

Abortion Vaccines

Some of you are still lambing, but for the earlier lambing flocks now could be the time to start thinking about your abortion vaccines. Both Toxovax and Cevac Chlamydia can be given up to 4 months prior to mating (anytime from now if you put tups in before October), and must be given at least 4 weeks ahead of the tups going in.

As we have experienced in the past, if everybody (nationwide) waits until September we get issues with the supply, particularly with Toxovax as it



is produced to order. To try and avoid this delay in supply later in the year, please think about doing your ewes/replacements well ahead of time.

Have you had more barren ewes than you would like this year?

Or did you have abortions? Now is the time to blood test for antibodies to Toxoplasma and Enzootic Abortion to see if they have increased your number of empty ewes. The vaccine companies run subsidised blood testing, but that only runs until the end of June, so get in touch if you want to get some testing done.

Summer Mastitis

With the weather as it is, we may start to see cases of summer mastitis, otherwise known as 'August bag'. With fly numbers building, it's important that we act first to try and prevent these cases of mastitis as the quarter is often lost. By far the most useful thing you can do is to make sure cattle are treated with a fly product (e.g. Spotinor). The product provides protection against flies for 4-8 weeks, so don't expect a single treatment at turnout to cover right through the summer.

It is also vital that you keep a close eye on all cattle – remember cows, heifers and even bulls can get summer mastitis. Often the first signs you see of a case of summer mastitis are hind limb lameness, due to the pain in the quarter, so it is always worth checking if anything goes lame.

Prompt and aggressive treatment is best for these infections. We usually suggest a daily dose of antibiotic – unfortunately, as much as a single shot of a long-acting product is less hassle, it just doesn't work as well, so it is probably easiest to get the animal in for a few days so you can treat correctly. If you're not sure what to treat with, please ring us as soon as you find a case so we can sort it out quickly.



Foot-trimming

Cows hooves are hygroscopic meaning they absorb water hence they are a lot harder to trim when conditions are dry. One lesion that can increase with heat stress is sole fractures on the medial claw, this is often seen because cows are standing longer to dissipate heat.

A cow's hoof should naturally shed horn but wet underfoot conditions can hinder this process, such as those often experienced whilst housed. If you think of the difference between a grazing cow's hoof and one that is kept indoors, the grazer tends to have a concave sole needing only the walls trimmed down (a rim trim) whilst the indoor cow will need sole removing. When trimming the sole, it is sometimes possible to see the joint where the sole should be shed, as white pithy horn (see picture). This indicates correct sole depth. This method of trimming is known as the "Kansas method".

Bryan is available for all your trimming needs, working socially distanced at the moment of-course. Whether its lame cows or routine trims, give him a ring on 07506 139047 to get some trimming booked in.



Milking cow tubes

The shortage of lactating cow tubes continues...

It seems a long time since we had 5 or 6 different products to choose from, but we are still going to have to wait a bit longer. We still don't have an exact date for any of the missing products returning, so we are managing with the 3 products we have on the shelf. Hopefully most of you have managed to get to grips with the new product if you have had to change. It's important to remember that if you don't follow the dosing regime on the data sheet then the milk should be kept out for 7 days. Giving an extra tube, or for an extra day can have a big effect on how the drug is cleared from the system and could lead to a bulk tank failure. We will keep you up to date as we hear more on the situation.

Reducing your TB risk.



Mycobacterium bovis (*M. bovis*) is the bacteria responsible for causing bovine tuberculosis, a chronic respiratory disease. As clinical signs are rare these days, compulsory testing is the only way of identifying infected animals and it has been proven to be the best approach to eradicate the disease in many countries around the world.

Testing must be used in conjunction with measures to prevent the animals from getting infected. This can be particularly challenging when there are large numbers of cows and wildlife reservoirs involved.

There are some practical measures that you can put in place to reduce the risk of infection. The TB biosecurity five-point plan is a good guide for farmers and gives some recommendations on how to protect your farm.

If you are buying animals in, it is important to pay attention to the TB history of the farm of origin and carry out any required post-movements tests. Also, whenever possible, consider isolating the animals for a period of 2 months to stop the spread of any disease that those animals may be incubating (not only TB). You can use the interactive map at ibTB.co.uk as a useful resource to check for breakdowns in England and Wales.

Cattle-to-cattle is the primary transmission route of the disease, so small measures such as avoid sharing equipment and grazing fields with other farms will reduce risks. Also, the improvement of the fencing and barriers with neighbouring herds will help to stop the contact between animals.

Taking your animals out for grazing in TB endemic areas could mean that they are at greater risk of getting infected with bTB. *M. bovis* can survive harsh conditions in the environment for considerable periods, maintaining its ability to infect susceptible hosts. Manure can play an important part in the spread of the disease if it is not properly managed. Storing manure for long periods and avoiding spreading it where the animals are grazing are two examples of good manure handling. Also, slurry should be spread in calm weather and avoiding using a method which produces aerosols that could travel long distances



Badgers are the most important wildlife reservoirs of the disease and they take a lot of responsibility in the maintenance and transmission of bTB to cattle. Keeping badgers and cows away from each other's territories can be challenging. Fencing off badger sets and latrines and storing food away from the ground could make a difference.

Finally, another way of reducing the risk of TB infection you can get CHecS bTB Herd Accreditation. This is a voluntary scheme that gives your herd a score that improves every year that it is free from a TB breakdown. It will give you recognition for your efforts to complement government and industry strategies to control infection.

Covid-19 outbreak and TB testing

Early detection and removal of bTB reactors will minimise the risk of the infection and spread of TB. Therefore, it is important that TB skin testing doesn't stop. To facilitate this, the government has introduced some changes and temporary amendments of the TB testing policy.

If you are due for a TB test, we'll contact you and we'll give you all the information that you need to start planning well ahead. Also, you can find more information on the TB Hub website. Please read through the Covid-19 FAQs, as it is up to date and a very good source of information.



Finally, we would like to take the opportunity to thank all of you for your patience and support throughout this period and also for your efforts and measures put in place to ensure that we all can comply with the current guidelines on social distancing.



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