

Dear Customer

As I write this newsletter in early March, many of you will know that I had a skiing holiday whilst Jono and John ran the practice for 4 days. I must thank them as they did a tremendous job. It is now Jono's turn to have a week of skiing, so let's hope he comes back in one piece!

Compared to last year, we are 75% up on cow caesareans. I think the mild winter has meant cows have maintained condition while they were still outdoors and are calving in better condition than in previous years which has led to heavier calf weights.

The misty, high humidity weather has meant we have seen several outbreaks of pneumonia in calves and fattening cattle and *Strep uberis* mastitis in dairy cows. Many of the outbreaks of pneumonia have been exacerbated or caused by IBR virus. Typical signs are very runny nasal discharge, runny eyes and a chronic rasping cough. Stress (nutritional, mixing of stock, weaning, poor quality air flow) will be a major contributing factor. Control is easy with a very cost-effective single dose vaccine given on arrival to the farm or at weaning. Cost is only £2.15 per dose.

Sheep

Lambing has well and truly started and our £65 ewe caesarean has been very popular. Jono did six in one week, with a 100% success rate.

Schmallenberg virus (SBV), as you all are aware, has been found in sheep across the eastern counties and here in the home counties. I lambed a ewe who had a lamb showing clinical signs (see picture). It had a deformed jaw and fused forelimb joints.

Berkshire farmers too have seen deformed lambs.



This lamb had deformed front legs with a very under shot jaw.

During the winter, we have seen abortions due to Enzootic abortion and Toxoplasmosis on several flocks so this summer the affected flocks will be vaccinated for both diseases in preparation for next year.

Schmallenberg Virus Meeting Monday 19th March @ 7:00pm

NorCal Veterinary Services and H&C Pearce will host a meeting on SBV with Alan Wight, VLA Winchester at Thame Store and light refreshments will be provided.

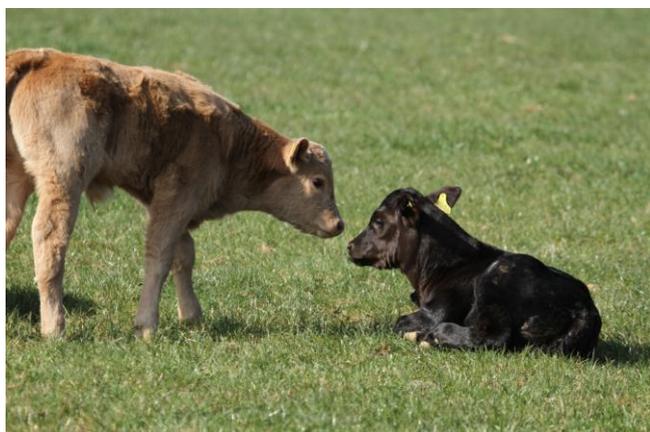
We will also be discussing how we can prevent infection in cattle next summer so I'm confident this will be very interesting and informative meeting. If you'd like to attend let either myself or Jono know ASAP.

Suckler cows

Now is the ideal time for a bull MOT and semen test. We have already been performing semen tests on bulls this winter and have had a couple of bulls showing poor semen quality, deformed penises, and penile growths.

Getting your bulls checked is a good insurance policy as last year we had several farms with poor fertility mainly due to subfertile bulls.

Several cases of clinical mastitis in suckler cows have been identified this calving season. Often this becomes apparent soon after calving as cows become depressed, with a high temperature, in appetite, with swollen quarters plus clots in the milk. It is important to call us quickly as this condition can be fatal.



Remember calves require 2 litres of colostrum within the first 6 hours of life. Intake may be compromised if the dam has mastitis. Colostrum is very high in calories and contains the essential antibodies from the dam which impart early protection from viruses and bacteria. Inadequate or, worse, no intake can be life threatening.

To check intake, keep a close eye on the calf in the first hours of its life and help it to the teat if required. At 3-4 hours, strip the dam of her colostrum into a clean bottle if you have not seen the calf suckle. If this is not practical, then you can use a commercial colostrum preparation from H&C Pearce and ideally bottle feed the calf or tube feed it.

If the calf will not suckle, then call us as it may require intravenous fluids.

Dairy Cows

A recent review of Somatic Cell Counts on a dairy farm prompted a visit at milking. I looked at the milking routine which was adequate, however teat end lesions were excessive especially in low yielding cows. The skin of a damaged teat may harbour many different bacteria responsible for causing mastitis.

Teat condition is affected by the weather (particularly cold and wet weather), contact with caustic agents (for example lime from cubicles, improperly mixed teat disinfectants) and the milking machine (for example poor liners and improper vacuum levels). On this farm it was the ACR which were at fault. Periodic teat end scoring is a good tool to see if overmilking is a problem.

Forthcoming Meetings and News...

Reminder: March 19th Schmallenberg Virus
Alan Wight from AHVLA Winchester will update us on where we are with the disease

Dairy Meeting on 22nd March

'Preparing for Turn Out' - I will be looking at 4 case studies on problems encountered at turn out. Andy Dodd, DairyCo will also present 'Maximising Milk from Grass'.

Game Bird meeting planned for April
Date to be confirmed but topics will be 'What diseases did we see last year?' and 'What management practices influence if you get Hexamiter (or not)'.

Reminder of Opening Hours

Mon – Fri 08.30 – 5.00pm

Sat 09.00 – 12.00 noon

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