

Farm News December 2023

Welcome to the December newsletter



In this issue we take a look at Selective Dry cow therapies and how they can reduce antibiotic usage on your farm. We also look at the discussions at the National TB Conference.

Following a meeting in November, we highlight some of the causes of sheep lameness.



Selective Dry Cow Therapy

Milking and calving can be a stressful period so allowing your herd to keep energy levels up is essential for good health management. Whilst Antibiotic Dry Cow Therapy was once preferable, by being more selective it's possible to cut down antibiotic usage and still look after your herd.

The drying off period is the dairy cow's chance to recoup the energy required for the rest of the year. However, the drying off period comes with its own challenges in terms of managing possible udder infections. New infections can occur during this period and not become evident until



1/6

the next lactation therefore management in this period should not be neglected.

Antibiotic Dry Cow Therapy

Since 1950, Antibiotic Dry Cow Therapy (ADCT) has been a popular way of ensuring the herd does not suffer with infection when they are not lactating. Antibiotics and teat sealants are used to fight any existing infections and prevent more being introduced.

At the beginning of the dry period, a plug is naturally formed in each teat to prevent infection. Not all cows are naturally able to form this plug and so a teat sealant is used.

With ADCT, antibiotic tubes which contain a high concentration of antibiotic in a slow-release base, are inserted into the quarters. ADCT is about fighting existing infections and preventing new infections in the dry period. However, the blanket use of antibiotics regardless of whether the cow has an infection or not, is discouraged by the government, vets and milk buyers.



Some studies have shown that using antibiotics on quarters that have no infection increases the risk of *E. coli* mastitis during the next lactation cycle.



Milk buyers are now insisting that supplier farms adopt selective dry cow therapy in their herds and are monitoring closely.

Implementing SDCT

The key word here is “selective”. All cows being ‘dried off’ receive teat sealants but, only those cows above an agreed somatic cell count are ‘selected’ to receive the antibiotic tubes, cutting down on the use of antibiotics in those cows that don’t need them. In cows that don’t have antibiotics, the use of a teat sealant alone in uninfected cows has been shown to be as good as, if not better than, antibiotic dry cow therapy at preventing new infections.

SDCT takes careful planning and preparation. The three essential requirements are:

- Accurate records of herd bulk cell counts’ and previous mastitis cases
- Vet involvement
- Operator training

This is outweighed by the benefits of SDCT to your herd, your farm and your bottom line, as well as ensuring your farm is looking to the future in the reduction of antibiotic use.

Your vet can help you initially and will be able to help you decide whether it is feasible for your

herd to begin SDCT at their next dry period by looking at herd cell counts and clinical mastitis cases. You will then be able to create a protocol for SDCT as operator training and strict hygiene protocols are of the highest importance for success.

There is no doubt that there is a move away from antibiotic dry cow therapy as SDCT becomes the norm. All the major milk buyers are very engaged in this and see the benefit in enrolling their farms in SDCT.

If you have any further questions, or wish to speak to one of our farm vets, please do not hesitate to contact the Farm Office on 01889 567200

Do ewe suffer from mastitis in your sheep?

The APHA Small Ruminant Expert Group is undertaking a suckler ewe mastitis bacteriology project during the 2023/2024 lambing season.



APHA are asking vets to submit up to 3 samples, collected in a sterile manner, per lambing group to help them investigate causes of mastitis and look for antimicrobial resistance.

The project runs between November 2023 and May 2024 and all lab testing is fully subsidised.

To find out more about the freezing and testing or how to take a sterile milk sample, contact the Farm Office on 01889 567200 and speak to one of the vets.



Sheep Lameness

Glenthorne Farm Vets recently held a very interesting meeting on “Sheep Lameness” with Alex Ashworth BVM& DBR MRCVS of MSD.



The evening talk was on the causes of sheep lameness and how to treat cases. It was part of the #HealthyFeetHappySheep campaign. It focusses on the Five Point Plan. More details are available on The Sheep Veterinary Society Website via the link below:

<https://sheepvetsoc.org.uk/news/healthyfeethappysheep>

1. Vaccinate
2. Cull
3. Treat
4. Quarantine
5. Avoid

For more details on the Plan or to speak to a vet about sheep lameness, contact The Farm Office on 01889 567200

National TB Conference

Glenthorne Farm staff attended the National TB Conference at Sixways Stadium, hosted by TBAS, held at the end of November with speakers from DEFRA, APHA, NFU, RABI and TBAS. There were also vets and farmers who talked about their experiences with the pilot schemes, cluster groups and local TB discussion groups.

Sarah Tomlinson, the TB Advisory Service Technical Director, who many of you will know from her talks about TB, chaired the meeting.

She stressed that TBAS are dedicated to sharing the science and evidence to vets and farmers, trying to help to understand the role everyone has to play in TB control. The message is that everyone has something in common: a shared goal to eradicate bovine TB and ensure a thriving sustainable livestock industry.” The aim is to be TB free by 2038 to be achieved by a collaborative approach from all stakeholders.



She said “TB is such an emotive subject and not necessarily because of the obvious reasons around badger control, but because it hurts people and impacts their livelihoods. Farming isn’t just a business, but also includes people’s homes, families and staff, generations of hard work which is put in jeopardy when TB threatens.”



“The conference aims to champion what has been achieved by people working together, highlighting the successes of TB control locally and where APHA has worked together with stakeholders, trying to bridge the gap between policy makers and those having to deliver and work under the rules.”

DEFRA

In the absence of Lord Benyon, Defra Minister of State, Ele Brown (Defra) outlined the achievements made since the bovine TB eradication scheme was published in 2014. Significant achievements include:

- For the first time in 15 years, there were fewer than 20,000 cattle slaughtered in England for bTB-related reasons over a 12-month period.
- There have been the fewest breakdowns over a 12-month period since 2004
- Herd incidence is at its lowest since 2008
- Development of a vaccine against bTB. In 2021 world leading trials began following major breakthrough by APHA scientists with the development of a new DIVA format of the skin test to **D**etect **I**nfected among **V**accinated **A**nimals
- Improvements have been made to diagnostics, surveillance, and epidemiology through a quicker and more efficient PCR test; whole genome sequencing; increased frequency and sensitivity of cattle testing in the High Risk and Edge Areas since 2021
- Formation of the Bovine TB Partnership for England in 2021, which continues to work to encourage shared ownership, co-operation and decision making in bTB. Bringing together experts from government, the farming industry, vets, scientists and academics, the partnership has already helped to shape policy development in areas such as future wildlife disease control and vaccination.

NFU

Tom Bradshaw, NFU Deputy President, represented the NFU who broadly support the government’s eradication scheme launched in 2014. The NFU recognises that bovine TB continues to pose a critical threat to farming communities and represents a severe risk to animal health and welfare. They continue to advocate for a comprehensive, evidence-led policy to address this persistent challenge and safeguard progress. Their dedicated TB Delivery team provides a vital resource for members, colleagues and the broader farming communities in addressing the challenges posed by TB.

FARMING COMMUNITY NETWORK

Dr Jude McCann and Stephen Dennis of the Farming Community Network outlined the practical, financial and emotional support services which are available through regionally based teams and via partnerships with other specialist providers.

The FCN has been helping farming people for over 160 years and understands the challenges faced by everyone in farming. Support services the FCN can help with include:

- Practical support services
- Financial support
- Emotional support

Contact the FCN Helpline on 03000 111 999

TBAS

Glenthorpe Farm Vets offer free, on-farm TBAS visits. The service consists of 2 on-farm visits 3 – 6 months apart. Throughout the visit, the vet will ask about the set up, and discuss any concerns currently regarding TB, and it is an opportunity to identify potential areas where TB risk could be eliminated or reduced.

At the end of the visit the vet and farmer agree on 4 recommendations to help reduce the risk of



TB in the herd or flock. The follow up visit is delivered 3 – 6 months later by the vet to assess what recommendations have been completed and what was involved in completing them, including the time and monetary costs associated with each.

The vet is there to help and not make judgement. Both parties can look at TB as an infectious disease and the recommendations are the start of an action plan to reduce the risk and length of a TB breakdown. There is no penalty for not completing the recommendations. TBAS report that many recommendations are “no regrets” which means they should not involve a large financial or time commitment.

The TB Advisory Service also run a free telephone advice line. Other contacts include:

T: 01306 779410
E: info@tbas.org.uk
W: tbas.org.uk

The Helpline is managed by experienced advisors who are there to help with any TB biosecurity queries farmers may have, but you can also speak to your vet for more information



For more information about TBAS or to book a visit, please contact Farm Office on 01889 567200

Glenthorne Farm Vets at the English Winter Fair

A huge thank you to everyone who came to see us at the English Winter Fair. It was great to meet up on the Stand and chat.



We also raised a magnificent £ 520 for the Air Ambulance.

Thank you to all who bought a ticket.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

PRACTICAL LAMBING COURSE

Join us on our Glenthorne Farm Vets-led Practical Lambing Course on Wednesday 24th January 2024 starting at 10.45.

The aim of this course is to expand your knowledge and develop key practical skills ready for this year's lambing season.

Ticket prices for Smallholder and Flock Health Club Members are £ 35 per person. For non-Club Members it is £ 50 per person. Lunch is provided courtesy of MSD.

Please contact the Farm Office on 01889 567200 to book your place



Practical Lambing Course
24th January 2024

PRACTICAL LAMBING COURSE		PRACTICAL LAMBING COURSE Wednesday, 24 th January 2024	
	10.45	ARRIVE	at Marchington Woodlands Village Hall
	11.00 – 12.45	SESSION 1	- Discussion with Q & A Led by Glenthorne Farm Vets
			Marchington Woodlands Village Hall, Tinkers Lane, Marchington, ST14 8PF
	12.45 – 13.30	LUNCH	Kindly sponsored by MSD
	13.45 – 15.00	SESSION 2	- On- Farm Practical Session

- Discussing preparations for lambing
- Equipment required
- Vaccination protocols for your flock
- Normal lambings
- Problem lambings
- Problems around lambings
- Abortions and weak lambs
- Medicine usage and injection techniques
- AHWP

PRICES
FLOCK HEALTH CLUB & SMALLHOLDER CLUB MEMBERS
£ 35 per person
NON MEMBERS
£ 50 per person

GLENTHORNE Farm Vets TO BOOK YOUR PLACE, CONTACT THE FARM OFFICE
01889 567200

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR OPENING HOURS

Monday 18th Dec – Friday 22nd December

Saturday 23rd December

Sunday 24th December

Christmas Day

Boxing Day

Wednesday 27th – Friday 29th December

Saturday 30th December

Sunday 31st December

Monday 1st January

Tuesday 2nd January

Open as normal

Main building open 8.30am – 12.30pm
(for pre-orders only)

Closed (out of hours service)

Closed (out of hours service)

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We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

