

PRACTICE NEWS

With the beginning of the pheasant and partridge rearing season soon to begin, we will be holding a meeting at the end of the month - date and location to be announced shortly.

The topics will be:

'Novel approach to the prevention of rotavirus'

And

'Getting the most out of Antibiotics'

NorCal Vets:
'Dedicated to the Health of Your Business'



Your Dedicated Farm and Game Veterinary Specialists

TB TEST CHANGES

What will the changes to TB legislation mean to you?

1) Post movement testing

The Post Movement Testing will affect people farming in the low risk area. This obliges them to post movement test all animals bought onto the farm from a higher risk area.

They may also volunteer to have a Government-funded pre movement test if they meet a number of criteria, such as number of animals being sold, previous test history and location. If you are in a higher risk area looking to buy in from a lower risk area, it is worthy of discussion.

2) Alterations to Short Interval tests following a breakdown

At the same time, any herd suffering a TB skin test reactor will require a minimum of two short interval tests, which will be interpreted on the severe reading before they are cleared of TB.

This updates a previous system where a mixture of interpretations was applied, dependent on various factors. It is expected that this will result in less undisclosed TB on farms in high risk areas.

3) Private Blood testing may be available

There is now an opportunity for farmers in the high risk area (yearly testing) to apply to APHA to undertake a private gamma interferon blood test if they meet certain criteria, such as the animals being currently free from disease and not removing the statutory skin test. It should be noted that the blood test will not be allowed as a 'second opinion' following a positive skin test.



These measures feed into the cattle control side of the TB eradication strategy. There is more information at www.TBhub.co.uk or speak to any of our vets.

COMPULSORY MICROCHIPPING FOR DOGS

There are a few exceptions, but generally all dogs now require a microchip; in any case it is good practice should your dog ever become separated from you.

It is our responsibility to chip all dogs older than 8 weeks of age, it remains your responsibility to make sure that the details recorded with the chip are kept up to date. This is quick and easy to do and we can carry it out on any visit, please just let us know in advance.



THE COST OF LATE CALVING SUCKLER COWS

One of the costliest problems in beef production is late calving cows and their reproduction management. The target for the length of bulling period in UK beef cows is 9 weeks. The primary cause for late calving cows is keeping the bull with the cows and heifers for more than this ideal period to serve the late calving cows; thus stretching the calving period above the desired 10-week target and potentiating the problem.

For maximum efficiency and profitability, a beef cow must calve once every 365 days to produce the maximal weight of calf weaned per cow bullied – the best measure of output in a beef herd. We know that a beef cow needs at least 45 days for her uterus to involute and be ready again to conceive, leaving only another 40 days or 2-3 cycles for her to get in calf.

If a cow calves late in an extended calving period (over 10 weeks) this will mean that she may only have 2 – 3 weeks before the bulls are put back in, and will not yet be cycling again. In addition to this, the first cycle has low conception rates, so many late calvers have only one true cycle with the bull, thus leading to a higher percentage of empty cows in your herd at the pregnancy diagnosis.

It's been shown that an empty cow costs on average more than £2 per day (~£720/year) when only considering feed costs. Even if you choose to cull barren cows after autumn pregnancy diagnosis, the prices for meat carcass are often low in that period so, whether kept or culled, the late calvers cause considerable economic losses to the farmer.

We can reduce the problems described above by oestrus synchronisation of these late calving animals before the bulls are put in for the next breeding period. Oestrus synchronisation in beef cattle consists of identifying the animals at risk (i.e. those calving beyond the recommended 10-week period or with a poor body condition score) and putting them on a hormonal treatment programme.



One favoured approach is the use of an intravaginal device and intramuscular injections administered according to a strict time protocol; this a viable economical solution. For more information, call your vet.

ACTION JOHNE'S INITIATIVE

There is increasing pressure from some milk purchasers for their producers to be signed up to at least measuring and recording Johne's status on their farm. This is the first stage, along with knowing your risks, of the National Johne's Management Plan (NJMP)

With the Veterinary Certificate requiring a signature in many cases to confirm that there is a Johne's Control Strategy in place, this will involve more than just presenting the surgery with some results, a form and a request for a signature.

It is likely that the NJMP will become mandatory before the end of 2016. Please stay in touch with the surgery to ensure that we are able to keep your milk purchaser happy, and your Johne's disease under control!



HIGH FLUKE RISK

Due to the very mild and extremely wet conditions throughout the UK this winter, the survival of all the internal parasites of sheep and cattle on pasture has been prolonged.

This means that, as well as having more cases of PGE (gut worms) in lambs than we may have expected through this early season, there remains a high fluke risk.

Chronic Liver Fluke may be seen in herds and flocks who have not taken steps to reduce the burden over winter and into spring.

Chronic Liver Fluke signs include:

- Poor body condition
- Poor fleece quality
- Bottle jaw
- Death

It is important to distinguish fluke from other conditions such as nutritional issues and Johne's disease prior to any treatment, so please do discuss any concerns with the surgery.

It may also be possible to use different drugs at this time of year, even if a fluke infestation is confirmed. This is likely to help to reduce the resistance pressure on drugs such as Triclabendazole (found in Fasinex and others) by being able to save them for a more appropriate timed dose.

Chronic fluke has been shown to impact profits by up to 50%. Prevention is always better than cure so include a fluke control strategy in your health plan.