

ISSUE 70 Spring/Summer 2020

# Livestock NEWS

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ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

## Covid – 19 Update

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our clients for your patience and understanding during the ongoing pandemic, particularly whilst we have been attending your premises and animals or if you have attended the practice.

Clearly the need for vigilance and social distancing remains a priority for everyone and the consequences of the 'test and trace' scheme and all of our mutual workforces remains crucial for everyone's safety and ability to keep working. Thus we will continue to encourage social distancing and good hygiene whenever possible and where is not achievable (certain procedures for example) we will be ensuring the risks of contact or cross infection are minimised, using PPE where appropriate.

We trust we will continue to have your support and understanding over the forthcoming months and thank you for your business.

## Bovine Mastitis Lactating Tube Availability

The UK continues to suffer a severe shortage of antibiotic mastitis treatment intramammary tubes. Current information from the manufacturers is that our earliest dates for availability are as follows:-

Syunulox LC	Oct - Dec '20	Combiclav LC	July '20
Tetra Delta	Oct - Dec '20	Multiject IMM	July '20
Mastiplan LC	July '20	Albionic LC	Aug '20
Leo Yellow LC	DISCONTINUED		

Currently we have availability of 2 UK licensed intramammary products for veterinary prescription:-

Ubrolexin MC	Ubropen LC
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Ubropen 600mg Intramammary Suspension is new to the UK, is licensed for use once daily for 3 - 5 days and has a milk withhold of 6 days and meat withhold of 3 days.

We have also sourced a UK unlicensed product under a Special Import certificate which we may be able to prescribe after a positive benefit: risk assessment has been reached for animals under our care.

Please speak to one of our vets to discuss your specific mastitis prevention and control plan as well as which products might be appropriate for mastitis treatment in your herd.

## Lambing - lessons learned and planning for the next one!

Hopefully lambing has now come to its abrupt end with lambs outside and hopefully growing well! Lambing this year has been a mixed bag with some earlier lambers battling the weather and ending with everyone praying for rain and more grass! Now that the mad lambing rush is over it's the perfect time to reflect on what challenges you have faced and how you can plan for a smoother lambing next year. If you have faced any challenges during lambing please don't hesitate to phone and speak to one of our farm vets, we are all more than happy to advise, discuss options and create a plan going forward for your flock.



Rhys Hopkins

One of the main challenges that seems to repeatedly come up is clients feel that lambing sometimes seems never ending, with some lambing for up to 8 weeks while working away from the farm or trying to run other enterprises on farm. If this is you condensing your lambing period could be an option to condense your workload and reduce disease build up. This can easily be done with a number of strategies available which suits the majority of farming systems.

### Teaser Rams

Vasectomies can be performed on rams and ram lambs to produce teasers. The sight, smell and sound of these rams begin to bring ewes into season at around the same time so that all ewes are already cycling before breeding rams are introduced, condensing the lambing period. One fit mature teaser can happily tease 100 ewes and the protocol for teasers is very similar to that of sponges and CIDRS, with teasers introduced for 14 days before being replaced with breeding rams. We are happy to perform vasectomies at both Dalston and Newbiggin surgeries or on farm, however these should be performed at least 6 weeks before they are intended to be used.

### Chronogest Sponges and CIDR Ovis

Sponges or CIDRS have multiple uses in sheep flocks, they can be used in combination with PMSG to advance lambing by up to 6 weeks, synchronise ewes before AI or more commonly used to synchronise ewes for tupping. Sponges and CIDRS are vaginal implants that are left in place for 12-14 days before being removed and rams introduced after 24 hours for CIDRS, 48 hours later for sponges. This protocol is widely used and can be used to condense your lambing period down to around 3 weeks with the vast majority of ewes lambing within 5-7 days.



## Blackleg

Blackleg is a Clostridial disease, in the same family as Botulism and is one of the diseases that sheep are regularly vaccinated for in their 7 in 1 vaccine. It can affect both sheep and cattle but typically occurs most regularly in young beef cattle that are growing well.

The Blackleg bacteria occurs in the soil and may be more likely when soil disturbance has occurred e.g flooding, but it can remain dormant in the animal's gut for some time after exposure so it isn't always easy to tie to a particular event. The bacteria attack large muscle masses - normally the muscles in the hind leg, but can occur in the back, front legs or even heart and diaphragm.

If the animal is found alive it is often lame with a fever and pain. The Clostridia may produce gas and a crackly sensation (called crepitus) is sometimes felt when running a hand over the the affected muscle but sometimes the muscle is just swollen and this can be less obvious. As the progression is rapid, animals are often found dead suddenly - Anthrax needs to be excluded in these circumstances before we can do a post mortem to try and establish if Blackleg could be a cause. Cases are often related to sudden exertion such as running about at turnout but can occur in staid old dairy cows that haven't skipped for years! In sheep it is usually related to a wound but in cattle wounds are frequently not present. Treatment options are very limited. Penicillin based antibiotics and pain relief can be administered in early cases but recovery is rare even with prompt treatment. Once a case has been established on your farm it is not uncommon to get several each year. Fortunately vaccines are available and are very effective so it is definitely worth speaking to a vet about control if you have had Blackleg cases in the past.



Anne Abbs



## Fly control in cattle and sheep

Flies can cause problems in both sheep and cattle in a number of ways. Firstly, they can negatively impact feed intakes due to the 'nuisance' factor. Many also report this at milking time, with units being kicked off and cows being generally more restless and irritable. Not only does this create a more stressful working environment it will negatively affect productivity by affecting milk let down, secondary impact on mastitis due to unit kick offs and reducing feeding times.



Charlie Bradshaw

Mastitis is a common problem associated with flies, particularly summer mastitis. Sheep will also be more likely to suffer from mastitis on farms with a fly problem. Additionally, blowfly strike is recognised as a major economic and welfare disease in sheep.

Fly control is, therefore, very important at this time of year. Methods of control include application of an ectoparasiticide (see below), prompt carcase disposal, parasitic wasps and homemade traps. In addition, specific measures in sheep include dagging, avoiding scour and prompt treatment of wounds and foot lesions.

Fly control product options are limited in cattle, although there are many brand names which do the same thing. At the practice we stock a deltamethrin product called spotinor. This has a zero milk withhold and a meat withhold in cattle of 17 days.



There are many more options in sheep these vary in their length of action and whether they prevent or treat blowfly strike. Some also cover lice and ticks and plunge dips also protect against sheep scab. Please phone your vet to discuss the most applicable product for your farm as this will depend on various factors including shearing times and withdrawal periods.

The product we stock at the practice is Ectofly which provides 6-8 weeks protection and treatment for blowfly and kills existing lice and ticks for up to 10 weeks. Importantly this is a useful product for fattening lambs as meat withhold is 8 days.. Another product which offers extended protection against blowfly strike is CLIK or CLIK extra which protect for 16 to 19 weeks respectively. However, these have a 40 day meat withhold, cannot be used for treatment and do not treat or protect against lice and ticks.



There is now an online blowfly strike tracker, which can be found at: <https://farmanimalhealth.co.uk/blowfly-tracker>.



## Calf rearing hygiene

There are many factors to consider when rearing calves and it is imperative you get it right for the success of the next generation of heifers. One of the key factors which often gets over looked is hygiene whether it be in the calving pen, calf shed, vaccinating or feeding equipment. This is not a costly factor to implement but can be costly if you get it wrong..



Karen McNeil

As soon as a calf is born they are at risk of picking up disease either through the mouth, nose or navel. Therefore the condition of the calving pen should be clean, well bedded and not over stocked. Adopting the practice of snatching calves at birth will reduce the risk of them being exposed to any bacteria in the calving pen. They should be transported from the calving pen using a clean calf barrow, to an individual pen the calf pens should be disinfected/cleaned between each calf, well bedded and have a fresh bucket of water available. Having fresh water available from birth is essential for rumen development. Upon arrival to the calf pen the navel should be immediately dipped with an iodine solution dipping is preferred over spraying as you are more likely to obtain full coverage of the navel. When selecting feeding equipment for calves choose a tough durable material such as polyethylene. Open topped buckets are more desirable as they are easily cleaned. This reduces milk residue build up eliminating the ability for bacteria to grow. If feeding equipment is incorrectly cleaned a biofilm can build up on the surface and this is where bacteria can begin to grow, a biofilm is invisible to the naked eye. Frequent exposure to low levels of bacteria can often lead to scours. To reduce the risk of biofilm implement a cleaning protocol for all calf feeding equipment and display in the calf shed for all staff to access. When using stomach tubes make sure you have more than one! Use one solely for feeding colostrum to new-borns and the other for sick calves and have them clearly labelled stating which is which. All feeding equipment should be cleaned immediately after feeding and left over milk discarded, if they are left on the pens for the duration of the day this creates an ideal environment for bacteria to grow. Make sure equipment is stacked correctly allowing them to air dry thoroughly **do not** stack wet buckets together as bacteria thrives in moisture.





## An Update from AHDB on the Genetic Base Change that came in April 2020

Genetic indexes are focused on the figures providing a comparison with and average animal. This average animal has PTA (Predicted Transmitting Ability) of zero for every trait. But, as the national herd makes genetic progress, that average also goes up. It is for this reason that we have base changes in effect an occasional recalculation of the average. If we didn't because of genetic progress almost every animal would eventually be better than the 'average determined many years before. So, every five years, the national average for every trait is recalculated and reset to Zero. In April 2020 the genetic base was recalculated for all breeds. This is why PTA is occasionally referred to as PTA2020. However, for simplicity's sake, the suffix is generally dropped, even though every PTA calculated in the ensuing period will technically be a PTA2020. Whenever there is a base change, there will be a noticeable reduction in PTA values across the board, although the base change itself causes no change in ranking. The important point to remember is to compare like with like. A PTA2020 should never be compared with an earlier or later PTA and, equally, only PTAs from the same proof run should be compared. Be particularly cautious of published bull catalogues, which are generally out of date within four months of publication. The genetic base for all breeds is reset to the average genetic merit of cows born in 2015, and the changes compared to the previous base are given in the table below.

Breed \ Trait	Milk	Fat (kg)	Pro (kg)	Fat (%)	Pro (%)	£PLI	SCC	Lifespan	Fertility Index	Maint.	F&L	Udder	TM
AYR	-180	-6.5	-4.2	0.00	0.01	-96	1	-24	-0.8	2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3
BSW	-67	-1.9	-2.2	0.02	0.00	-31	1	10	-0.6	-5	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1
FRI	-102	-6.2	-3.8	-0.02	0.00	-115	0	-20	-1.5	4	-0.4	-0.6	-0.6
GUE	1	-0.1	0.2	0.00	0.00	-32	3	-17	-2.0	-2	-0.2	-0.5	-0.4
HOL	-155	-6.0	-5.0	0.01	0.00	-142	5	-47	-3.1	-4	-0.5	-0.8	-0.6
JER	-96	-4.7	-3.3	0.01	0.01	-66	0	-20	0.4	-4	-0.3	-0.5	-0.4
MON	-148	-4.3	-4.1	0.02	0.01	-63	2	-2	-0.7	0			
SHO	-110	-5.2	-4.3	0.00	-0.01	-78	1	1	-0.7	0	0.1	0.0	0.0

## Upcoming Events

### BVD Stamp It Out Meeting - TBC



### AI Course - Autumn

Contact the practice to register your interest.



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