



Highgate Veterinary Clinic

Farmers Newsletter - July 2006

New Parasite Appears on Our Patch

Last month, I was presented with a hogg that was very pale and thin with no other signs. The hoggs had been wintered away on the north west coast of Cumbria and been fluked (and possibly wormed) on their return. I took faeces and blood samples for laboratory analysis.

There had been two deaths and another was looking very sick. This soon died and on post mortem all I could find was a pale carcass and certainly no fluke. I looked in the stomach

but it appeared reasonably normal.

I'd been banking on fluke and had dismissed a blood sucking worm called *Haemonchus* because "its too cold for it here" – Wrong! The faeces result came back full of worm eggs and the lab said this was most likely to be *Haemonchus*, which they have seen on the Cumbrian coast.

This bloodsucker are great egg producers have a nasty habit of becoming resistant to wormers

so we advised using generous doses of ivomec type drugs.

We've probably all forgotten the word biosecurity or at least think it's not worth the hassle, but be careful what you buy in or what returns with your animals after wintering or summer grazing. We hope this infestation can be eliminated quickly but there is the potential that this becomes a regular disease on this unit and may spread through the district.



Twisted Calf beds

One of our dairy clients had four twisted calf beds in two weeks out of twelve calvings. Understandably, he was concerned and asked if there was anything he could change to prevent them.

Uterine torsions (the official terminology) are probably the most common kind of dystokia we are called out to. I've al-

ways thought they're just "one of those things". The theory (and it is only theory as little research has been done on the cause) is that in the last days of pregnancy as the calf moves about to get into the correct position it manages to flip itself and the calf bed over. This twists the neck of the bed and the calf can't get out.

I've searched the literature but got nowhere. I'm a member of an American cattle veterinary society so I e-mailed the membership. Several theories - including trimming feet in turn over crushes, poisonous plants and not feeding enough straw were put forward but none seemed to fit our situation.

Since then we haven't had another case on that farm despite several more cows calving. Is it just possible to have "one of those things" four times in two weeks?

Milk production isn't all black and white



Different colours are appearing in the fields, reds browns and yellows and I'm not talking about the flowers. Several farmers in the area are looking at alternative breeds.

A friend of a friend who has a 200 cow Jersey herd near Clitharoe was having an open day last month so we decided to have a look. He sells his milk to Longely Dairies so he's paid well for milk solids.

The cows are averaging just over 6000 litres at 6% BF and 4% protein. This is the equivalent of 9000 litres at 4% BF and if you take the size of the cows into account, this is the equivalent of a Holstein herd averaging 13000 litres!

Not surprisingly the lactation diet looked like rocket fuel but the cows looked very well and happy. In addition to this, despite 200 people wondering about the yard, two cows

calved in a box in what seemed like a blink of an eye.

Alright not everything is rosy, talking to the local vet, he said that due to they're low body reserves, a sick Jersey either gets better quickly or dies quickly, there's no in between.

All in all I was impressed, I know things are different for every farm and what suits one doesn't suit another but its always nice to see alternatives.