

Farm First Newsletter June 2020

Beef Parasite Control As the grazing season has just kicked off; we take a look at worm control in grazing beef cattle for the coming season. As the grazing season progresses, the risk of parasite infection typically increases because of the accumulation of infective stages of gut worms and liver fluke on pasture and weather conditions that favour the rapid development of lungworm larvae.

Generally, older cattle that have grazed previously for at least two full (>4 months) grazing seasons will have acquired immunity to gut worms and lungworms (though immunity to lungworms is dependent on exposure and is of short duration). In general then, healthy adult beef cows do not need worming for gut worms and lungworms, so the focus for parasite control falls mainly on first and second grazing season youngstock. It is important to realise however, that there is no effective age-related immunity to liver fluke, so cattle of all ages can be infected and suffer losses from this parasite.

In a typical spring-calving beef suckler herd, while calves are at foot, there is little need to treat for worms through the grazing season, as there is relatively low herbage (and hence larval) intake. The protective effect of cow's milk also means that the parasites have little impact on calves. The cattle should nevertheless be inspected daily as lungworm can sometimes affect suckler calves before weaning. They then will need worming and possibly treatment for fluke when they are weaned/housed later on in the year.

During its second grazing season, the susceptibility of yearlings to parasites depends to some extent on the exposure that they experienced the previous year. Calves that were late born or that were weaned late (less than a month before housing) will have incomplete immunity to stomach worms and may grow faster if they are given one or two anthelmintic doses at the start of their second grazing season e.g. dosing at 0 and 8 weeks post turnout with a wormer with some persistency. Monthly monitoring of liveweight gain is a good way of monitoring for the effects of gut parasites. We have **competitively priced** products in stock e.g. **Taurador** and **Enovex** which are ideal treatments for cattle over the summer.

Finally, liver fluke should be controlled if yearlings are grazing on high risk infected pastures. If cattle start the grazing season free of liver fluke but are grazing fluke infested pasture, then the first flukicide treatment can be delayed until around eight to twelve weeks after turn-out, as this is when the fluke get into the bile ducts and start to cause liver damage. Treatment at this time or a bit later will also prevent fluke eggs being passed in the dung, hence keeping the level of pasture contamination down. If liver fluke is present at high levels on a farm, treatment of adult cows at this time is also useful in controlling pasture contamination. Monitoring of growth rates of youngstock, backed up with dung samples to check for fluke eggs, will help determine if any further treatments are needed over the remainder of the grazing season.

This is obviously a basic overview of the principles of parasite control. If you require any further information or advice please contact one of the other vets at the practice.

Kexxtone Use in SOFT Cows From around three weeks before, and for a number of weeks after calving, dairy cows use more energy than they can take in. This negative energy balance means the cow pulls energy from her fat stores: which can result in ketosis. Only a tiny amount of ketosis causes obvious signs. Most ketosis in a herd is 'hidden' also known as sub-clinical. These cows are sometimes known as 'slow' cows after calving. Hidden ketosis increases the chance of diseases such as left displaced abomasum, metritis and

cystic ovaries. This impacts the health and productivity of the cow. The average cost of hidden ketosis is £220/ cow.



Total cost of Hidden Ketosis **£220**

Reducing the risk. Step 1: Monitoring

The amount of hidden ketosis occurring in the herd, and the economic impact of the disease is often underestimated. Simple reports using NMR or CIS data are now available which can tell us the about the level in the herd.

Step 2: Risk factors

While it is important to understand the herd level, prevention should focus on obvious risk factors we can look for:

Sick **Old** **Fat** **Twin carrying cows**

SOFT cows are all at greater risk of hidden ketosis. Other cows to focus on include cows that transition during times of heat stress, increased stocking density or cows with dry periods in excess of 70 days.

Step 3: Prevention Measures taken to address the overall level of ketosis in priority order would include:



There is currently a deal for new and lapsed users of Kexxtone – Buy 2 packs, get 1 free. This product is ideal for use in these SOFT cows.

African Swine Fever The latest APHA International Disease Monitoring report describes the continued spread of African Swine Fever virus in Eastern Europe, Belgium and close to the Polish – German border where it has been diagnosed in wild boar. Overall, the disease has been seen most commonly in wild boar and in small holder pig units. Although international travel is dramatically reduced at the moment, the risk of disease importation through imported pork products still remains. The virus can survive for months, not just in fresh/frozen pig meat, but in air-dried ham and other charcuterie.

The ban on feeding kitchen scraps/swill/any produce that has been through a kitchen is a vital tool in the fight against incursion of several notifiable diseases.

Clinical signs of African Swine Fever include pyrexia, huddling up, conjunctivitis, red/purple discolouration of the skin (particularly the ears, other extremities, or ventrum), vomiting or diarrhoea, haemorrhages in the skin or throughout the internal organs, and death. Mortality is usually (but not always) high, and all age groups may be affected. African Swine Fever is notifiable: any suspicion of an outbreak must be reported to your local APHA office immediately. Photos of infected pigs are provided by DEFRA for information, and can found here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/defragovuk/sets/72157694954571532/>

Jokes 1. Doc, I can't stop singing the 'Green Green Grass of Home'. He said: 'That sounds like Tom Jones syndrome'. 'Is it common?' I asked. 'It's not unusual' he replied.

2. Two aerals meet on a roof - fall in love - get married. The ceremony was rubbish - but the reception was brilliant.

3. Police arrested two kids yesterday, one was drinking battery acid, the other was eating fireworks. They charged one - and let the other one off.