds it's time to lay the foundations for next years crop of calves. Our goal is to have at least 70-85% of cows calved in the first 6 weeks of the calving window. In order to achieve this we need to ensure our cows have recovered from the previous calving. Post calving checks to detect and treat any cows with endometritis (whites) should be done 2-4 weeks after they calve. It is also good practice

to monitor and record bulling behaviour in the 3-4 weeks prior to the start of mating using heat detection aids such as scratchcards, Kamars, tail paint or electronic systems such as heat detection collars or pedometers.

Then pre-mating vet checks are recommended to be performed at the start of mating on any cows that haven't had a heat in the previous 3-4 weeks. During this visit we would scan the cows uterus and ovaries to detect any issues such as cysts on the ovaries, and then treat or synchronise these cows to ensure they are served at the start of the mating period.

When it comes to choosing your next group of heifers, we often rely on appearance alone, but have you considered using pelvic measurements as a tool to aid your decision? There is a proven correlation between the area of the pelvic opening and how easy it is for her to calve without assistance. By taking horizontal and vertical measurement we can calculate the area of the pelvic canal, this can be assessed alongside breeding checks. Heifers naturally take longer to recover from a calving compared to an older cow and this is especially true for any heifer that requires assistance of any sort at calving.

Pre-breeding is also a good opportunity to make sure our annual vaccinations are up to date

for example, a BVD vaccination booster given at least 4 weeks prior to the start of gestation is the best timing for the desired protection during the pregnancy.

If you use a stock bull, it is well worth getting his fertility tested pre mating. Sub-fertility is a common issue amongst stock bulls and will lead to an extended calving period and a higher percentage of barren cows. Without testing your bull pre mating, you wouldn't be aware of an issue until it was too late, so leaving it to chance can be very costly. A lot can happen within a year, so just because his fertility was good last year doesn't mean it will be ok again this year. This is why we recommend yearly bull fertility testing.

Different approach to disbudding

Disbudding can be stressful for both calf and farmer! Whilst using sedation for disbuds is a well established practice in New Zealand, it has only been used in the UK on a wide scale over the last couple of years. This technique often referred to as 'knock-down disbuds' involves sedating the calves with an intramuscular injection followed by traditional numbing of the horn bud and the horn bud is removed with a hot iron. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (Metacam) is given to provide a longer lasting pain relief along with topical spray to ward off infection.

So what are the benefits of this over traditional methods? Because the calf is asleep it is unaware of the procedure, making it quick and stress-

free, this also eliminates some of the dangers of handling the calves. Due to using sedatives there are other considerations. Prior to sedation we must ensure that the animal is healthy enough to under go sedation and the timing of feeding is important. Sedation is not recommended to be performed until at least a couple of hours after the last feed, this is to reduce the risk of regurgitation. Many farmers have reported that calves seem to respond better after the procedure leading to the calves being quicker to drink afterwards.

This technique can be particular effective in a block calving system (both suckler or dairy), where a large group of calves can be done stress free in one day. If this is something that would be of interest to you then please get in touch with the practice and talk to one of our vets.

Post movement changes in England

From 1st August 2023, any cattle moved to herds located in annual surveillance testing parts of the Edge Area, from higher TB incidence areas of England and from Wales, will require compulsory PoMT between 60 and 120 days after their arrival.

Compulsory PoMT must be arranged and paid for by the keeper. The skin test must be completed between 60 and 120 days after arrival in an annual testing part of the Edge Area. Cattle requiring a PoMT cannot be moved off the holding until the test has been completed with negative results.

