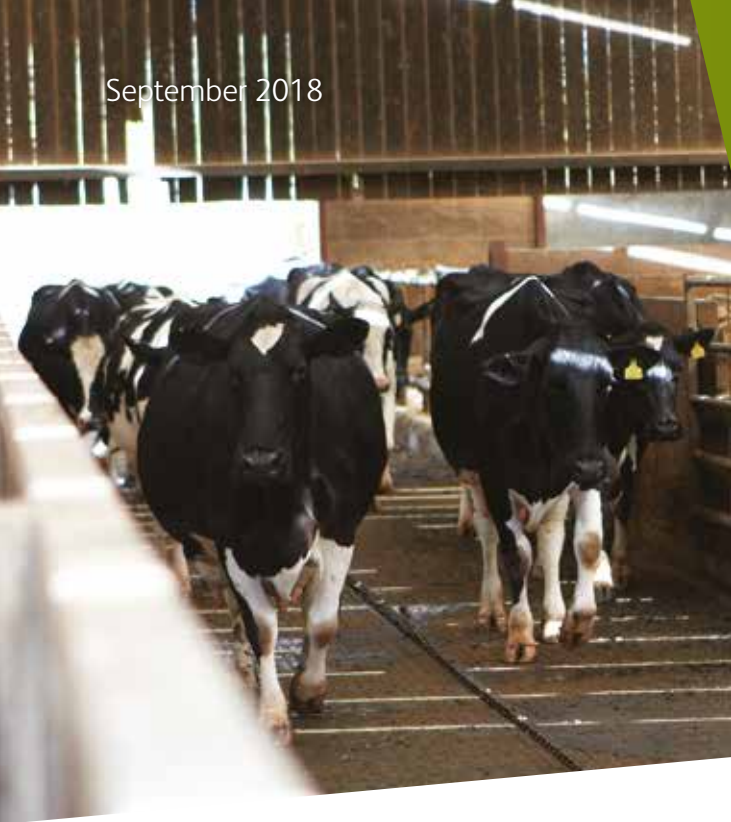


Farm news



Rose Jackson BVSc DBR MRCVS

The hidden danger of subclinical ketosis

Taking control of subclinical ketosis can be tricky. After all, its very nature as a low-level, rumbling problem makes it hard to spot and, as a result, difficult to both prevent and treat. But there are ways to overcome the issue and the first of those is to ensure cows are at as low risk of subclinical ketosis as possible – prevention is better than cure.

Ketosis is caused by cows being unable to match energy intake to their energy output, which surges in the immediate post-calving period. Therefore, the first step in any prevention plan must be to speak to your vet and nutritionist about appropriate diets in the transition period. Such an approach will help you more effectively balance cow intakes with requirements and will be a useful first step in combatting the problem. Additionally, ensuring cows have sufficient feed space and aren't being bullied at the feed rail will mean they are able to maximise intakes as much as possible.

When considering which cows will be at risk, there are several factors to take into account. The first is body condition score, with over-conditioned cows at a BCS of 3.5 or higher at particular risk. Those animals that suffered from diseases linked to negative energy balance (retained placenta, ketosis, displaced abomasum, metritis) in the previous lactation also have a higher risk of developing ketosis, as do older cows (3rd lactation and above).

Subclinical ketosis is most often a problem in the first two weeks post calving, making careful monitoring of fresh cows a key part of the management plan to combat the problem. A simple way to

monitor cows post-calving is to use Elanco's Keto-Test™ to check milk samples of cows in the first three weeks after calving. This quick, cow-side test gives a rapid indication of whether subclinical ketosis is an issue and allows action to be taken quickly to help cows overcome any problems.

With subclinical ketosis causing a wide range of problems (including delays in returning to heat, resulting in an increased time to first service and potentially an increased calving interval) an early 'heads up' could be extremely valuable. Cows with subclinical ketosis tend to be predisposed to ovarian cysts, as well as being more likely to suffer with metritis and mastitis. Importantly, subclinical ketosis sufferers are also more at risk of developing a displaced abomasum, further impacting milk yields and overall cow health, increasing the economic impact of the condition.

Prevention is always better than cure. Identifying at-risk cows in the dry period, and dealing swiftly with any cases identified post-calving, can limit both yield losses and the impact from the secondary issues outlined above. Kexxtone can be given to at-risk cows before calving to reduce their chances of developing ketosis afterwards.

Have a chat with your vet next time they are on farm or call the practice on **01332 294929** to discuss ketosis.

For more information call our practice on **01332 294929** or email farmandequine@scarsdalevets.com



Well done Bobby!



Many congratulations to Bobby Hyde, who has recently become a Diplomat of the European College of Bovine Health Management (Dip. ECBHM). He joins an elite band of only 222 European Diplomats in this subject.

This specialist qualification is a result of three years' hard work during Bobby's residency at Nottingham Vet School, followed by a final exam. This is a very challenging exam which takes place over three days, and this year only four of the fifteen candidates passed (and these were fifteen of the brightest veterinary minds in Europe!).

Bobby would like to pass on his best wishes to all the Scarsdale farmers who have supported him during the past three years. He's now looking forward to starting his PhD in calf management, again at Nottingham, aiming to identify which areas of management are most important for calf health and production, and consequently develop best practice plans for the industry.

We wish Bobby all the very best for the future! Emily Payne, who many of you already know, is the new resident and we look forward to working with her over the next three years.

Welcome to Charlie

We welcomed Charlie Mays to our team in July, and he introduces himself here:

"My name is Charlie and I am a newly graduated vet from the Royal Veterinary College in London, but I originate from Rutland.

I am a big sports fan and play rugby and golf as regularly as possible and follow just about everything else! At the weekends I can be found playing sport, socialising with friends or walking my dogs and I'm looking forward to visiting plenty of Derbyshire pubs! (and maybe even Pride Park to see how Frank Lampard gets on!)

I am interested in all aspects of farm animal practice but have particular interests in lameness, dairy fertility and beef suckler herd management. I am really excited to be joining such an enthusiastic, friendly and knowledgeable team and hope to meet lots of you over the coming weeks and months.

Poisonous plant of the month: Oak (*Quercus*)

Rob Howard BVMS MRCVS

One of the more common plant toxicities we deal with is oak poisoning, from both leaves and acorns. The disease occurs at two times of the year, spring and autumn. In both seasons poisonings tend to be seen after a storm or particularly high winds. Fallen trees or lots of acorns on the ground are a major risk factor. The animals most at risk are usually those on a restricted diet or restricted grazing. This makes them much more likely to eat toxic doses of young leaves or acorns.

Clinical disease is seen 3-7 days after the animal has eaten the oak, which causes gut damage and kidney failure. Both cattle and sheep are vulnerable. There is often a high rate of mortality – up to 70%.

If the animal survives the initial disease it can take up to 60 days to regain good health. Another possible side effect of oak consumption is in pregnant cows - if the pregnancy is between 3 and 6 months then it is possible the cow will abort or the calf will be born deformed.

Early treatment is essential to maximise survival rates in affected animals. Whether the animal survives or not may be more down to the quantity of oak eaten rather than the treatment, so euthanasia on welfare grounds may occasionally be the most appropriate treatment.



Signs to look out for where oak may have been ingested are as follows:

- Off feed
- Depression
- Poor/losing condition
- Dehydration
- Straining
- Drinking/urinating more
- Mucoid or bloody diarrhoea
- Death

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Pride Veterinary Centre
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