

PRACTICE NEWS

We will be having a dairy meeting in September, date to be confirmed.

DairyCo

The topic is 'The introduction of DairyCo mastitis plan and kexxtone boluses to help with the negative energy balance in the fresh cow'.

More details to follow shortly!

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

HOW ARE YOUR REPLACEMENTS GROWING?

Most people would answer this question with 'They're fine.' But how can you be sure? If you feel that you couldn't possibly calve them at 24 months of age, then they are growing too slowly.

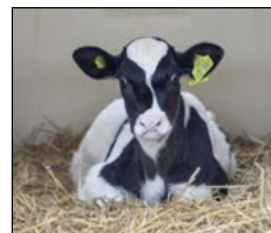
For example, a heifer growing at 1.1kg per day will have no problem calving at 24 months of age; if the same heifer only manages 0.5kg per day, she will be a whole year older before she can successfully calve. This presents the following drawbacks:

1. The heifer may be fatter at first calving, which increases the risk of complications arising.
2. By the time she is five, and you are looking to have made a profit from her, the heifer calving earlier will have fit in a whole lactation more than the heifer calving later. Even if the lactations are a bit lighter, she will still deliver more milk per day of life compared to her mate.

This is equally true in terms of reproductive efficiency in beef cows - she will have delivered more kilograms of beef per day of life by having fit in an additional calving.

3. You will have to carry more heifers (ultimately unproductive animals) for three years rather than two. This places additional stress on your buildings and labour, as well as pushing up disease-spread risks.

It may not be practical to consider frequent weighing of your heifers, but there is a good correlation between weight and height (although there is variation between breeds). Some simple marks on a wall against which you can visualise your heifers regularly, will help you to confirm that they are on target to be lean mean production machines for your farm!



ANNUAL VET VISIT FOR ASSURED LIVESTOCK FARMS

Red Tractor recently updated its assurance scheme standards and, from 1 October 2014, beef and sheep farmers who use prescription medicines will need to show that they have a visit from their vet at least once a year.



This is one of a number of proposed changes that aims to encourage greater use of health plans as a basis for identifying, and acting on, potential problems on the farm.

More information can be found on the Red Tractor website.

NEW FOREST DISEASE

Infectious Bovine Keratoconjunctivitis (IBK) - more commonly known as 'New Forest Disease' or 'Pink Eye' - is probably the most frequently seen ocular disease in cattle in Britain.

The most common cause of this distressing and economically important disease is the bacteria *Moraxella bovis*. The bacteria are maintained in a herd by carriers and spread by direct contact (head to head), flies and inanimate fomites (fence posts, feed barriers etc). Other factors, such as viral infections, ultraviolet light, dust and pollens can increase severity and susceptibility.

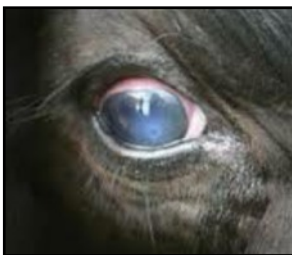


The first signs of disease are usually a wet patch of tear staining beneath the eye and increased blinking. The eye may have a hazy blue appearance, show evidence of conjunctivitis and within a couple of days ulcers may appear on the surface of the eye. If these ulcers become large and run under the surface tissue, rupture of the eye may occur leading to blindness in that eye.

The disease produces an immune response giving rise to at least partial protection which is probably constantly boosted by milder infections throughout life; hence the more severe infections are usually seen in younger animals.

Cases can recover spontaneously but many require varying degrees of treatment - in uncomplicated cases, response is generally good but a white scar can often be seen on the surface of the eye. Ensure gloves and protective clothing are worn and then disinfected when handling infected animals.

Purchased stock can be a source of infection, therefore new stock should be temporarily isolated wherever possible. Fly control using ear tags and pour-on insecticides is advisable but won't provide full protection and repeated treatments can prove costly.



To discuss options for management, control, prevention and treatment, please give the practice a ring.

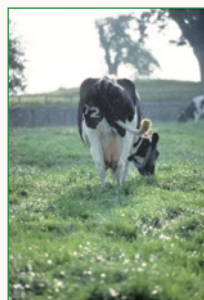
VETS WARN OF SUMMER MASTITIS EXPLOSION

We wanted to follow up on last month's summer mastitis article, with a report on the national alert from veterinary surgeons who are experiencing an unusually large number of cases.

The prolonged warm spell has provided an ideal environment for the disease to take hold, by encouraging the hatching of flies that spread the bacteria.

Heifers appear to be most affected, and some mild cases do not show clinical signs until she calves down blind on one or more quarters.

As well as fly treatment, pasture management to reduce thistles and other causes of cuts to the udder should be considered now to reduce the risk to your herd.



A CLEAN UTERUS!

85 – 90% of cows served by either AI or natural service will conceive.

Why then do we only confirm perhaps half this number in calf at 30 days and why do you see so many come over at 21 days?

There are a multitude of possible answers to this, but a significant contributory factor is the condition of the uterus lining at the all important implantation period, around 16 days after service.

You can significantly improve the opportunity for the cow to hold in calf by ensuring that the uterus is in top condition before service.

This is where the post-calving check is so important; often overlooked, it may be the most important veterinary ultrasound examination of the cows year.

The outcome of the ultrasound will dictate whether she becomes a high or low fertility performer for the next season.

The ultrasound can also be used to have a look at the cow's ovaries, helping to determine how soon after calving the heifer is likely to start cycling again.

So, all things considered, the costs of this quick examination are hugely repaid by the savings to be made in helping to get your cows back in calf when you want them to.

For more information, give the practice a ring.