Bovilis RSP

It turns out you can teach an old dog new tricks

Until now the earliest calves could be vaccinated against pneumonia was at 7 days of age. Bovilis Intranasal RSP Live has changed its licensing due to new research, allowing it to be given from birth, which results in full immunity within a week of age. This allows for the vaccine to fit into your on farm schedule and not become a job for another day. It is available in single dose packages so no calves have to wait to be vaccinated. If you would like more information please speak to one of our team members.

RCVS ACCREDITED PRACTICE
FARM ANIMAL PRACTICE

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

Kirkby Lonsdale Surgery
Monday & Thursday 8.30am-7.00pm
Tuesday 8.30am-6.00pm
Wednesday & Friday 8.30am-5.00pm
Saturday 8.30am-12 noon
Tel:015242 71221

www.westmorland-vets.co.uk

Westmorland Veterinary Group
FARM SERVICES

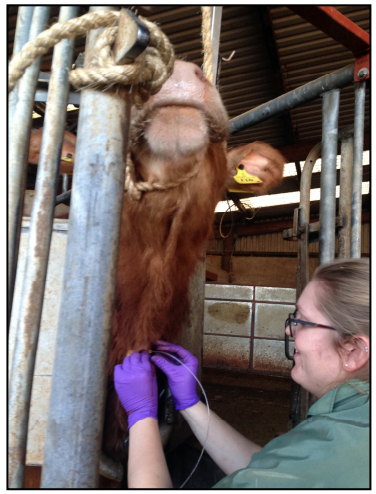
PRACTICE NEWS

KENDAL ○ KIRKBY LONSDALE ○ ULVERSTON

November 2022

We've had a bit of a mixed bag of conditions this month, with the wet weather and cows now nearly all being inside. Scouring dairy cows have come up quite a few times already, with a few different causes found. We've had a couple of different types of Salmonella grown, some strains causing more illness than others. The historically more common strains of *Salmonella dublin* and *Salmonella typhimurium* can make animals very ill and appear to be septic, necessitating prompt treatment. There is a new kid on the block though, in the shape of *Salmonella mbandaka*. This mainly seems to cause a scour, associated with milk drop and poor appetite. Some cases of scour also occur in calves too. Symptoms from infection tend to occur at times of stress, such as in cows which have just calved, or suffered from mastitis, lameness or some such other condition. One outbreak reported by the SRUC (formerly SAC) linked it to the presence of BVD circulating in the herd and causing immunosuppression, which then precipitated the *S. mbandaka* scour. It has also been found to be found in many places on affected farms, from dust to rodents, to normal cow faeces where the cow appears to be uninfected. It is often associated with feed contamination, with soya-bean meal, rapeseed, maize-meal and palm-kernel all have previously been identified as sources. We have seen other causes of scour too, such as liver fluke infection, and even one where the only discernible cause was rumen fluke infection. On top of that, there are is whole other gamut of causes from those such as coronavirus, to nutritional causes such as low digestible fibre. If this is something that is bugging you then it might well be worth some investigating.

The autumnal weather has brought along some calf pneumonia cases with it as well this year, as per usual. Just a reminder that we now have some pretty nifty investigative techniques at our disposal, not least of which is a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test for various DNA fragments of infectious calf pneumonia agents. These tests commonly give us a 'hit' on causes and the presence of infectious agents when cultures come back sterile with no growth, and also for viruses and *Mycoplasma* species. They are extremely useful in formulating a plan and it is often prudent to do it each year to inform treatments needed. We usually collect them through a BAL (broncho-alveolar lavage), which is a small procedure when a collecting tube is inserted through as very small incision in the neck.



Richard Knight

Getting Ready For Housing

With the weather on the turn it is time for cattle to be coming in. This can be a busy time for you and a stressful time for the cattle. There are lots of ways which we can help you minimise the impacts of this stress for your cattle.

Do you have the minerals?

Feeding your adult cows and youngstock is one of the biggest costs over the winter months. Making sure your animals have the correct levels of trace elements allows them to utilise the feed you are giving them efficiently. There are different methods by which we are able to help you asses the mineral status of your herd:

1. Blood samples- taking blood from 6-10 animals gives a good representation of the herd's overall levels.
2. Liver biopsies- these give a better indication of long term mineral status.
3. Cull cows or fat stock- if you are sending cattle straight to slaughter we can communicate with the slaughterhouse to arrange samples being taken.

Once results have arrived we are then able to help you decide whether supplementation is required and how this can be most efficiently achieved.

Who else is taking their cut?

Parasites will also affect how efficiently your cattle can utilise their feed. In youngstock which have just finished their first grazing season gut worms can be an issue. Liver fluke can affect all ages of cattle. We can help decide on the best treatment course for your herd based on the results of faecal samples. We can look for gut worm eggs and fluke eggs in house and get results back to you within 48hrs of you dropping off the sample.

Boosting immunity

Vaccines can be used to help animals produce immunity to the diseases they will face over winter. The most common vaccines which are used are against pneumonia. There are several vaccines available. We can help you decide which vaccine protocol will suit your farm best.

Ben Harvey

Coproantigen Testing

Coproantigen testing looks for a specific secretion from liver fluke in faecal samples. It allows for detection of infected animals 5-6 weeks after they are infected. This is earlier detection than can be achieved with looking for fluke eggs.

Toxovax

Toxoplasma gondii is now the world's most common parasite and it's been estimated that over 90% of sheep flocks in Great Britain are exposed to it. The complex Toxoplama gondii parasite lifecycle presents significant disease management challenges because the sheer volume of infectious oocysts produced by the parasite and their resistance to destruction. Normally we suggest that everyone vaccinates replacement ewes before they go to the ram, however unfortunately, this year Toxovax vaccination is unavailable and therefore we have no choice but to think about alternative ways to reduce the risk of toxoplasmosis abortion in our flocks.

Control cat populations:

Toxoplasmosis is caused by toxoplasma oocysts picked up from feed or hay, or off pasture that has been contaminated by cat faeces. Toxoplasma oocysts are shed by cats for a short period when they have just been weaned and first start hunting, or if they are immunocompromised, so keeping a healthy adult population of neutered cats on farm may help reduce the risks. The organism also survives from generation to generation in mice and rats providing an ongoing source of disease for susceptible cats. It is useful to neuter all farm cats to avoid the production of further kittens that can act as a new source of infection. Euthanizing existing farm cats is not a useful approach as this often leads to the entry of a new population of cats, providing further kittens which will potentiate the infection and life cycle of disease.

Keep seropositive sheep, sheep that have been previously vaccinated and sheep that have previously aborted with toxoplasmosis.

Once a ewe has been infected, she soon becomes immune and is unlikely to show signs of the disease in subsequent years. It is only when an infection is picked up for the first time during pregnancy that problems occur. It is important to realise that toxoplasmosis is NOT a sheep to sheep disease so mixing sheep prior to pregnancy will not result in control.

Control Rodents:

As rodents provide an ongoing source of infection to cats, an effective rodent control plan must be implemented on farm.

Individual risk management for toxoplasmosis through flock health planning will be key this year, please contact the surgery if you wish to discuss this further with one of our vets

Rebecca Howard