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Livestock NEWS

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ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

Bringing Cattle in for Winter:

By Graeme Hutchison



Body Condition Score (BCS)

On the back of a busy calving season for farmers and vets, now is a great time to take stock and plan ahead. The vast majority of problem calvings we as vets are called to, consist of malpresentations or foetal-dam mismatch. The best tack to reduce intervention, veterinary costs and loss of calves and/or cows around calving, is to ensure suitable sire selection and dam body condition. Over conditioned cows lay down fat in the pelvis which significantly reduces the size of the pelvic canal. Body condition scoring cattle when bringing in for winter allows you to group

cows by their dietary needs, those overfat can have their feed bulked out/limited and those under condition can be pushed while indoors. **The overall aim is to have your cows calving down at a BCS of 2.5 out of 5.**

Image: Agriculture and Food Development Authority



Diet analysis

This takes us nicely onto diet. Silage analysis allows you to quantifiably work out requirements and if anything needs adjusting prior to winter – as a minimum assess **Dry Matter**, **Crude Protein** and **Trace Elements** such as **Calcium**, **Phosphorus** and, we see a lot of weak/dummy

calves in West Cumbria with **selenium** and **iodine** deficiencies.

Pneumonia and housing

It is always a good idea to do a check of your housing before winter. This is harder when the nights are long and the stock are already in, so now is a good time. Have a think back to last winter, was there anything that made you think 'I better look into sorting that for next year!'. As well as the usual running repairs such as leaking roofs, draughts and drainage, have a think about layout, is there anything you would do differently? We have all become more aware of pneumonia prevention in recent years and the importance of shed design so why not ensure you have the fundamentals right before the stock comes in; open ridges in the roof, inlets that

allow fresh air but limit draught and a design that allows for the stack effect. In addition, from an infection point of view, if you have the time then power washing sheds prior to stocking would be a good idea. If you have had problems in the past with pneumonia then it might be worth having a chat with us regarding vaccination, there are plenty out there with varying protocols. Find one that suits your set up and handling facilities/opportunities, ideally vaccinate prior to the stresses and challenges of housing. Combined, pneumonia vaccinations and housing repairs can significantly increase food conversion ratios and limit costs.

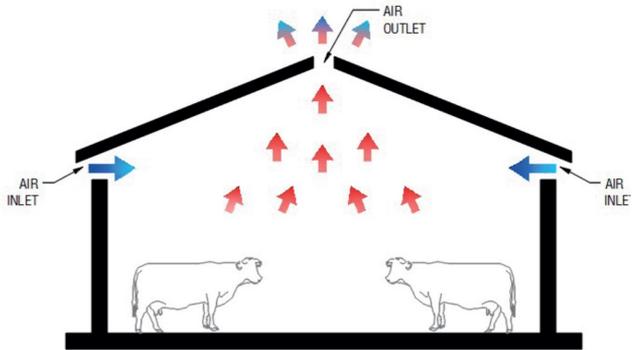


Image: Farm Advisory Service

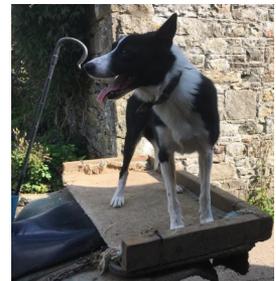
Worming Treatments for Farm Dogs and Cats:

By Anne Abbs

There has been a review of medicines dispensing by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons recently. This means that veterinary Prescription Only Medications (POM-V) can only be prescribed after a physical examination of the animal (unless there are exceptional circumstances). This guidance comes into force in January and will include farm dogs and cats. Some of the worming and flea treatment products we dispense are not POM-V and therefore not subject to such rigorous requirements.

The staff in the dispensaries at each branch will be checking the record when you order any flea or worm treatment, so if you use regular treatments for your farm small animals, please

- **Check with your regular vet if these products are POM-V**
- **If they are, get the vet to check the relevant animal(s) whilst on farm**
- **Ask them to record an internal prescription on your records at the practice**



Prescriptions will normally run for a year so it won't be necessary to do an examination on each occasion.

Regulations for Export of Meat:

Notice - *Veterinary Animal Health Declarations*

EU Animal Health Regulations require farms producing animals or products of animal origin for export to the EU to have regular veterinary visits.

*From **13 December 2023** UK producers sending animals to market or to slaughter must be able to demonstrate written evidence that a veterinary visit has taken place in the past 12 months.*



At least some portion of most carcasses is exported which means that most farm businesses will need to ensure compliance.

The requirement can be certified if the farm is a member of a recognised assurance scheme (currently Red Tractor, Welsh Beef and Lamb Producers, and Quality Meat Scotland) or when a visit has taken place as part of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway for England and your veterinary surgeon has signed a Veterinary Declaration.

By Bruce Richards



Post Movement Testing for Show Cattle:

There is some confusion over which cattle require post-movement testing and when, particularly in relation to cattle moving to and from shows.

By Anne Abbs



To summarise:-Cattle that start in the LRA (even if they are on Radial testing) can send cattle to an exempt show in the Edge or HRA and return them without having to post-movement test. An exempt show lasts less than 24 hours and the cattle remain outdoors – check with the show organiser if you are unsure.

Cattle that start in the LRA and go to a non-exempt show in the Edge or HRA must undergo a post-movement test when they return to your holding. Until that test is complete they may not move to any other holding or show (even an exempt one). They may go to slaughter. If you are sending an animal to multiple shows in the Edge or HRA and don't have time to post-movement test between then the only way round this is to keep the animals on a holding in the HRA or SOME Edge areas (check with the keeper as some Edge holdings require post-movement testing) between shows.



Cattle purchased from the Edge or HRA for the purpose of showing must undergo a post-movement test if they come to your holding before they go to a show.



Post-movement testing is at your expense and must be done 60-120 days **after the animal arrives on your holding**, regardless of when it had any pre-movement test i.e. if it was pre-movement tested 57 days before it moves on, you can't complete the post-movement 3 days later, it must still wait at least 60 days.

If you need to know more <https://tbhub.co.uk> has a huge amount of

Information.

Bluetongue Outbreak in the Netherlands:

The Netherlands has had its first outbreak of Bluetongue disease since 2009, with four sheep farms being affected so far. To contain the outbreak, Dutch farmers will have to start vaccinating sheep against the disease, including any sheep that are being exported. The country will have to be declared bluetongue-free for three years before it can reclaim its disease-free status.

Bluetongue, a notifiable disease that was last found in the UK in 2008, can affect **sheep, cattle, goats, deer and camelids**, but is not known to affect humans. Generally, sheep are most severely affected, while cattle and goats may not show any clinical signs of disease, but can carry the virus for a certain period of time.

The virus targets the immune system and the walls of blood vessels, causing **bleeding and swelling of infected animals**. As a result, bluetongue is characterised by **high fevers, facial swelling, reddening of membranes of the eyes and mouth, and lesions around the claws, udder and around the mouth**.



Images: DEFRA Flickr-The Pirbright Institute

Transmission of bluetongue disease is largely via midge bites. Flocks and herds can become infected when midges carrying the disease move between holdings or when the infected animals themselves are moved. Infected animals can also pass the virus to their offspring before they are born. The spread of bluetongue into the UK could occur from the illegal movement of

infected animals or from the movement of infected midges carried by the wind from Europe. The risk of the latter is dependent on the weather and the level of disease in nearby Europe.

To prevent and control bluetongue virus we rely on the vaccination of cattle and sheep, and ensuring good biosecurity practice on premises. A general licence is required for vaccinating any animals outside of a restricted zone for bluetongue. In the UK, if bluetongue virus is confirmed, surveillance zones of at least 100km and restriction zones of at least 50km will be put in place. The movement of susceptible animals, semen and embryos out of these restricted areas will be banned to reduce the risk of further spread. Any animals that are confirmed positive for bluetongue will be culled.

Livestock owners are strongly advised to source replacement stock responsibly and to consult with their private veterinarians on relevant controls to prevent the introduction of bluetongue virus. Assurances should also be sought from traders to ensure bluetongue-susceptible animals are fully protected prior to travel. Ideally, this means certifying that the purchased animals have been correctly vaccinated and/or have built up sufficient immunity to protect them against the bluetongue strain that is circulating in their region of origin.

It is also of note that, should keepers wish to move show animals to an exhibition held in a bluetongue restriction zone on the continent and then return them back to the UK bluetongue free area, the animals will need to be fully vaccinated against the two circulating strains (BTV-4 and BTV-8) prior to entering the restriction zone.

If you suspect bluetongue virus, it must be reported immediately by calling the Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301.

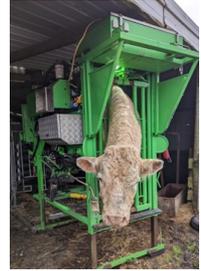


By Diane Watson

Foot Trimming



We provide a fully integrated **foot care service** and can provide bespoke farm foot trimming. Please discuss with your routine vet , our Foot Trimmer-Peter Cullen **07786712704** or contact the practice for more information.



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