



Highgate Veterinary Clinic

Farmers Newsletter - December 2007

Highgate Veterinary Clinic Wishes all its Customers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Controlling Pain in Farm Animals

Many of us, when afflicted with minor aches, pains or the dreaded man flu, will reach for the paracetamol or ibuprofen because they make us feel better and let us get on with life and work. Similarly, in our work with companion animals, a large proportion of our patients receive pain relief because it improves their welfare and aids rapid recovery.

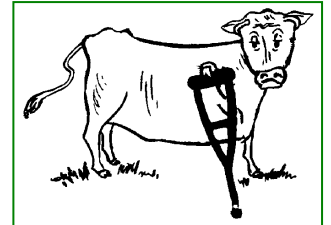
So why don't our farm animals get this treatment more often?

There is no doubt that ruminants do experience pain but unlike dogs and cats, cattle and sheep tend to hide the signs. They are prey animals and have evolved not to show any indication that they are weaker than their companions and so avoid being attacked by predators.

There are few diseases where the components of inflammation (heat, pain, swelling and redness) are not present. Therefore there are few conditions which would not benefit from anti-inflammatory treatment.

Flunixin (finadyne) was one of the first anti-inflammatory drugs and is still one of the best. Its strength is useful in many conditions e.g. damage due to a bad calving, mastitis and calf diarrhoea. It makes the animal feel better and so return to eating and normal behaviour more quickly. It can help antibiotic treatments to get to the area of infection and reduce the damage due to infection so reducing recurrence rates and long-term disability.

Initially, the cost of Flunixin was prohibitory, but the price has come down and as a special offer to encourage you to try it, up to the end of January, if you buy a 100ml bottle of Flunixin, we will give you another FOC. So why don't you give it a go and see what difference it makes to your stock's health and welfare.



Calf Pneumonia

It's that time of year. Rapidly changing temperatures and recent misty mornings have tested some calf buildings to their limit. Vaccination is only one component in the fight to prevent pneumonia.



Here are a few reminders of other factors:

Ensure calves receive enough good quality colostrum, at least 6 pints in the first 6 hours of life.

Avoid overcrowding. This increases humidity in a building and so the survivability of pneumonia viruses in the air.

Avoid mixing different age groups in the same air space. Older calves can be carriers of pneumonia viruses.

Ensure adequate ventilation. Concentrate on air outlets in the roof of the building. They are usually the limiting factor to good ventilation. If possible open the ridge fully.

Treat pneumonia cases promptly and aggressively. Use powerful antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs as you may not get a second chance.

Calves that are in contact with sick calves but are not obviously ill may be infected. Use a thermometer to identify calves running a fever (over 103F) and treat them.

Groups of coughing calves which continue to eat, may not warrant treatment but their future growth rates may be depressed due to low grade chronic lung damage.

This Month: December



Fluke cattle if you haven't already done so.



Treat ewes with copper supplementation in mid pregnancy if your flock is prone to swayback.



Fluke sheep again with a flukacide which kills all stages of fluke. The risk of disease this year is very high.



Look at your buildings with a view to improving ventilation. Damp conditions make animals more prone to pneumonia, mastitis, digital dermatitis etc.