



## Dry Cow Tubes

Ubro Red is being withdrawn from the market and replaced by Ubrostar Red but there are a few key differences to take note of. Due to a modification to the type of penicillin the withdrawal periods have had to change.

Milk should be kept out for **35 days dry + 36 hours post-calving**, assuming the cow is dry for 35 days or more.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with any of the vets via the office on **01477 571000**.

## Trace Element Deficiency

Copper, cobalt, selenium and iodine are essential trace elements required by cattle and sheep. Deficiencies of trace elements can cause poor production. However, there are other common causes of low productivity such as parasite infestations or energy deficiency. Trace element requirements vary with age and production level with young, pregnant and lactating animals having the greatest need. Deficiencies should be confirmed by testing before purchasing supplements.



## Foot-trimming

Bryan has been out trimming a lot of cattle recently and has also had a few lame bulls to deal with too. He is getting booked up with visits in advance so if you want routine trimming done, it's worth getting in touch well ahead of time. He will still do his best to fit in any lame cows where he can, but it might need to be between calls or at the start or end of the day.

Routinely trimming cattle is far better than trying to sort them out when already lame. This is especially true with bulls as a lame bull is more than likely not working. Before turning bulls with the cows, make sure they have 4 good feet to stand on to keep them working as best they can whilst serving.

If you want to get booked in for some routine trimming or to look at some lame animals, the best thing to do is to give the office a ring to book in or we can get Bryan to ring you back between trims.



## Copper deficiency

Although copper deficiency can occur on copper deficient pastures, it is more commonly seen on pastures high in molybdenum, sulphur, and iron. These elements act together to reduce the availability and absorption of copper from the rumen.

Signs of copper deficiency are usually seen in young animals at pasture. Swayback' in lambs occurs when a lack of copper results in damage to the spinal cord. In cattle, copper deficiency can cause 'spectacling' of dark coated cattle due to reduced pigmentation of the hair around the eyes. A more serious deficiency results in poor growth and scouring, and in extreme cases a thickening of bones around the joints. Infertility in cattle is also often linked to copper deficiency. This can be seen as depressed or delayed oestrus behaviour, particularly in heifers.

Ruminants are susceptible to copper toxicity, either if a very large amount of copper is ingested or injected at one time, or if copper accumulates in the liver over a long period of time. Copper absorption varies considerably in different breeds. Texels absorb copper very efficiently to the extent that they can easily be put at risk of copper toxicity, whereas Scottish Blackface are less efficient and more likely to suffer copper deficiency. Due to the risk of causing toxicity, animals should only be supplemented with copper when laboratory tests confirm that extra copper is needed. Testing can be done on blood or liver tissue. Sheep are more susceptible to copper toxicity than cattle.



## Abortion Vaccines

Just another quick reminder to get ahead and order your Cevac Chlamydia and Toxovax sooner rather than later. Demand is only going to increase over the next couple of months, and the Toxovax production system can sometimes struggle, as we

have experienced in the past. Toxovax is produced to order and takes up to 2 weeks to arrive once requested. We can order it ahead of time for delivery at a late date, so even if you don't necessarily want it in the next couple of weeks, it is worth letting us know when you want it for so we can get the ball rolling and reduce the chance of any problems. Give Holly Tree a ring to place your order.

## TB Update

Unfortunately, TB continues to have a huge impact in the area. We currently have 27 holdings under restriction, 5 of which were new breakdowns in the last month or so. We have had 2 farms who have recently had restrictions lifted after clear tests. Though these figures sound depressing, they are better than the picture we were faced with 4 or 5 years ago, and we often find we have more problems through the summer and autumn. We continue to be very busy testing and get booked up for whole herd tests quite quickly, so if at all possible please ring to book in as soon as you receive your testing window from animal health so we can get a date to suit you.

### Selenium and Vitamin E deficiency

Selenium and Vitamin E are important to protect the body's cells against damage. Skeletal, heart and respiratory cells are the most susceptible to damage. It is also important for immune function. Lack of selenium is mostly widely recognised as White Muscle Disease (WMD), ill-thrift, and infertility.

Signs of this deficiency can present as a sudden onset of stiffness / inability to stand, respiratory distress or sudden death. A typical example would be when young animals not used to exercise, are newly turned out onto lush pasture. They suffer muscle damage which can prove fatal. The calf/lamb can also be affected in the womb and can either be stillborn or born weak and unable to suck unaided and often die within a few days of birth. Selenium can cross the placenta, and both selenium and vitamin E are concentrated in the colostrum therefore supplementation of the dam's diet during late pregnancy will ensure good supply to the newborn.

Lack of selenium can also cause poor reproductive performance. In females, it can cause early embryonic death, resulting in poor scanning figures in sheep and an extended calving period in cattle. Retained placenta in cattle can also be associated with selenium deficiency. Inadequate selenium also affects male fertility, so where a deficiency is identified, it is important that rams and bulls are also supplemented. Diagnosis is usually by blood sampling and measuring levels of the enzyme, glutathione peroxidase, which contains selenium.

### Cobalt deficiency



Cobalt is an essential component of vitamin B12 which is associated with energy metabolism. In ruminants this vitamin is produced by rumen micro-organisms which require a regular supply of cobalt in the animal's diet. Vitamin B12 is secreted in milk which provides an early source to suckling lambs and calves. Cobalt is only required as the rumen develops.

Also known as 'pine', cobalt deficiency results in ill-thrift accompanied by poor appetite.

Weaned lambs are most at risk, then adult sheep, followed by growing cattle and adult cattle. Where sheep and cattle are grazed on the same pastures, deficiency may be diagnosed in the sheep flock but not in the cattle. Other signs of deficiency include lethargy, poor appetite, an 'open' fleece, tear staining of cheeks and poor condition despite adequate grazing. In severe cases, animals become emaciated, weak and anaemic.

Ill-thrift can mean lambs are more prone to clostridial disease and pasteurellosis. Heavy worm burdens reduce the absorption of vitamin B12 from the gut, so may induce cobalt deficiency even when dietary cobalt is adequate.

Blood testing and improved growth following vitamin B12 injections in a controlled study is the best means of establishing the diagnosis. Intra-ruminal boluses can be given for prevention.

### Iodine deficiency

Iodine is a component of the important hormone, thyroxine, which controls the animals' energy metabolism. It is also essential for foetal growth and development. Iodine deficiency is typically associated with an enlarged thyroid, commonly known as goitre. Typical signs are late abortions, still-born or weak calves and lambs, which may be born with hair loss. Neonatal mortality is markedly increased. Cows deficient in iodine tend to retain their afterbirths and have poor milk production.

Low iodine in the soil leads to a primary deficiency. A secondary deficiency results from ingestion of compounds (goitrogens) found in brassicas and legumes.

Selenium deficiency may also lead to secondary iodine deficient states. Pregnant and lactating animals have a much higher iodine requirement compared to dry stock, and pasture is often unable to fully satisfy requirements on its own.

Iodine deficiency can be diagnosed using the weight and histopathology on stillborn calves or by blood testing adults.

To prevent iodine deficiency, iodine is frequently added to concentrate rations for feeding to cattle, for example using seaweed preparations. Rapeseed meals are usually treated to eliminate goitrogens prior to feeding, and newer "double-zero" oil seed rape varieties are lower in goitrogens. Other treatments include intra-ruminal boluses twice a year, or painting iodine onto flanks.

### Conclusion



Grass and forage varies widely in trace element content due to soil type, pH, drainage, plant species and fertiliser use. Clay soils generally have higher trace element levels than sandy soils.

It is important to diagnose any trace element deficiencies, blood or tissue testing is more accurate than pasture or soil testing. The diagnosis of a deficiency should be confirmed by monitoring the response to supplementation. This can be in the form of intra-ruminal boluses, feed additives, and mineral injections. Intra-ruminal boluses are a good means of supplementation as you can control the levels of supplemented trace element each animal is receiving. Over-supplementation could cause toxicity or cause other undesirable interactions in the animal, in addition to wasting money.

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