



FARM FIRST NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2022

FREE CATTLE PARASITE TESTING



Recent investigations by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and the Moredun Research Institute (MRI) have suggested that bovine parasitic gastroenteritis due to *Ostertagia ostertagi* may be underdiagnosed. In addition, they have identified resistance to the benzimidazole class of anthelmintics in this roundworm species. This was the first detection of this type in the UK, and this resistance is also likely to be underdiagnosed in this economically important roundworm.

For the 2022 grazing season, APHA and MRI are running a project to investigate resistance, or reduced efficacy, to benzimidazoles in *Ostertagia ostertagi* in cattle in England and Wales.

The survey is looking for:

- Samples from first-season grazers (or second-season that did not graze much the previous year), which have been out at pasture for at least four-to-six weeks.
- The sampled animals should be either untreated, or have not been treated for at least two weeks.
- Fresh faeces samples (collected from yard or pasture) from 5 to 10 animals (10 is preferred but at least 5 animals).
- APHA Carmarthen will pool the samples, run a free of charge FEC, and report the results as usual.

If you are interested in having your herd tested, please let us know and we can advise on the best way to sample.

Cow Restraint at Calvings

Our vets have recently been called out to calvings where there has been no experienced or able staff member to help them get the cow restrained for the procedure, or to help them deliver the calf in a safe manner. This puts the vets in a very difficult position as it is often not safe to go into pens alone to handle a calving cow and can put the success of the calving at risk. Please think ahead when calling us to calve a cow and try and ensure that there are sufficient able bodied staff around to help us when we arrive. A suitably placed calving gate in a pen will make the whole procedure safer for everyone involved, including the cow and calf. These gates are also very useful if a calf needs to be suckled on to a cow. We prefer not to calve cows in a crush unless they are very well designed. This is because access to calve the cow will be impeded if the cow goes down, possibly resulting in the loss of a calf and damage to the cow. However, if there is no other safe place to calve a cow, particularly if she is aggressive, then vets as a last resort may have to calve the cow in the crush. If a client cannot summon any suitable help from family, staff or neighbours and the vet feels that the handling system is not safe for them to proceed, we have decided that they may have to call out a second member of staff to attend, for which there will be a charge. We cannot guarantee that there will always be someone available out of hours, so please can clients think ahead and plan for these situations.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

We have two NADIS/
Farming Connect
meetings coming up:

Cattle Parasite Control

7pm

Wednesday, 22nd June
Llanover Village Hall

Flock Fertility

7pm

Thursday, 23rd June
Llanddewi Rhydderch Village Hall

Food provided. You must be registered with Farming Connect.

To book your free place or for further details please contact the office. Further details are also available on our website.

* * * STAFF NEWS * * *



Congratulations to Constance and her new husband, Jules who were married recently. Best wishes to you both for a fun-filled future together!

We are delighted to welcome Lauren Richards to the Farm First team. Outside of work, Lauren loves to be on the farm working sheep and cattle or with her collie pup 'Teg' on long walks or training her to work the sheep. When not busy on the farm or at a young farmers event, she loves to be in the kitchen baking cakes which is great news for her sweet-toothed colleagues!



An update from Andrew

Thank you to all the Farm First clients for your kind words and best wishes when I left the practice. I have now started my new role at the vet school in Glasgow but will fondly remember my time working in Monmouthshire. It was a pleasure and a privilege to work with you all. We do plan to come back to Abergavenny for holidays, so unfortunately, you may not have seen the last of me!

From mid-June, in addition to recording information about livestock numbers when registering new clients and for Herd Health Plans, our reception team will also be requesting similar basic details when dispensing medicines. There are several ways in which this assists the practice:

- to ensure optimum medicine stock levels are maintained
- to record livestock figures for each species we provide health services for
- to better understand our clients' animal health requirements.

If you have any queries please ask one of the team.

JOKE TIME!!!

What's black and white and eats like a horse?



A zebra!!

Ataxic and weak lambs



Is it swayback, white muscle disease or something else?

Swayback, both the congenital and delayed form, results from incorrect development in the central nervous system, beginning during mid to late pregnancy. Delayed swayback is most common in lambs aged 4-12 weeks, and usually presents as paralysis and weakness, most obvious when stock are moved. The cause is low copper levels during pregnancy, which can be secondary to high molybdenum and sulphur levels. Blood and liver copper levels are not always useful as the copper status may have subsequently improved after birth. Post-mortem and histopathological examination of the brain and spinal cord is the most useful test. Delayed swayback cases may respond to supplementation with concentrate feed, but more often they are permanently affected. Differential diagnoses for delayed swayback include spinal abscess, traumatic injury, tick-borne fever, louping ill, white muscle disease and sarcocystosis (usually older lambs/hogs).

Selenium and/or vitamin E deficiency can have a variable presentation, but it is most often recognised as white muscle disease. In acquired WMD, signs develop 3-16 weeks after birth, with weakness, stiffness and a raised respiratory rate being the most common presentations. Blood tests will show the historic selenium intake and can be used to diagnose WMD in the live animal and there may be concurrent vitamin E deficiency. At postmortem, areas of muscle and cardiac tissue are sometimes pale and gritty but no changes can be seen in many cases. Histopathology of skeletal muscle and heart muscle is required for a definite diagnosis. Low liver selenium/ vitamin E levels can help to confirm the diagnosis. Lambs with acquired WMD may respond to treatment with selenium/ vitamin E supplements.

Differential diagnoses for white muscle disease include joint ill, respiratory disease, tick-borne fever, delayed swayback and rickets.

If you have suspect cases, please do not hesitate to get in touch and we can work out the best way to investigate further.