



# Highgate Veterinary Clinic

## Farmers Newsletter - November 2007

### Improve your fertility by 10%!!

It does sound like the title of one of the uninvited e mails I receive on a regular basis but it's not quite what it seems. Cow fertility could be quite a challenge this winter. As the summer's been so bad, cows are not in the best of condition. In addition, many silages are wet and acidic.

There are many components to infertility but early embryonic death (EED) is one of the major causes. EED is when fertilisation takes place but the developing calf dies before the next heat is due. The cow returns to oestrus three weeks after service and appears to be a repeat breeder.

Receptal contains a hormone that can improve the survivability of the embryo.

In trials, 2.5 ml Receptal given 11-12 days after all services has been shown to improve pregnancy rate by 10%. When used with discretion, Receptal is a useful and cost effective tool. We wouldn't recommend using it after every service, but it's worth using on repeat breeders on their 3rd service onwards and in periods of year, like now, when fertility is low.

Cows returning to oestrus after service cost your business £65 each but worse still, culling a cow due to infertility will cost at least £1000 at the moment. In contrast, a single treatment of Receptal costs £6! So why not give it a try?



### The way forward with sheep

There's no need to tell you where the sheep industry is at the moment. If you're going to stay in the industry and make money, it's perhaps a good time to look at how you manage your flock. It is all too tempting to try and cut costs when times are hard, but money spent on good advice and appropriate treatments is an investment rather than a cost.

We are fully aware that the diagnosis of disease and its treatment in individual sheep can be unrewarding, and sometimes a waste of time and money. This is why directing efforts towards flock health planning and preventative medicine is a more sensible approach.

Vets in general are in a good position to help improve your flock's health. Highgate vets in particular are very willing and able to help. The whole team has an interest in sheep and many years of experience. Sarah, as most of you know, has excellent knowledge in this field and Mark is attending a modular course at Edinburgh University.

If you would like to know how we could save you money, please give the surgery a ring.



### What do you know about BVD?

Most of you will have a rough idea that BVD causes abortion, poor fertility and scouring stirks but did you know that it can affect the general health of calves making them more prone to scour and pneumonia? More importantly, do you know if your herd is infected? If you buy in stock or your stock has nose to nose contact your neighbours', then your herd is vulnerable to BVD. The signs are often subtle and not terribly specific but there are tests (many of which are free) which can help determine if BVD is affecting your business.

Knowledge is power! If you know that your herd is free of BVD you can take action to reduce the risk of them getting it. Conversely if the herd is infected, you may have to take action to protect animals that you buy in.

BVD vaccination is not always the full answer. Infection can persist in herds even after years of vaccination. New tests now available can identify the presence of the virus in either bulk milk or pooled blood samples even in vaccinated herds. This can help to identify the presence of carrier animals and ultimately eliminate BVD from the herd.

If you want to know how to protect your herd from this costly disease, please contact the surgery.



### This Month: November



Fluke risk is high this year, treat now if you haven't already done so.



Remember the enzootic abortion vaccine, Mydiavac, can be used on ewes after the ram has come out.



High cell count cows are a source of infection to others in the herd, treat them promptly with e.g. Tylan.