



Fertility Benchmarking Meeting

Our annual fertility benchmarking meeting will be held virtually on 22nd February at 8pm. Please speak to one of our vets if you wish to have your data included. Email jenniferhutchison@mbmvetgroup.co.uk to register your interest and receive your Microsoft Teams link to join the meeting. Certificates of attendance will be supplied.

Are You Getting The Full Value From Your Milk Recording?

Natasha McCappin

Milk recording (MR) collects a significant volume of herd data, however often lack of analysis and action upon results limits its potential to improve herd performance despite its expense.



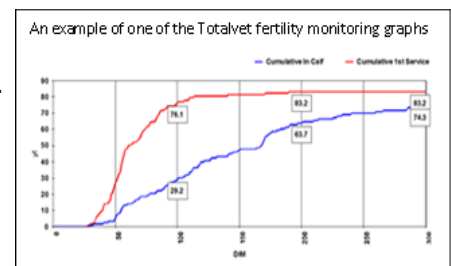
Most herds sign up to MR to collect Individual Somatic Cell Counts (InSCC), which are needed for herd SCC management, mastitis and cow treatment decisions. We have also seen more farms sign up to allow individual Johnes milk testing as part of NJMP compliance. There is an ongoing push to end 'blanket dry cow antibiotic treatment policies', InSCC data is essential in making safe selective dry cow decisions, **so how else can this data you're paying for be used?**

Accurate records for a range of parameters beyond InSCC & milk data e.g. cow services, can easily be uploaded by your milk recorder. The farm vets can then access these records with your permission and use the programme "Totalvet", to analyse and assess fertility/mastitis/nutrition/health. Whilst MAJOR poor performance periods are usually obvious, reviewing data at set times of year can highlight more subtle poor performance periods that would previously have went unrecognised and result in high hidden costs to the farm.

When a period of poor performance is recognised either by a farmer reporting it, or during a farm review, your data in Totalvet gives us a full armoury of graphs/charts displaying yields, butterfat, protein, service intervals etc. We use these to develop an overall picture or pattern of the cows at the time, which then gives clues as to what was wrong, and can direct further on-farm investigations where needed and help us advise you.

NUTRITION: Individual yields, protein & butterfat alongside date of calving allows us to monitor nutrition for specific groups e.g. fresh calvers, we can assess things like cow performance/energy status/risk of ketosis or fatty liver, diet efficiency etc.

FERTILITY: Key fertility parameters can be monitored to give a picture of herd performance; analysis of service intervals, bulls being used etc. can detect fertility issues and direct steps to improvement. Each year we hold a fertility benchmarking meeting, discussing fertility and anonymously comparing farms data (with permission), this is a great way to see your farms data in comparison to your peers and identify if more fertility input could benefit your margins.



MASTITIS: MR is a great asset to mastitis management, using the Totalvet programme we can identify patterns in SCC and mastitis that can direct on farm investigations and help us create a farm specific mastitis control plan that will benefit your herd and your pocket! Remember to give details of each mastitis case you treat to your MR for upload as these records help us advise you better.

What Do We Need For Fertility? For fertility a minimum of 12 months data is needed before we can review and analyse your herds performance, the information we need is shown in Box 1 and can be given to your milk recorder each month to be uploaded at no extra charge. It is worth noting in some cases where an incident has caused cows serious ill health for example, these records have allowed us to display the resultant fertility effects for the period and helped prove insurance claims; e.g. we could display the fertility for that period was incomparable to other times.

Box 1. FERTILITY - WHAT TO RECORD?

- All cow services: COW ID, DATE & BULL (NOT JUST SUCCESSFUL SERVICES)
- Cows pregnancy diagnosed positive
- Calved cows
- Voluntary Cull Cows - Non Breeders
- Deaths (Died on farm not culled)

Disposal of Used Medicine Bottles and Sharps (e.g. Injection Needles)

We are getting increasing numbers of requests to dispose of these on behalf of farms and unfortunately we cannot continue to absorb the costs. As a result we have set up a proper disposal service at modest cost.

If you wish to use this service you purchase a 30 or 60 litre bottle bin and/or a 0.6 or 5 litre sharps bin at the prices shown below.

When full you return the bins to the practice for disposal. The price to you includes the disposal of these full bins through our licensed disposal route.

Please give us 7 days notice for the bottle bins as due to their size we do not keep many on site.

Prices for bins including disposal (ex. VAT)

30 litre bottle bin: £14.85 60 litre bottle bin: £15.85

0.6 litre sharps bin: £4.00 5 litre sharps bin: £5.00



60l bottle bin and 5l sharps bin.

Stop Press

Synulox lactating cow intramammary tubes should be available from the end of January 2021

Ewe Ok Hun Rebecca McCloy

"Listen girls, its getting to that time of year again, when we have to decide who is going to drop dead for no apparent reason" Henry Brewis



Case study: The case of the blind ewe...this month a 4th crop ewe due to lamb mid-February was found one morning standing in the corner when everyone else came forward for cake. When examined, she had a normal temperature but no vision. Twin lamb disease was suspected and confirmed with a blood test and she was treated with propylene glycol drenches. She was still alive at the time of writing...

Sadly even when caught early, many ewes with this condition will die and those that survive often lose their lambs. This is why prevention by getting the ration just right in the last 2 months of pregnancy is so important. At this time the burst of growth from

the lambs create a big increase in demand for energy, whilst the physical space they occupy in the abdomen reduces the ewes' ability to fill her rumen. If she then isn't getting enough energy from her feed, the ewe starts burning her own body tissues which is unsustainable. Feeding the pregnant ewe adequately is certainly a difficult balance, a lot depends on how many lambs she is carrying and what her fat reserves are like, so it is best practice to group ewes with respect to body condition as well as twins, triplets etc.

The vets can advise on feeding and can carry out blood testing 2-3 weeks before lambing starts to check that the ration is performing and that ewes are not sitting on a knife-edge about to topple into twin-lamb disease. If you have any ewes die around lambing the vets can do gross post mortems to quickly identify other complicating diseases such as fluke, OPA (Ovine pulmonary adenocarcinoma) or Johnes disease which is not so obvious in sheep as it is in cattle.

We have also already started hearing from flocks with ewes slipping lambs. This is a problem as common as it is expensive and demoralising. It can be tempting in the midst of a hectic lambing to chalk it up to ewes getting knocked or spooked, but please get in touch if you are losing lambs before their due date, as the most common infectious causes have an effective vaccine solution, and in some cases there are steps you can take to reduce further losses this year. Losses over 2% are particularly suspicious of an infectious culprit. The best way to rule these important causes in or out is by submitting fresh aborted lambs ideally with cleansing, SRUC will run up to 3 lambs as a batch under the same lab fee as the more material they get the better – please call the surgery to discuss with a vet.

There will always be lambing time problems which we cannot control (the weather being a notable mention) but when it comes to twin lamb and aborted lambs, there are factors we can control, and this is where directing our energies can be most rewarding.

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