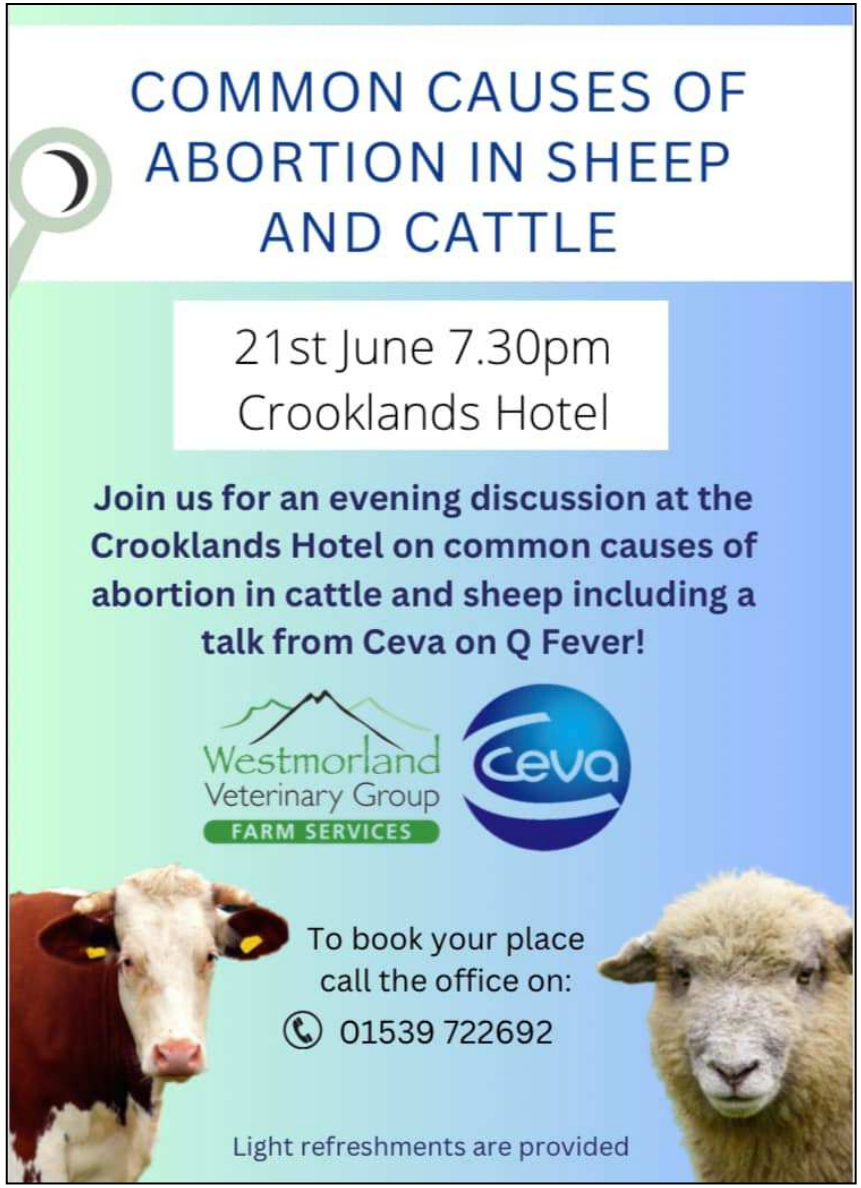

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FARM ANIMAL PRACTICE

Kendal Surgery
Monday to Friday 8.30am—7.00pm
Saturday 8.30am-12noon
Tel:01539 722692

Kirkby Lonsdale Surgery
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Tuesday 8.30am-6.00pm
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Westmorland Veterinary Group
FARM SERVICES

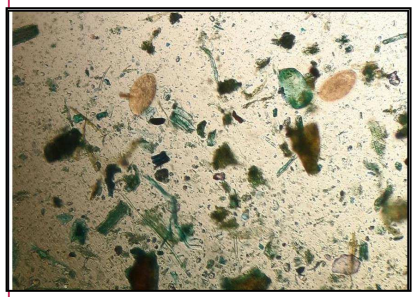
PRACTICE NEWS

KENDAL KIRKBY LONSDALE

June 2023

There's the hum of mowers in the distance late into the night at the minute, and the luxury of folks being able to travel on ground unlike most other years. As long as the rain keeps coming when it's needed then a few months of this will be grand!

A common thread of conversation with sheep clients as the moment is the question of whether flukicide treatments have been effective. This has been particularly with regard to triclabendazole, but naturally this has led to questions over the efficacy of other treatments. To date we have seen no reported cases of resistance of liver flukes (*Fasciola hepatica*) to anything other than triclabendazole. The other day I got some fluke test results back from some faecal samples we'd sent off. The test confirmed that there were no flukes of 9 weeks of age or older present in that group of sheep- saving the farmer time and money in giving a needless treatment. We talked about how it was amazing that more folk didn't do such testing, especially when thinking about the effectiveness of treatment. Wouldn't it be good to know that infection was there and if so, that the treatment had worked?!



Well, that can be done- with the help of a relatively new test called the faecal coproantigen ELISA test, which looks for liver fluke saliva in the animals' faeces. A test of a group (10 faecal samples submitted in individual pots which the lab then pools) done before treatment to determine the need, and then a test done 2 weeks after treatment to show that it has worked or not. Easy. We have a need to be good stewards of antibiotic usage, which is in the farming press a lot at the minute- I think that there is a responsibility also to use wormers and flukicides as best as we are able, also, so that they are there for future generations of farmers and their animals.

Enjoy the sunshine! *Richard Knight*

Understanding the Common Infectious Causes of Abortion in Cattle

Ensuring your cows have a calf every year drives efficiency. Abortion can lead to significant economic losses and impact the overall productivity of your farm. In the UK, certain infections are more prevalent during specific times of the year, and being aware of these patterns can help you take appropriate preventive measures. In this article we will go through common causes of abortion in cattle in the UK. Explaining clinical signs for each and control measures we can put in place. Additionally, we will touch upon Q fever, an important zoonotic disease.

1. Neosporosis (All Year Round): Neosporosis is one of the leading infectious causes of abortion in cattle throughout the year. Clinical signs may include late-term abortions, stillbirths, weak calves, or the birth of calves with neurological issues. Neosporosis can be spread through vertical transmission (from mother to calf) or horizontal transmission (through contaminated feed, water, or close contact with infected dogs). Vertical transmission is the most common cause so strategic testing and breeding policies form the mainstay of neosporosis control.

2. Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) (All Year Round): BVD is a viral infection that can lead to reproductive issues, including abortion, in cattle. Clinical signs may vary, but abortion typically occurs between 4 and 8 months of gestation. Early embryonic death can also occur with BVD infections. Infected animals may exhibit signs of fever, diarrhoea, respiratory issues, or reduced milk production. Implementing a comprehensive BVD control program, including bio security measures and vaccination, can help prevent the spread of this disease.

3. Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR) (Autumn and Winter): IBR is a highly contagious viral disease that commonly causes abortion in cattle during autumn and winter. Clinical signs include fever, nasal discharge, coughing, conjunctivitis, and reduced milk production. Abortions often occur between 4 and 7 months of gestation. Vaccination, along with strict bio security measures, is crucial to preventing IBR outbreaks.

Leptospirosis (Late Summer to Early Autumn): Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection that can cause abortion in cattle, primarily during late summer and early autumn. Clinical signs may include abortions at any stage of pregnancy, stillbirths, weak calves, and infertility. Infected animals may also exhibit fever, jaundice, and reduced milk production. Maintaining proper rodent control and considering vaccination can help prevent leptospirosis.

Q Fever (Throughout the Year): While Q fever is primarily a zoonotic disease that affects humans, it can cause reproductive issues in cattle. Q fever can lead to abortions, stillbirths, and weak calves. Clinical signs in cattle may be subtle, but infected animals may exhibit fever, reduced milk production, and respiratory symptoms. Proper bio security measures, such as controlling access to infected animals and practicing good hygiene, are crucial to preventing Q fever transmission.

Please speak to a member of the team to discuss how we can help you prevent abortions in your cattle.

Ben Harvey

Sheep News

The last Flock Health Club meeting included a visit from PC Jamie Callen who is one of our local crime prevention officers. There was some really useful discussion during his visit with pointers about how to keep your self and equipment safe. These included;-

- Using a tracker on your quad bike - not only is it likely that you will get the bike back within 12 hours if it is stolen but also it can alert your family/contacts if the bike turns over and not righted.

- For those of you who have smart phones downloading the 'what 3 words' app and using it to identify your location is easier and much more accurate, allowing officers to attend promptly if required.

- He also encouraged attendees to report even minor incidents via 101 or the online reporting system. This means that the police have more evidence to act - as Jamie said if they don't know about something they can't act. Better reporting allows them to build up a picture of rural crime and patrol areas more effectively.

Our summer sheep visit this year is to join an AHDB farm walk on Tuesday 27th June at Rawfoot farm near Shap. If you would like to join us please book a place via the office. We are planning to meet at J36 at 12.30 or on farm at 13.30. This is one of AHDB Strategic farms and discussions will cover Richard's journey through the strategic farm programme, his progress in improving grass quality whilst reducing fertilizer input (to zero in the last couple of years), managing livestock and grass on a rotational grazing system and how the system can support more stock should he wish it to.

We also discussed the challenges the industry is facing with regards to anthelmintic resistance. With no new or revolutionary products likely to arrive in the near future, developing a picture of resistance patterns on individual farms is key to prolonging the effectiveness of the products we have. The animal health and welfare pathway is open for applications and provides funding of £436 to conduct a welfare review on farm and discuss any challenges as well as future plans for the business. It will also cover the cover the cost of a drench check to begin to build a picture of what wormers work on your farm at different points of the year. This is all done with the aim of improving not just health and welfare but also the efficiency of production – which ultimately benefits you financially.

GOV.UK

https://apply-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-review.defra.gov.uk/apply/register-your-interest

Judith Lee