Daleside
Veterinary Group

FARM NEWSLETTER

June 2026

Fighting nuisance flies this summer

Every summer we are faced with the challenge of dealing with flies, which cause serious nuisance to both livestock and farmers! As well as causing an increase in stress levels, they are well known vectors of diseases resulting in production losses due to decreased milk yields and reduced growth rates.

Throughout the summer months, a single 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 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 a larger number of larvae and eggs are already developing on the farm.

The use of Biowaps is specifically designed to target these early stages, resulting in less flies on the farm. 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. Please contact the office for more information on how Biowasp could be beneficial on your farm.

Pour-on and spot-on also play avital role in controlling the fly population. Chemical fly control targets the adult population of flies – killing as many as possible before they can lay large numbers of eggs. It is important to have a protocol in place and treat livestock as early in the season as possible to gain the best results.

After last year's warm and wet Autumn, Schmallenberg Virus has once again become an issue in the UK alongside Bluetongue virus. Both viruses are spread by midges. There is no licensed control product for midges in the UK, however, current spot-on/pour-on on the UK market have been shown to kill midges in lab conditions. As the threat of these two viruses become greater, fly control has never been so important!

Spring Calving Pre-mating checks

With the 2026 calving season finished for most of our spring calving herds it's time to lay the foundations for next years crop of calves. In order to achieve a tight calving pattern, 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, 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 your 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.

Some of you will of already seen Amy out and about on farm over the last month. Amy has joined the team as an Approved TB tester. We are pleased to say Amy has now passed her online modules and is now in her conditional stage of training, going out testing under the supervision of one of our vets.