



February Focus

As we get used to writing 2020 instead of 2019 the mild weather is making thoughts turn to lambing, fieldwork and even getting prepared for turnout. Hopefully 2020 will bring us some kind weather and healthy stock, but if it doesn't.....

Our newsletter this month has a reminder of the importance of biosecurity – something we see happening on a human scale in China at the moment. It is a reminder to us that viruses and bacteria, and the diseases they cause, can evolve and change in unexpected ways. It is also a reminder that in the face of this, our key lines of biosecurity defences would be recognisable to the villagers of plague-struck Eyam in Derbyshire in the 17th century (which I happened to visit this Autumn – They have a very nice brewery there now!!).

The outbreak there was caused by infected hides brought in from London for the leatherworks and the outbreak cost 260 lives but it was eventual contained within the village (saving thousands in the neighbouring villages) and brought to an end after 12 months by following some pretty basic steps – Keep new infection out (all movement into and out of the

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village was stopped), if in doubt, isolate (food was delivered to the edge of the village and left on a rocky slope, all gatherings were banned), prevent spread by practicing good hygiene (including disposal of bodies), and control the vectors or reservoirs of disease – crushed lime and spirits were used as a disinfectants and cats were brought in to tackle the rat population.

We know a lot more about disease spread now but these principles are still the same and are useful in practically all diseases we see on farm, so have a read of the newsletter and see if we can keep up with the 17th century!!

Tim

Training Courses

Calf Club relaunch

Are you interested in maximising your returns from your calves and youngstock? – both dairy heifers and beef calves to sell? We are relaunching our quarterly dairy heifer meeting as the Calf Club with our first meeting at Bentleyford Farm, Longnor by kind permission of the Higgins family on 13/02/2020 at 12 noon until 2pm. There is a nominal fee to join us but lunch is included and hopefully we can bring some fresh ideas for you to discuss and learn from.

Mastering Medicines

As you are probably aware it is now a requirement for dairy's farm assurance and an advisory for all other farm assured farms to have at least one member of staff trained in the use of medicines. We run two different courses that will satisfy these requirements – one is the Milksure course which is mostly focussed on preventing bulk tank failures and the other is our Mastering Medicines course which is a little broader.

If you have done the Milksure training and want to keep your farm accredited there is a top up course that needs to be done annually. This is much briefer than the full course but if you don't do the top up within 12 months you have to do the whole lot again!! So contact Milksure to register for the top up to avoid extra costs.

We try to make this focussed on what actually happens with medicines on farm and how you can use medicines more effectively. The feedback from people who have attended the course (mostly experienced farmers/farmworkers) is that it is much more interesting and more worthwhile than they were expecting. We run the courses once we have sufficient demand so contact the practice to register your interest.



Shropshire Farm Vets

Hanwood Office: Unit 3, The Depot, Hanwood, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 8NY T: 01743 860 920 F: 01743 861 934

Whittington & Oswestry Office: Glovers Meadow Industrial Estate, Maesbury Rd, Oswestry SY19 8NH T: 01691 898 822

E: farm@shropshirefarmvets.com W: www.shropshirefarmvets.com

Company Reg No 6497266. VAT Reg No 817914608

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Biosecurity Best Practice – Control of Bovine TB

What is Biosecurity?

Biosecurity reduces/prevents the introduction of new diseases onto a farm from outside sources.

Biocontainment reduces/prevents the movement of infectious diseases once they are on your farm once biosecurity has been breached.

Many biosecurity recommendations are common sense. We all know that thorough and effective cleaning and disinfection will minimise the spread of disease between animals but other basic biosecurity operating procedures can include protocols for:

Selection

Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) is one of the biggest challenges facing the farming industry today. It is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium bovis*, which can also infect and cause TB in badgers, deer, goats, pigs, camelids, dogs and cats. It is a slow chronic disease, and it takes time for the infected animals to become detectable. This means it is possible that cattle could be bTB-infected but not react to the skin test. So when buying cattle do not rely on just one pre-movement test. Instead quarantine them for 2 months and then test again.

- Purchase all animals from known sources
- Know the health status of purchased animals
- Only buy from farms of known bTB status. Additionally, ask for the previous years bTB test results for that cow AND the farm. Don't settle just for the last PrMT result
- Find out if the cow you are buying has lived in any other herds before her current farm
- Limit the number of bought in cattle

Isolation

- Isolate/quarantine all new animals (re-test after 2 months)
- If possible keep/switch to a closed herd
- If possible avoid using common grazing
- Keep your stock away from your neighbours with secure fencing.
- If you show cattle have an isolation unit and test your show cattle regularly.

Farm Movements

- Limit where possible any unnecessary visits
- Provide a clean parking/loading/delivery area away from livestock areas.
- Ensure all visitors comply with biosecurity
- Insist upon clean, disinfected boots/clothing or better still provide them.
- Insist visitors equipment arrives clean and leaves clean

Sanitation/Disinfection

- If you must share livestock vehicles and trailers, disinfect them. Routinely clean and disinfect all equipment
- Avoid spreading slurry from another farm – used hired umbilicals only for arable ground if possible. If possible store slurry for 6 months
- Don't feed milk from a reactor or IR to calves – this is a common route of transmission of the disease

- Don't feed mastitis milk to calves – the mastitis may be due to M.Bovis

Control of Wildlife

Wildlife, particularly badgers, can transmit bTB to cattle through either direct contact, where an infected mammal comes within close proximity to cattle, or through indirect contact, whereby cattle ingest feed contaminated by an infected mammal. Your badgers may be clean now but there is no guarantee they will remain so. Always act within legal constraints but if there is a cull in your area then comply with the conditions to make sure it is effective.

- Make sure all buildings are secure are there are no gaps through which wildlife can gain access
- Ring fencing / electric fencing (3 strands at 10cm, 15cm and 20cm) around buildings
- Prevent wildlife accessing maize silage clamps and feed stores by using electric fencing
- Ensure the gaps between the bottom of gates, doors or fences and the floor are less than 10cm
- Avoid feeding cattle on the ground or with mineral licks and use high sided water troughs.
- Be aware of high risk areas at pasture—active badger sets, badger latrines

Biosecurity – Best Practice

- If clear of bTB, don't think your herd is immune – it isn't!
- Early detection of the disease is key – comply fully with herd testing
- Seek out and share best biosecurity practice
- Remember that this disease is an epidemic in cattle and wildlife. Protect your herd from both
- Work with your vet to formulate a health plan for your herd

Biosecurity 5 Point Plan for TB

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|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Selection | 4 Sanitation/Disinfection |
| 2 Isolation | 5 Control of Wildlife |
| 3 Farm Movements | |

Final Word

A 'gold standard' bio-security protocol will include the examination and testing of all purchased animals. Several diseases are easily detected by examination and sampling of blood and milk to find carrier animals. Their risk to the herd can then be determined.

Unfortunately this is rarely done due to the perceived costs, however in the long term, it is a money-saving practice.

Prevention is ALWAYS better

Tim



Stock Outages

You may have noticed that there are even more stock outages than the last time I mentioned them – December. We have been working hard to secure the supplies we have, or source alternates from either the UK or EU, these are not guaranteed and we are currently facing unprecedented shortages in mastitis tubes.. I return to what I said a couple of months ago as it is even more prevalent now - Whilst we continue to have a policy of keeping high levels of medicines on our own shelves (as opposed to working “just in time”), there is little if any warning prior to these issues of supply, and with a massive drive on antibiotic responsibility, we can’t just use anything anymore. The focus has to come even stronger on prevention – management and vaccination.

You may have to have some conversations with your regular vet as to what the current situation is and what choices/alternates you have.

Current stock outages and shortages (26th January) –

Adrenacaine

There is an ongoing manufacturing delay subsequent to the ones last year and supply is expected to resume supply late Feb/early March, but that remains to be seen. We are continuing to use Pronestic after our last batch of Adrenacaine ran out.

Betamox LA

There is an ongoing manufacturing delay and supply is not expected to resume until late March/April. We will endeavour to get hold of a replacement for when supplies run out. (Betamox 100 ml supplies are, for now, ok).

Norodine 24

This ongoing total lack of supply is not expected to resume before May and there is no stock available, anywhere. I expect that once VMD agree, we will be looking to import a similar product

Ultrapen LA

We only use this during lambing time and since we don’t expect supplies to resume before May it is unlikely that any sheep will be jabbed with this product this year.

Combiclav injection 100ml/Noroclav 100ml

Limited supply, at least until the end of March.

Tetra Delta MC

We have a very limited supply of tubes which will not last long. Initially we were told that supply would resume at the end of January and we thought we had this one covered however we are now being told that there might be an announcement at the end of January

Multiject IMM

We might have access to a limited supply but this will not meet usual levels and definitely not plug the TDMC gap. We are told that supply may resume in May.

Ubro Yellow

Manufacturing is now ended as this tube has been discontinued – great timing! We have a limited supply, but not enough.

Synulox LC

This product has a manufacturing issue and is out for the foreseeable future. We have none.

Combiclav LC

One tube we still have! At least for now. We have access to a semi-protected supply which I hope continues.

To end on a positive, we have good volumes of Ubrolexin, and Boehringer are going to release a new tube called Ubro Pen (presumably a strong penicillin mastitis tube) in March/April.

Alistair

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS

From the middle of 2020, we will only be producing electronic newsletters for delivery by email, or download from the website. In order to keep receiving the newsletters, please make sure that we have your email address/addresses that are appropriate.

We will be giving monthly reminders so at the moment there is plenty of time to organise this.



Huskvac – back to the future?

Huskvac is a live lungworm vaccine given orally to calves before turnout. Calves require two doses pre-turn out and the immunity is subsequently boosted by exposure of small amounts of lungworm on pasture. In most circumstances then the calf will develop lifelong protective immunity to lungworm. What's not to like?

Well in the last twenty years the use of Huskvac (prev known as Dictol) has declined as wormers, especially the ivomec type have become cheaper and more convenient in terms of pour on application. This is because it can be cheaper to use these products across the summer to get good control of lungworm and of course you are getting control of gutworms at the same time. At the same time there has been no reduction and probably an increase in the number of lungworm outbreaks especially in adult animals.

In the long run, however, indiscriminate use of these wormers can lead only to one end point, – development of resistant worms.

Just think what the consequences for your farm would be if you had worms in your cattle that you couldn't treat. So, just as we have been having conversations about reducing antibiotics, we also need to start thinking about alternative ways of managing worms. There is a lot of potential in terms of identifying animals with genetic resistance to worms (where animals still pick up worms but can thrive with high burdens) but we also need to be thinking of reducing the selection pressure of wormers by reducing their use.

So with this in mind Huskvac, which is a very old vaccine, is an incredibly useful tool. Because lungworm infection causes such damage so quickly (it can easily cause death within 2 weeks of infection) not protecting against infection will inevitably lead to losses, both deaths and longterm lung damage. By contrast gutworms cause problems step by step, as numbers build up so you have more time to safely assess faecal samples and performance. In addition the gut can repair itself whereas the lungs are very poor at doing so.

Using Huskvac gives you a safety net that will then allow you to use a targeted, informed, wait and see approach to gutworms. On many farms you may be able to drastically reduce the amount of wormer you use.

It's not the cheapest vaccine nor the easiest vaccine to administer but it is sustainable, it is effective and for such an old vaccine it is the future.

Tim



TB NUMBERS

We carried out 56 tests in January testing 10526 animals with 13 reactors and 1 inconclusive

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

ALISTAIR MACPHERSON 07909 517184
TIM O'SULLIVAN 07909 517479
ROEL DRIESEN 07813 833385
JAMES MARSDEN 07876 443950
ROD WOOD 07809 227426
NATHAN LOEWENSTEIN 07815 543546
JOHN HEMINGWAY 07496 305412
SEAN HUGHES 07973 567367

ROSA FERNANDEZ 07719 270835
MIHAIL STOICA 07948 475669
ALEX BEZMAN 07943 889285
JAMES ANDERSON 07852 289271
RENATA SA CRUZ 07883 444236
ALEX CORNEA 07765 157263
CRISTINA SAN AGUSTIN 07734 420878
DANIEL DE LA FUENTE 07469 351633
CLAUDIA COJOCARU 07501 099216

Please keep a note of the mobile numbers for the vets should you ever need them

Find us on social media



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Shropshire Farm Vets

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