

ISSUE 81 Spring 2023

Livestock NEWS

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ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

Current Government Funding Available:

Animal Health and Welfare Grants

A new list of items eligible for grants is now available on the government website. Items of interest we noted include:



By Charlie Bradshaw

Cattle	Sheep	General
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calving gates • Automated footbaths • Mobile calf milk pasteuriser and dispenser • Rubber flooring mats • Automated mobility/ body condition scoring system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile sheep dip • Foam disinfecting equipment • Electronic weight crates • Automatic weighing and drafting crate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaccine fridge with external monitor • Cameras • Digital brix refractometer for measuring colostrum • Ventilation systems

There are plenty more items listed so have a look or discuss with your vet what might be most relevant and useful for your farm.

Animal Health and Welfare Review-This is a new government initiative in England that provides funding for veterinary advice and disease testing. There is a lot of information on the government website and applications of interest are currently open.

Summarised points of interest:-The Review is separate from farm assurance reviews (such as Red Tractor) but it can be used to discuss and investigate areas highlighted at a red tractor review such as lameness or mastitis. We can do these on the same day if this is helpful.

You can use your annual review to subsidise your accreditation testing if you arrange it at the time when this is due.

Once you have signed up this will be funded by the government for three years, with one review a year.

Once you have applied you have **6** months to complete the review.

There are specific diseases that need to be investigated for each species (see below) in order to get the funding. However, you can focus on other areas with the remaining funding. Currently you can only apply for one species, for example if you have beef and sheep you will have to select one. However, the aim is for it to be opened up to multiple species .

What next?

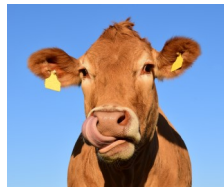
Sheep clients – this involves wormer effectiveness testing therefore we anticipate early summer being key for this.

Beef clients – this involves BVD check (antibody) testing of unvaccinated cattle, usually calves 9-18 months old. So this will depend on your calving pattern and turnout.

Dairy clients – BVD bulk tank testing either for virus or antibody can be done all year round. This will depend on calving pattern, number of cows and vaccination status. Antibody check testing as for beef cattle is also accepted.

Remember, you have 6 months to complete a review so register your interest now to get the ball rolling.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/farming-equipment-and-technology-fund-fetf-2023/annex-4-fetf-2023-animal-health-and-welfare-eligible-items>



Cull Ewe Screen

By Annie Kerr



Have you had problems with abortions, empty ewes or weak lambs this year? Blood sampling non-vaccinated ewes is a useful thing to do to check if you have toxoplasmosis or enzootic abortion in the flock.

Funding is available to help with the testing and it is available until September 2023. In addition there is funding to help with post mortem sampling if enzootic abortion is suspected. Speak to one of our vets for more information.



New Regulations for Export of Meat:

New Requirements for the eligibility for Export of Product of Animal Origin (essentially meat from cattle and sheep) into the EU and Northern Ireland come into force in December this year and we draw our farmers attention to what will be required.

Essentially no Product of Animal Origin (POAO), so fresh carcass, meat or any processed meat products can be exported to the EU or NI unless they:-

- Originate from a farm or premises which is an evidenced member of a Farm Assurance Scheme, or

- Have a current, written Veterinary Declaration that the farm or premises receives regular veterinary visits



Since the introduction of the Animal Health Regulation (AHR), there has been the requirement for farms of origin to be subject to regular animal health visits by a veterinarian and a 'farmer declaration' to this effect was added to the food chain information which will continue to be used as a source of evidence for the certification of the 'regular vet visit' requirement until 13 December 2023

After this date, certification will be needed from either membership of a **qualifying farm assurance scheme** or via a **valid veterinary declaration** and templates have been developed however the logistics of how these declarations will follow animals to the point of slaughter and export is still unclear. Animals that DO NOT meet these requirements will not be eligible for export out of the UK!

It is our advice therefore that farmers selling animals for slaughter or potential slaughter should consider joining a Farm Assurance Scheme before December 2023 as it is most likely this will be the most effective way of meeting this export requirement as abattoirs and



certifying veterinarians will not be allowed to certify product for export without written evidence and they will unlikely take animals for slaughter if they do not meet these requirements.

If you have any queries please speak to one of our vets.

By Bruce Richards

By Jemma Reed

RVC Calf Colostrum Research Project:

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) are currently conducting a research project with the aim of assessing current colostrum feeding practices and the extent of passive transfer in dairy herds in the UK.

Since dairy calf health is an area we are actively involved in and keen to promote and engage with clients on, Paragon has signed up to be involved with this project. We feel it will provide valuable information for our dairy clients as the information collected will be anonymously benchmarked at a national level. This is a step more than what we can offer currently as we can only benchmark calf data within our client base at this time.

The project has 2 aims: to develop an understanding of different husbandry, colostrum management and feeding practices in herds in the UK as well as to accurately identify an estimate of the passive transfer status (blood level of colostral antibodies) of dairy calves in the UK.

The RVC are keen to enrol as many farms as possible up until October 2023 when the project ends. Farms that enrol would need to sign a consent form agreeing to share the results. A minimum of 26 blood samples from calves 2-7 days old would be taken to assess passive transfer. Also a short questionnaire needs to be completed on calf husbandry, colostrum feeding and management. Unfortunately, the cost of the sampling is not covered by the RVC and is client chargeable but for those farms that are

currently regularly sampling calves whether via the Calf Health Club or on an ad hoc basis the project would not be any extra cost and the samples would be used to be benchmarked at a national level. We also hope that at the end of the project the RVC would come and present the results at a client meeting.

If you are interested or have any questions then please contact myself or Karen McNeil.



Biosecurity When Buying in Cattle?

Having a closed herd is the best protection from bringing new diseases onto a farm. However, this isn't always possible. Therefore excellent biosecurity is the next best option.

The introduction of new stock is one of the biggest threats to the health of any herd. It is therefore important to take steps to reduce the risk of diseases being brought onto the farm to maintain the health of the herd and concurrently the welfare, productivity and profitability.

Before purchasing new stock, you can take steps to reduce the risks involved. These include finding out as much as possible about the animals you plan to buy. It is important to find out about the general health of the herd and their vaccination status.



VACCINATION

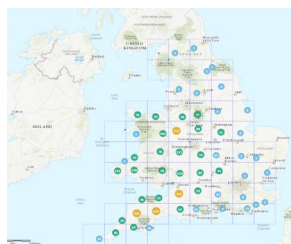
Animals may have an infection, but it isn't always easy to identify. Some animals may also be carriers of disease for some time after recovering from the initial infection. Isolation is a key step for reducing disease spread into the herd, this must apply to any new stock being introduced including borrowed animals. This is a perfect opportunity to undertake testing before they join the herd and carry out any planned vaccinations or treatments.

Isolation means no direct contact between new stock and the existing herd, as well as no contact between the waste from each group of stock. Ideally a separate building should be used, as far away from the existing herd as



possible. When cattle are out at grazing, a separate field with a 3m boundary between fields should be used for new stock. Dairy cattle that are lactating pose a more complex issue, in this case any new stock should only be brought into the collecting yard and parlour after the main herd.

There are some key diseases that must be considered when buying in new cattle:



TB – assess the testing history of the herd you are buying from, taking note of when the last test was undertaken, and assess the TB status of the surrounding holdings using the ibTB map. You should also consider pre and post movement testing before mixing cattle with your herd.

Johnes – this disease is difficult to see, especially in young animals due to the long incubation period. The Cattle Health Certification Standards Scheme (CHeCS) is a useful tool, as it certifies the risk level for Johnes in each herd.

BVD – this can present with a wide array of clinical signs and can cause a large financial loss. The health status of the herd the cattle are coming from should be ascertained. There are also tests that can be done to assess individual animals. Persistently infected animals must never be bought!

Campylobacter – this disease is especially important to consider when using natural service, sweeper bulls or sharing a bull with other farms. It is sexually transmitted, causing abortions and poor conception rates. A closed herd is best, if this is not possible a policy of purchasing virgin heifers and bulls only is best.

IBR – this causes respiratory disease and a carrier status is often developed after infection. Therefore, you should always ascertain the animals' health status, which includes its vaccination status and the product used.

Bringing new stock onto the farm is never without risk. However, by taking steps to assess the health and vaccination status of the herd of origin, and carrying out suitable testing and isolation protocols, these risks can be reduced. The herd health plan should give more detail on biosecurity and strategies which will have been discussed with your veterinary surgeon.



By Dan Lawson

Sustainable Use of Parasiticides in Cattle:

Parasiticides are important in agriculture, preventing significant economic losses from reduced growth rates of livestock. However, these pharmaceuticals cost the agricultural industry a significant amount of money alongside causing environmental contamination. These drugs are excreted in the faeces of livestock as residues, where they can have toxic impacts on the invertebrate communities that rely on dung, particularly beetles and flies.

The loss of decomposer invertebrates may increase parasitic nematode burdens on pasture, slow the cycling of carbon and nitrogen, reduce soil fertility, and increase GHG emissions from standing dung. There are equally substantial effects on the biodiversity of farms, with declines in populations of mammals, such as bats, and birds which rely on dung-dwelling invertebrates for food. It has also been estimated that dung dwelling insects save the cattle industry £367 million per year (Beynon et al., 2015), very impressive statistics for such a small creature.

My project involves looking at patterns of wormer and insecticide treatment in the UK. To take part farmers would need to initially sign up via our website. The subsequent participation involves farmers filling in a monthly survey, with information on the type of anthelmintic/insecticide/flukicide used and numbers of cattle treated. This will take 2-3 minutes to fill out each month. The more data we can collect on the temporal and spatial parasiticide use, the greater the accuracy of our predictions of their future consequences on ecologically significant organisms, like the dung beetle. Through this project we can help farmers decide what treatments are best for both their livestock and the environment, ultimately leading to agroeconomic savings.

If you would like to sign up to receiving this survey or are simply interested in the project please visit our website: www.sustainablelivestockmanagement.co.uk or email on el.graves.2018@bristol.ac.uk.



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