

PRACTICE NEWS

“Goodbye “

After two years, we say good bye to Jonathan Goodsen and wish him well for the future.

“Hello”

Anna Clark has joined us this month.

She has moved to the area after a stint of working in New Zealand and 4 years in North Wales.

Please give her a warm welcome on farm.

**Merry Christmas
and a Happy
New Year from
Norcal Vets!**



AVOIDING TEENAGE PREGNANCIES!

From Farmer to Vet we dread the call “it’s a heifer calving that never should have been caught but ...” as the outcome for all concerned is at best stressful and often disastrous leading to dead heifer and dead calf!

Prevention is always better than cure, so managing our stock in such a way that heifer calves cannot be impregnated by the bull is definitely the best way forward.

1. If you run a nice tight calving pattern, with the bull going in 90 days after the start of calving and staying in for 9 weeks, then your oldest heifer calf will be just over 5 months old when the bull comes out and unlikely to have been ‘caught’. So, as long as all your male calves are castrated, you are unlikely to have an issue in this situation.
2. If you keep to the nice tight calving pattern above, but keep your males entire, you will also need to separate your dams with bull calves from your dams with heifer calves so the younger bulls don’t impregnate the girls.
3. If, for management reasons, you do not run a tight calving pattern then you will need to treat your heifers to remove any unwanted pregnancies 7 days after the bull comes away.

How this is accomplished and success rates depend on how far the heifers are in calf at the time of treatment.



Success rates in removing unwanted pregnancies in heifers less than 90 days in calf are >90%, but this drops markedly in the middle trimester and further medications are needed; please speak to the vets for further help.

BOVINE TB INITIATIVE LAUNCHED

Last month, the Minister launched the Bovine TB Biosecurity Policy, which aims to promote measures that will help to reduce the risk of your farm contracting TB. The ‘5 Point Plan’ (see the back of this newsletter for more detail) applies equally well to any farmer, anywhere in the country.

Please take some time to consider what actions you might take to reduce the risk of TB entering your herd as it is important for all of us to take some control over our TB destiny.



ATYPICAL FOG FEVER

Fog Fever (or Acute Bovine Pulmonary Oedema and Emphysema) usually develops in autumn, 5-10 days post turning out to a fresh lush pasture, in animals that have been on a poorer paddock for some time.

Evidence so far leads us to believe the signs occur because the lush grass has a high concentration of protein and an amino-acid from the protein, tryptophan, is metabolised by the rumen 'bugs' into a substance called 3-methylindole which is absorbed through the rumen wall and is transported via the blood stream in the animal's body.

Once it reaches the lungs the 3-methylindole causes damage to the cells, leading to severe emphysema and oedema (the lungs are often described as 'like bubble wrap').

The animals will cough, have difficulty breathing, will have froth around the mouth and usually will NOT run a fever. In severely affected animals the ability to breathe is impaired resulting in death.

However, lately we have encountered 'fog fever' in animals which have spent all summer on grass and haven't been fed with a dry diet.

This is because, although we traditionally think of 'fog fever' being caused by lush grass after a poorer diet, there are other plants that can cause these same toxic effects on the lungs; hence don't rule fog fever out on grazing pattern alone.

Unfortunately there is no treatment and the only thing we can do is manage the symptoms, but even this can be ineffective and deaths are common even if only a small percentage of animals in the group are affected.



Please call the practice if you have coughing animals, as this is just one of many diseases which can cause breathing difficulties.

All of these conditions will have significant impact on growth rates, even if animals do not look truly sick or die.

TB BIOSECURITY - THE 5 POINT PLAN

Restrict badger access by considering fencing (electric or permanent), closing and improving gates, or reducing contact from cattle to areas frequented by badgers.

It does not mean fencing off the entire farm, mounting sentries on each gate or any other completely unachievable measure.

Manage cattle feed and water by raising troughs off the ground. Otherwise, next time you need to buy a trough, why not replace it with one with rollers on the side?

Over time, the farm will become populated with these and reduce the risk of badgers getting into the feed when it is out. When feed is in storage, the same models of electric fencing or similar apply to reducing access by badgers to feed stores. cont'd...



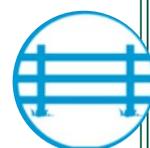
THE 5 POINT PLAN...cont'd

Stop infected cattle entering the herd - as it says on the tin!

Again, it is about reducing, not eliminating your risk, but the measures highlighted will all help to reduce the risk of spread to your herd.



Reduce risk from neighbouring herds, which is easier now that the new website www.ibtb.co.uk has been released; you can use this site to see where outbreaks are in your area.



However, regardless of nearby outbreaks, you should take steps to ensure that any high-risk boundaries are protected.

Remember that preventative actions will not just help reduce the risk of TB, but also of BVD, IBR and many other conditions.

Minimise infection from cattle manure - this is difficult, yet achievable.

If you need to use fresh manure, try to spread it on silage fields as this will help to ensure that by the time it is fed as silage) it will not contain TB.



Remember that ensiling kills TB effectively. If you are spreading muck on grazing fields then previous storage is much more important.

For further information, have a look at the new website - www.tbhub.co.uk.

