



SUMMER UPDATE

# FARM FIRST NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2021



## FEELING HOT, HOT, HOT!

We have recently had temperatures of over 30°C and with another heatwave forecast in August, we look at some of the risks to animals which increase with the ongoing hot weather.

**Heat Stress** - The upper critical temperature for cattle is 25°C rising to 29°C for shorn sheep. During hot weather ruminants will attempt to dissipate heat by panting to increase evaporation. The rumen is a major source of heat. The cow in an effort to reduce this heat production will decrease dry matter intake, often as much as 30%.

Milking cows will generate more heat than dry cows and the risk of heat stress is greater if humidity is also high. The consequences of heat stress include reductions in feed intake, milk yield, and fertility. For more information:

<https://media.ahdb.org.uk/media/Default/Imported%20Publication%20Docs/AHDB-Beef-Lamb-cattle-and-sheep-hot-weather.pdf>

<http://www.nadis.org.uk/bulletins/managing-heat-stress-in-dairy-cows.aspx>

**Water intoxication/Salt poisoning** - Access to water should be unrestricted and trough volume and refill times must be adequate. If water supply is interrupted for any reason thirsty animals should not be permitted free access to water. Sudden ingestion of water can lead to intravascular haemolysis, anaemia and haemoglobinuria. A rapid reduction in plasma salt concentration creates an osmotic gradient, swelling of tissues and increased intracranial pressure. Ataxia, convulsions and death can result. Beware of thirsty animals attempting to drink foot bath/sheep dip solutions or parlour washings.

**Bluegreen algae blooms** - Sunny weather and evaporation increases the electrolyte concentration, particularly of shallow water, favouring algal blooms. Areas of fertiliser run off with high K and N are also at risk. *Microcystis aeruginosa* is the most common species implicated and produces toxins which damage liver cells. Clinical signs can include colic, haemorrhagic diarrhoea, and death. Photosensitisation may occur secondary to less severe liver damage. Pay particular attention to field with ponds and also aftermaths grazed for the first time where water troughs may not have been used yet this year.

**Botulism** - *Clostridium botulinum* proliferates in decaying animal and plant material and toxins are produced. Carcasses in troughs/forage pose a risk as does decaying plant material in ponds. Feeding waste vegetables is not without risk when temperatures are high. **When this weather breaks look out for:**

**PGE** - Worm larvae can become trapped within faeces during hot, dry weather. When the rain returns a sudden release of larvae onto pasture may lead to outbreaks of parasitic gastroenteritis.

**Nitrate toxicity** - High levels of nitrate can accumulate in soil during conditions of drought and can be taken up by plants following wet weather increasing the risk of nitrate toxicity. Nitrates are converted to nitrites in the rumen and their absorption leads to anoxia secondary to methaemoglobinaemia.

## OPENING HOURS

MON - FRI

8.15 AM - 5.30 PM

## HIGH HOUSE PREMISES

## OPENING HOURS

MON & WED

9.30 AM - 1.00 PM

We have a good stock of wormers and fly products available & you can also pick up pre-ordered prescription medicines.

Please call and see what we have on offer.



For more advice on this and other issues call us

on

01873 840167

## HAEMONCHOSIS IN ADULT EWES

We have just diagnosed our first case of Haemonchus this year in a flock which lost several ewes over a couple of days. This disease is caused by a blood-sucking worm, which causes anaemia, weakness, ill thrift and sudden death. It seems to be an increasing problem in this area. Other clinical signs include bottle jaw and pale mucous membranes. This worm is resistant to many of the commonly available wormers. If you have a couple of unexpected ewe losses, or ewes getting left behind when they are being moved, please contact us for advice on diagnosis and treatment.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO  
PRE ORDER YOUR DRUGS  
VIA TELEPHONE BEFORE  
COLLECTION**

## QUARANTINE DOSING

We have now entered the sheep sale season and it is very important to correctly dose any purchased sheep to prevent bringing any resistant worms (including Haemonchus), resistant fluke or sheep scab on to your farm. We will have a vet at many of the sheep sales, so please ask us for advice on what you need to treat the sheep. We will write down for you the amount that you need, and for the sales held at the market, you can pop over the road to our office at High House Farm, where we will dispense the exact amount that you need. This avoids the need for you purchase a greater amount than required.

## REAL SUPPORT FOR MONMOUTHSHIRE FARMERS

**Bob Stevenson MRCVS**, who many of you will know as one of the former partners from Usk Vets, has written to following: "Some farmers and their families will already be aware of the existence of a sizeable new trailer at the Livestock Market near Raglan. This information and support unit has been established after considerable effort, plus a sizeable grant from the Rural Development Fund. This is a unique example in Wales of combined focus to be able to assist in whatever way is needed. We should be able to help with businesses and with personal resilience in some way. You are the most important of all rural populations – farmers, farm workers and their families. A huge thank you to the Market for realising the need for this type of support and allowing easy access for all farmers with, limited time or inclination, to search for assistance for their own farm and personal situation. The Monmouthshire rural support centre (MRSC) will be staffed by volunteers who will give their time to provide information and literature pamphlets etc, and be able to select persons/organisation most able to help. The centre will be welcoming all during each active market and special sale days. All enquiries will be progressed, and any private discussions arranged to take place in confidence within the centre. The intention is to have access to on-line information and print out latest information for you. In addition, latest guidance on business and individual resilience will be accessible. This comprehensive Rural Support centre will be present at Usk Show where it will be officially launched. Come and visit. I am sure you will recognise many friendly faces all involved and concerned about the viability of the rural economy and farming businesses.

## LAMENESS MEETING

On Thursday 26th August, Farm First Vets and Ceva will be hosting a meeting on dairy cow lameness prevention and control. The meeting will be held at Usk College, The Rhadyr Farm, starting at 11.30am. This will be an informal meeting with a chance to see what has worked at the college to reduce lameness. Lunch will kindly be provided by Ceva. This is our first on-farm meeting since the beginning of the pandemic so as well as being informative it will also provide a chance to socialise (at a safe distance!). Please RSVP by 5pm on Monday 23rd August to 01873 840167. Please wear clean disinfected wellies and protective clothing.

## JOKE

A man arrived home from work & noticed that his father seemed to be avoiding the grandchildren. 'What's the problem?' he asked. 'You usually love playing with them'. The old man produced a medicine prescription from his pocket and said 'Read the label. That's why!' The son took the bottle and read the label 'Take two pills a day: KEEP AWAY FROM CHILDREN'.