



HIGHGATE VETERINARY CLINIC— Farmer Newsletter

September 2009

173 Highgate
Kendal
LA9 4EN
Tel. 01539 721344
www.highgate-vets.co.uk

August's interesting cases: Bulk milk sampling

Clinic opening times

Monday—Friday

8.30am—7.30pm

Saturday

9.00am—12.30am

Sunday

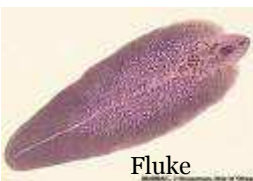
emergencies only

In the past month David and Mark have been busy investigating problems on several dairy farms. Taking a sample of the bulk milk is simple and the tests that can be performed on that sample (some of which are free) can give very useful information about the health of the herd.

IBR

One herd which has been experiencing embryonic loss and abortion had a dramatic increase in IBR antibody in the bulk milk sample compared to six months ago. This suggests a recent outbreak of IBR in the herd which would explain the recent problems despite the lack of classic respiratory signs.

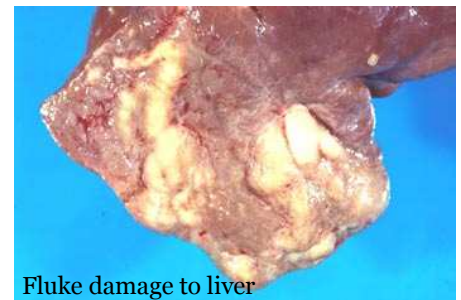
Fluke



Fluke

The sample was also tested for fluke infection. Each cow in this herd is treated with flukicide at drying off. As there are no licensed flukicides for lactating cows this is a sensible but not ideal way to control fluke.

The bulk milk sample indicated that cows were under a big challenge. Recent low butter fats in this herd had been blamed on increased production but may be partially due to high fluke levels. Yet another wet summer will have contributed to the high levels of host snails on what are usually dry pastures.



Fluke damage to liver

Catch up
with us at
Westmorland
Show
stand G223

- Information and advice
- Refreshments
- Freebies
- Lucky dip

Inside this issue:

Bulk milk sampling	1
Lameness investigation	2
Rapid milk bacteriology	2
And finally...	2
This month:	2

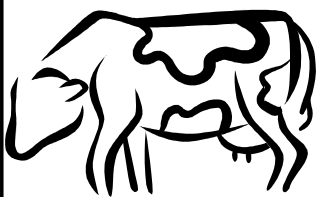
Lungworm

On another farm new calved heifers were struggling to thrive, several tests on them and bulk milk testing indicated lungworm infection. The heifers and the lactating herd are being treated with Eprinex P.O.

BVD

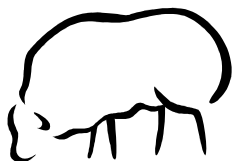
An abortion storm on a third farm was initially investigated by sending a foetus to VLA Penrith. BVD virus was found but a bulk milk sample showed that the virus was not circulating in the herd. This investigation continues to find the source of the outbreak.

This Month



Look for coughing in young stock, it's likely to be lung worm.

Be careful not to overestimate the quality of grass at this time of year. Low energy diets affect the fertility by increasing the incidence of cysts, quiet heats and poor conception.



Prepare for tupping well in advance by ensuring the tups are healthy and in good bodily condition.

Ensure their feet are OK and give the tackle a quick look over. Infertile rams often have obvious problems on the outside.

If in doubt, let us take a look. We now have new better equipment for accessing semen samples.

Rapid milk bacteriology

Wouldn't it be great to know which bug is causing mastitis before you treat it so that you would know which drug to use and for how long?

At the moment this isn't possible, but we are trying to speed up the identification process. We've now put kits into three farms which contain sample pots, submission forms

and stamped addressed envelopes.

The idea is that a pre-treatment sample is put in the post to the lab A.S.A.P. so that results can be back in 2-3 days and treatment changed if necessary.

If anyone else is interested in trying this, please contact Mark.

Lameness investigation

A lameness investigation on one farm included locomotion scoring of the whole herd, only 50% of which could be said to be completely sound.

The farm consultant had calculated that this was costing £50,000 in lost milk revenue. We can add to that poor fertility and poor general health.

Wet weather which softens feet,

added to the stony track and long walking distances all add to the problem.

We opted to put lame cows in a separate group so they didn't have to walk too far, and to sweep tracks regularly.

Starting to foot bath now before returning to housing will help to reduce digital dermatitis this winter.

Locomotion scoring

Good mobility



Imperfect mobility



Impaired mobility



Severely impaired mobility



Digital dermatitis

And finally...

On a lighter note we were called out to a freshly lambed ewe with moss ill (low blood calcium). The owner was first made aware of the pregnancy when walkers reported the birth. It's not clear whether this old girl lambed in spring, but it seems unlikely.