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Livestock NEWS

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farm paragon VETERINARY GROUP

XL Vets Farm

Inside this issue:

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

The impact of Stress on herd performance?

Stress is maybe something we do not always think about our cows experiencing. There are in fact many expected (and unexpected!) stress events that cows experience during their day to day management on farm such as:

- Calving
- Extreme temperatures
- Feed
- Handling
- Transport
- Social

"Stress" actually leads to the increase in production of a hormone called cortisol, which can have a negative effect on the cows immune system potentially leaving them more vulnerable to health issues.

Omnigen AF is a nutritional speciality produce made by Phibro animal health.

When fed daily, it helps to support the cows natural immune system function (rescuing it from the negative effects of stress), which can lead to greater milk productivity, fewer infections and metabolic disease in the herd. This provides the cow with a more consistent level of immunity.

It can also be fed to calves via milk powder or hard feed.

OmniGen-AF®

The product has been extensively used in the USA and Europe and more recently has been available in the UK.

On farm "Immunity Challenge" trials, whereby the herd simply is fed Omnigen for 180 days and performance data is compared before vs after has shown some encouraging results:

Consistent Results Across Regions

*North America and the EU**

OmniGen AF

	Europe	North America
Dairy farms evaluated	244	1004
Dairy cows enrolled	40.333	651.254
Average herd size	165	649
Differences in health metrics		
Incidence of retained placenta	↓ 34%	↓ 20%
Incidence of Metritis	↓ 34%	↓ 21%
Incidence of Mastitis	↓ 28%	↓ 13%
Incidence of Mastitis (fresh cows)		↓ 15%
No of Involuntary culls (USA sold cows)	↓ 22%	↓ 10%
Milk yield and quality	↑	↑
Kg per cow per day	↓ 0.45	↓ 0.49
Somatic cell counts cells/ml	48.000	35.602

There is ever increasing pressure on farms to improve performance striving towards a more preventative approach to disease and reduction of drug usage. This product is an interesting concept and a different approach to potentially improving herd health.

Phibro have made contact with our team at Paragon and is keen to sponsor some of our farms to try the 180 day immunity challenge at a reduced cost. If you think this is something you might be interested in please get in touch with the Practice to find out more!

By Victor Oudhuis and Charlotte Pennington

Johne's Progress Tracker

By Anne Abbs

Do you use quarterly milk samples to track and help with the control of Johne's in your herd? Until recently, producer reports were primarily a list of cows and their scores and status using a traffic light system. This aids in decisions for individual cows but doesn't help you track changes and see how your Johne's control is progressing.

The Johne's action group has developed a progress tracking tool which is being embraced by CIS and NMR. Data is benchmarked against national parameters and your previous historical data. This highlights the strength and weaknesses of your on farm Johne's plan.

Parameters that are assessed include service and culling decisions on infected animals, and new infections coming into the milking herd. This enables to see if control measures in calves and young heifers are working rather than levels of infection being maintained by action taken on already infected adult animals.

Results should be available on NMR Herdwise and CIS YourHerd portals. These should be discussed with your routine vet to help maximise the effectiveness and, if necessary, adjust your Johne's plan to reduce herd infection levels as quickly as possible.

Red Tractor Update effective from 1 November 2021

- Beef farms now require a **BVD** plan as part of their health plan
- At least one person on beef and sheep farms must have undertaken **medicine training** to help raise awareness of antimicrobial resistance and drive medicine use best practice.
- Health plans should continue to focus on proactive management to help farm improvement, and need to be signed, dated and reviewed **annually** by your vet who must visit the farm at least once a year.
- Dairy farms require a written breeding plan and a **bull calf** management plan to help ensure the dairy industry eliminates routine euthanasia of calves by 2023.

Speak to your vet if you need any advice or to update your health plan. You can find the full revised standards for dairy, beef, lamb and pig sectors on the red tractor website.

Quarantine – what's it all about?

Autumn is the time where breeding stock changes hands throughout Cumbria and all over the UK. These stock movements can sometimes cause huge issues as buying in livestock is the main route new diseases are introduced onto farms, and poses a huge economic and animal health risk. The only way to eliminate this risk is to run a closed herd or flock, however on many farms this is not possible. Therefore, on farms where animals are bought in, there should be strategies in place to limit the possibility of introducing a new disease.

When deciding to buy in livestock consideration should always be given to where they are going to be sourced from. Sometimes the cheapest option may not be the most appropriate, with money saved on the purchase being far outweighed by the cost of any diseases introduced. A new disease can spread through a population very quickly, sometimes with disastrous health consequences.

All livestock arriving onto a new holding should be quarantined. The length of the quarantine period varies between diseases, but should be a minimum of 28 days but could be as long as 60 days. Your quarantine area should be a separate building or paddock with at least a 3m gap around the perimeter to prevent any direct contact with the existing herd or flock. Wellies and waterproofs should be disinfected when entering and leaving the quarantine area and indoor quarantine areas should be thoroughly mucked out and disinfected between batches.

Remember the quarantine period is an opportunity to protect the health status of your current livestock against disease. This time can be put to good use, allowing you to treat for worms, fluke and external parasites such as lice and sheep scab to try and prevent bringing any resistant strains onto your holding.

Along with this, quarantine allow the enrolment of vaccination protocols, as well as allowing time for monitoring and treatment for any diseases not apparent when first purchased such as footrot, and allows the opportunity for blood tests and disease screening to take place.

These simple steps can drastically reduce the risk of introducing a new disease onto your holding.

By Rhys Hopkins

Up to date quarantine parasite treatment guidelines can be found at www.scops.org.uk for sheep and www.cattleparasites.org.uk for cattle.

If you have any questions or would like a discussion on quarantine protocols for your farm, please give us a call at the surgery.

Quarantine treatment options for worms (and scab)

This information is provided by SCOPS as a guide. SCOPS does everything within its power to ensure the information is up-to-date and correct but product choices remain the responsibility of the prescriber and user. Always read the manufacturer's instructions before use. Withdrawal periods are subject to change and it is the user's responsibility to ensure withdrawal periods are adhered to.

Choose your risk category from the three options and then a carry out ALL the treatments shown in your choice of either the gold, silver or bronze columns.

	Scab risk (no dip)					Scab risk (dip)					No scab risk					
4-AD	√	√		√		√	√		√		√	√		√		4-AD
5-SI	√		√		√	√		√		√	√		√		√	5-SI
Mox (inj)	√	√	√													Mox (inj)
Do				√	√											Do
OP						√	√	√	√	√						OP
Mox (oral)							√	√				√	√			Mox (oral)

Key:-

Gold standard

Silver standard

Bronze standard

4-AD = Monepantel (Zolvix™)
Do = Doramectin (Dectomax™)

5-SI = Derquantel / abamectin (Startect™)
OP = Organophosphate plunge dip

Mox (Inj) = Moxidectin injection*
Mox (oral) = Moxidectin oral drench

**1% preferred but seek advice*

Staff News

Welcome!

Some of you may remember Hannah who came to see practice here as a student earlier in the year. We are pleased to say that she will be joining the practice doing both large and small animals from early September.

Youngstock housing assessment: small changes can make a big difference

Have you ever looked at your calf shed and wondered whether it was up to scratch?

Do you complain of sick calves, poor doing calves, poor growth rates or even calves dying? Or have you noticed damp bedding/floors or a draught? If so, it may be worth having a closer look at your shed and if there are any changes you can make to get the most out of it.

Here are some keys this we look for when doing a housing assessment:

- **Space:** This is very important for build-up of disease and has an impact on ventilation. How many calves are in each group/air space?

1. Maximum 12 calves per group – but around 5 is best.
2. Maximum 30 calves in the same air space.
3. Space requirements per calf range from $2m^2$ as a newborn to $6m^2$ 7months+.

- **Flooring/drainage**: what is the slope, are drains clear of bedding, is there standing water? This has a big impact on the ability of bugs to replicate and spread between calves. A damp environment also reduces the ability of the calf to cope with low temperatures.

- **Temperature and relative humidity:** These are important as a low temperature uses up the calf's energy to keep warm. This then impacts on its ability to grow and fight disease. Various numbers are quoted as it is dependent on air speed and relative humidity so this will depend on your shed but a good place to start is about 10^oC consider using calf jackets. Relative humidity should be below 75%.

- **Ventilation:** Calves need fresh air but no draught. Often calf sheds suffer from a lack of inlet and outlet. The inlet needs to be twice the outlet and outlet should be approximately 0.03m^2 for pre-weaned claves, increasing with calf weight.

An easy way to assess your calf shed ventilation is smoke bombs and looking at how the smoke behaves. Here are photos of an example of a calf shed where we found there was inadequate inlet:

The inlet was improved by removing the boarding (shown in the photo below) and will be replaced with Yorkshire boarding.

Please speak to your vet if you would like our help assessing you calf housing.

By Charlie Bradshaw

Have you got problem breeders in your herd?

Could 'cow-stopper' embryos be the solution?

It is not unusual for some cows to repeatedly fail to hold in calf and continue to return to oestrus every 21 days. Using a cow-stopper (repeat breeder) embryo could be an effective way to solve this problem. Cow-stopper embryos are transferred in to cows in addition to serving or artificially inseminating them. The addition of the cow-stopper embryo can help the establishment and recognition of pregnancy. An embryo (originally frozen at 7 days old) is thawed and implanted 7 days post oestrus/service. Matching the stage of cow-stopper embryo to the stage the cow is in her reproductive cycle is critical to improving conception rates.

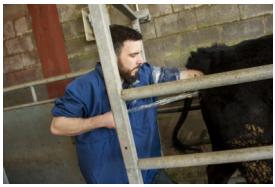
Which cows require cow-stopper embryos?

Cow-stopper embryos are usually implanted in cows that have been served and/or artificially inseminated more than 3-4 times and have returned to oestrus or had a negative pregnancy diagnosis. Cow-stopper embryos are more commonly used in the dairy industry where there is the greatest need for a cow to produce a calf every year in order to continue milk production but can also be used in valuable beef cows that have proven difficult to get in calf.

How is the embryo implanted?

The day of implantation is 7 days after the cow has been served or AI'd. The insertion of a cow-stopper is a non-surgical procedure. On the day an assessment of the repeat breeder

cow's ovaries will be made. As long as the cow has a CL (a small structure that is formed when the cow releases an egg of her own) on one of the ovaries, the cow-stopper can be implanted. The embryo is implanted using the standard technique used for embryo transfer. This involves using a fine catheter to allow the embryo to pass up through the uterus and in to the uterine horn. The procedure is carried out under epidural anaesthesia to prevent discomfort for the cow. The cow-stopper can be put in on a natural or synchronised heat.



Results from cow-stopper embryos?

- 50% cent of cows given a cow-stopper become pregnant
- The majority of calves born will have parentage belonging to the cow's original service
- A smaller percentage will have a calf born from the cow-stopper embryo implanted.
- Around 15% will have calves born as twins, one to the original service and one to the cow-stopper embryo.

Cow stoppers used in a dairy herd are normally easy calving beef breed embryos, making identification of the resulting calf easy.

Are cow-stoppers for me?

Often farmers are surprised at how cost effective the cow-stopper service is, especially when the price is compared to the expense of keeping an unproductive barren cow or replacement.

For more information regarding cow-stopper embryos please get in touch with the advanced breeding team: 01768 439101

By Tom Redmayne

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