



Highgate Veterinary Clinic

Farmers Newsletter - August 2007

Foot and Mouth

Foot and mouth disease was identified in cattle on a farm in Surrey on Friday 3rd August. As a result a total nationwide ban on farm animal movement has been put into force. For further details, see the DEFRA website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/>.

Fly explosion on its way?



With the past two months being wet and cool, we've seen less flies about than usual - but the Met Office predicts warmer weather throughout August, which has the potential to create huge increases in fly populations.

Stable flies lay 25 times more eggs when temperatures reach the mid twenties, compared to the mid teens. Over its lifetime, an adult female stable fly will lay less than 30 eggs at 15°C, but over 700 eggs when the temperature rises above 25°C.

It's important to apply pour on fly repellents before the problem starts. The two brand leaders in pour on repellents are Spot on and Butox swish which last four and 8-10 weeks respectively.

Is lungworm starting to strike?

When three farmers in two days mention that their cows are starting to cough, alarm bells start to ring. Is this just dusty cake, IBR, "a bit of a chill" or lungworm? It's not always an easy question to answer. Coughing cattle at grass from late July onwards could well have lungworm. Diagnosis is not always simple. Larvae in the faeces are only detected if adult worms are in the lungs but coughing can occur before the worms reach maturity. The antibody levels in blood can indicate if the cattle have been exposed to lungworm but is not able to tell you when. Even cattle vaccinated as calves can still cough due to lungworm under certain circumstances.

So what's the answer? Well up to now in these three herds, I've advised wait and see as milk yield has not been affected and there are no sick animals. Treating a few coughers with wormer e.g. Eprinex in lactating dairy cows and seeing if they get better may be a way to make a diagnosis. If it's youngstock that are coughing at this time of year, I wouldn't hesitate to worm them before anything became ill.

Fertility isn't just a female problem

It's only five minutes since lambing time stopped and tupping time is under way. I've tested one ram up to now who was fine last year but the AI company couldn't get a sample this year and he produced a poor sample for me. His testicles were the right size but slightly too hard and when they were examined with the ultrasound machine, there were several areas of scar tissue.

Similarly, a bull purchased this year had got 30 heifers in calf last year but wasn't stopping anything on his new farm. His testicles were small and soft and he was unable to produce a sample. Needless to say his owner was disappointed that he now owned a "jaffa" (not a technical term!).

Male fertility is not permanent. If you have any cause for concern that a bull or ram may be infertile or his fertility is vitally important at any given point such as AI or probably just the mating season, why not have him checked out before you find he's let you down?

Cartmel Show

We had a stand at Cartmel show this year. Although the show was busy, there seemed to be a lack of farmers. I guess you were all out making the most of the dry weather to grab grass before it rained on it! - More pictures on the Highgate web site.



The Highgate Veterinary Centre Stand



Luke Robinson,
Holmescales Farm
wins young handler



Robert Dixon



Queuing for water to wash the
stock

This Month: August



Check rams for lameness or other illnesses. It will take sperm counts around two months to recover if illness has affected them.



Order sheep abortion vaccines. They should be given at least 3 weeks before tupping time.



Protect against summer mastitis. Dry cow therapy, teat sealants, fly repellents stockholme tar and keeping cows out of fly prone fields.



Vasectomise rams to help tighten lambing periods.