

Animal health & welfare grants 2024 update

This year the funding available is split into 3 separate grants (productivity, slurry and animal health and welfare equipment) and more total funding is available. The maximum grant amounts for productivity and slurry is now £50,000 per theme although the equipment grant remains at £25,000. The grant amounts per item have mostly increased as well from last year and various new items have been added following feedback! Once again multiple windows for application will open throughout the year so keep an eye out for these on the DEFRA farming blog. A new way of applying to get the grants should make things quicker and easier as well.

For the animal health and welfare items applications are scored on contribution towards Animal Health & Welfare Pathway Priorities and scores can be increased by 20% if you can demonstrate you have discussed your application with a vet. If you need any help with applications or want to discuss what would benefit your farm the most please give us a call on 01477 571000 and we will all be more than happy to discuss your needs. Using money available through the Animal Health & Welfare review these discussions can also be fully government funded!

More information can be found at <https://defrafarming.blog.gov.uk/2024/02/20/farming-equipment-and-technology-fund-2024-guidance-now-available/>

Calving gates grant

Have you ever thought about installing a calving gate on your farm? These are great pieces of equipment that improve safety around the time of calving in a variety of ways. Calving gates can help with direct assistance at calving, giving the cow some extra aftercare or even allowing a calf to latch on to drink.

Here is what one of our clients, Brian Taylor, had to say after installing a calving gate on his farm.



Brian: "Having farmed Limousin and BB suckler cows for many years, I have long been aware of the need to properly secure the cow not only to ease the calving process but also to ensure personal safety. I originally used a self-locking head yoke within a dedicated calving pen and this served us well for years. Having been told of the benefits of calving gates by friends we added one to the yoke about 3 years ago. The gate gives us more control over the cow in any assisted calving and can also be used to assist the calf suckling. If the calving develops into a caesarean the gate can be secured tightly against the cow, preventing her moving about and kicking. 2 bars hinge outwards allowing the vet full access to the cow's side. One of many benefits we have noticed is that the operation is cleaner and neater, giving better recovery times and potential savings on antibiotics. The whole operation is less stressful and it's nice to be able to concentrate our efforts on the newborn calf rather than trying to restrain 700kg+ of grumpy cow. In summary the calving gate is a great piece of kit that will pay for itself over and over again whilst also reducing stress and risk of injury to ourselves, to the cow and calf, and also to the vets working on our premises."

Some calving gates can be found for as little as £450 which we think is a bargain! Whilst this would not achieve the minimum grant level of £1000 it can be combined with other equipment grants as well. We would be happy to discuss what the grant requirements may be and we can provide you a letter to boost your application.

Microchipping cats

Just a quick reminder that from 10th June 2024 it is a legal requirement to have all pet cats microchipped.

Another baby boom!

We have had lots of great news in the Wright & Morten Farm Team last month!

Jennie and partner Carl have welcomed their not so little boy Bobby into the world. They're looking forward to all the adventures that a newborn will bring them. Both mum and baby are doing well and we are looking forward to having a visit for a cuddle soon!



One of our Nottingham vets Emily and her husband have also welcomed twin girls! Mum and babies are doing very well albeit being kept very busy!



FAM 30

You may have heard that FAM 30 was temporarily suspended from the DEFRA approved disinfectants list for TB. It has now been re-added to the list but at a new dilution rate! The new rate is 1:14 (compared with 1:20 previously). As a rough guide this means in 5L of water you would need 360ml of FAM30 – this is more than before so make sure when using FAM30 for TB disinfection you are using enough product to ensure proper disinfection occurs.

Congratulations Emily H

Emily Henshall has passed her TB assessment meaning she is now a fully qualified TB tester. We hope you will join us in wishing her a big congratulations! Emily will be working in the same role as Laura (approved tuberculin tester) so please let us know if you need vet work during your tests e.g. attestations or castrates.

Congratulations Niamh and Vesper

You may remember us mentioning one of our clients Niamh Darcy and her dog Vesper who were nominated for Hero Dog of the Year at Crufts this year. Thank you to those of you who voted and we are very pleased to say that Niamh and Vesper have won the award! It is a well deserved recognition of a fantastic partnership!

Cattle worm control – a fresh approach

As the grazing season approaches it is a great time to consider the new research surrounding parasite control in cattle to maximise returns in growth and yields as well as protecting the flora and fauna in your fields for years to come.

A cattle worm control plan should consider: your pasture management, optimising your livestock's natural immunity against worms, and targeted use of anthelmintics (wormers).

Developing Natural Immunity

As cattle age they develop their own immunity against worms due to the increased time spent at pasture and exposure to worms. Strategies that balance careful exposure of youngstock to worms and targeted worm treatment can develop this natural immunity (free in-built wormer!).

Worm control and treatment plans should be targeted towards first and second season grazing cattle, whilst adult cattle should be monitored and only treated after testing.

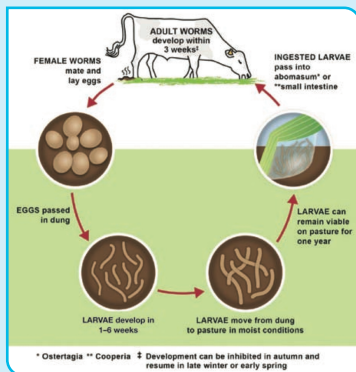
Youngstock in their first and second grazing season can be monitored in 2 ways:

Weighing: In young cattle, probably the most important measure of performance is growth rate, whether animals are destined to be fattened for beef, replacement heifers or breeding bulls. Average growth rates of 0.7kg per day or more, on pasture are required if beef cattle are to be finished before they are two years old and replacement heifers are to calve at 24 months.

Monitoring growth rates can be used to focus treatment specifically on those animals which fail to reach a target daily liveweight gain. However, this is only possible if an adequate plane of nutrition is provided, weighing equipment is available, other disease is controlled and an appropriate weight gain target is set. A figure of 0.7 kg/day has been used in some farm trials. Others suggest using a target set for each particular farm/group of animals – your vet can help with this.

Faecal egg counts:

Faecal egg counts are a good choice for monitoring infection in young calves and are a good predictor of pasture contamination. For routine gut worm monitoring during the grazing season, start two months after turnout and take at least one mid-season and one late season sample. For more accurate predictors group samples should be taken every 3 weeks to identify trends in worm burden. Generally adult cows will not need regular monitoring unless a problem emerges – discuss with your vet how to monitor adult groups.



Guidelines for collection of faeces for egg counting – cattle

- Take samples from ten cattle per management group
- Wearing a glove, collect fresh faeces from a fresh, warm dung pat on the ground.
- Four heaped tablespoons of faeces per animal should be collected
- Take the sample from at least three areas of the dung pat
- Place samples into individual zipper storage bags or plastic pots with screw lids and label
- Squeeze air out before sealing if using bags. With pots, fill to the brim to exclude air
- Store hygienically in a fridge at around 4°C, if there will be a delay before getting them to us

Targeted Treatment

Following a check in growth rates or high egg counts, a wormer treatment strategy can be discussed with your vet. Using the right dose, the right product, the right time and on the right animals will provide maximum benefit. Your vet can help decide on an appropriate worming product.

Parasites are not evenly distributed among animals within a herd with roughly 20% of animals harbouring 80% of worms. Targeted treatment of individuals that are performing poorly, or that have high faecal egg counts, can lead to a far better reduction in total worm infections rather than treating the whole group. Calves that are over-protected in their first season at grass by excessive anthelmintic treatment are also at risk of slow development of immunity. Leaving a portion of the group untreated means a proportion of the worms in the cattle are not exposed to wormer, which helps slow down development of wormer resistance.

So what does 'targeted treatment' look like in real terms?

Your vet can discuss how to best carry out targeted treatment on your farm. In practice this usually means leaving a percentage of a group untreated or strategic treatment based on pasture contamination risk, weights and testing. It may seem scary to leave young animals untreated – however if correctly targeted only the right animals will receive treatment and those that don't need it won't!

Pasture Risk Analysis And Management

Pasture management is an essential component of parasite control. It is estimated that 95% of parasites are on pasture and only 5% in the animal. However this depends on the season, temperature, stocking density, age of stock, forage type and rainfall, pasture rotation as well as the treatment history.

This an incredibly farm-specific area of worm control that is best discussed with your vet when assessing need for treatment. See below for some extra tips on pasture management for worm control.

DO

- Introduce pasture rotation rather than continuous grazing on a single pasture:
- Rotate animals out of a pasture before they eat the grass down to an extreme. The closer to the ground the grass is, the more likely animals are to ingest a higher number of parasite larvae.
- Reduce the density of animals in pasture. This will mean animals don't need to feed near faecal pats and thereby decrease the risk of ingesting parasites.
- Encourage refugia. Rotate between non-treated animals and treated animals on the same plot, or leave a percentage of cattle untreated.
- Strategically coordinate parasiticide treatments with pasture grazing season.
- Leave a plot unused for animal grazing for one year.
- Mixing different animals (cattle, sheep and horses) on the same pasture helps reduce contamination.

DO NOT

- Do not use pasture where the grass is too short; 80% of parasites are concentrated in the first 5 centimetres of grass. Supplement grazing with hay when the grass gets too short.
- Do not allow animals to drink directly from rivers and streams. Give preference to water tanks sited on dry ground.
- Do not spread manure that has not been effectively composted.

This article merely scratches the surface of control of worms in cattle – our vets are on hand to discuss your parasite control at your herd health plans or over the grazing season. We are also offering wormers at very competitive prices at Holly Tree and Whaley Bridge, often matching prices found online – don't hesitate to ask for a price estimate when buying your wormers.

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