



HIGHGATE VETERINARY CLINIC— Farmer Newsletter

March 2010

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Clinic opening times

Monday-Friday
8.30 am—7.30 pm

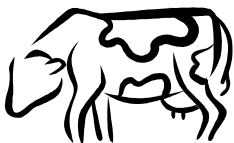
Saturday
9.00a m—12.30 pm

Sunday
emergencies only

This Month:



Treat stock for fluke



Husk vaccination is due this month

Inside this issue:

BVD, 2
Leptospirosis
and IBR

National 2
Infectious
Disease Check

Controlling parasites

Liver Fluke

Yes, we are mentioning this again. In February at least three flocks have had cases of liver fluke despite treatment with flukicides this winter.

Please bare in mind that flukicides do not have a residual protective effect, i.e. they kill what's in the animal when treated but do not stop the sheep or cow being re-infected the next day if they are returned to a contaminated pasture.

Repeated treatments are definitely required this winter and a spring treatment will help prevent adult fluke living in the sheep over the summer and further contaminating the ground.

Husk

This parasite rears its head every year at the back end, which is a shame as it is the only parasitic disease to have an effective vaccine against it. Now is the time to start vaccinating young stock before being turned out for the first time

Sheep scab

Despite having good treatments for sheep scab, outbreaks are yet again occurring this year. After treatment, residual protection from these medicines is limited. As mange mites can live off the sheep for up to 17 days re-infection from contaminated pens, fields and fences is common. Due to the lack of coordination between farms eradication from one unit can very quickly be reversed if a neighbour's sheep are infected and have not been treated at the same time.

When scab was a notifiable disease and dipping compulsory, scab was rare. If we are to return to those scab free days farmers need to start to work together to co-ordinate treatments of their sheep.

If you would like to help to establish a co-ordinated treatment regime in your area we would be very happy to participate.

Blue Tongue Virus—to vaccinate or not to vaccinate?

That is the question many of you are asking. It is a decision you will have to make individually, but the help you, here are some facts.

- Last year there were no clinical cases of BTV in the UK.
- Boosting cattle against BTV will only require one shot of vaccine, If allowed to lapse, it will take 2 shots 3 weeks apart to start again.
- Vaccine manufacturers have reduced production; if there is an outbreak this year production will not match panic buying in time to protect animals.
- It is becoming very common practice for dairy farmers to import in calf heifers from the continent because they are cheap.
- A vaccinated heifer may still contain an infected calf.
- Compulsory vaccination in France will cease in March 2010.
- Despite bad experiences in the previous years and compulsory vaccination in 2008, only 50% of animals in the Netherlands were vaccinated last year.

The risks this year may be greater than last year because the number of susceptible animals will increase as vaccine use reduces here and abroad. In addition bio-security measures for the UK are as bad as they've ever been.

If you would like to discuss this issue further please don't hesitate to contact us.

Protect your herd from three of the most commonly seen diseases

BVD (Bovine Viral Diarrhoea)

Over 56% of dairy herds have been exposed to the BVD virus.

Around 67% of beef and suckler herds have been shown to be infected.

Economic significance

Reduced fertility.

Retarded growth and calf death.

Lower milk yields.

Reduced immunity increases susceptibility to other diseases e.g. pneumonia or mastitis.

If infected in early pregnancy a cow will give birth to a PI (Persistently Infected) calf capable of spreading infection within the herd. The PI animal may appear normal but PIs are most often the source of infection in many herds.

Leptospirosis

Around two-thirds of dairy herds and over 50% of beef herds tested positive for Leptospirosis.

Worryingly, once infected, an animal can become a carrier for months and even years.

Economic significance

Abortions.

Unexplained poor fertility.

Studies have also shown that infected animals achieve only a 30% conception rate, compared to around 46% in one particular study. This equates to only 66% cows in-calf in an infected herd compared to 84% in-calf when Leptospirosis is controlled.

IBR (Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis)

72% of UK herds regularly test positive for IBR.

Once cattle are exposed to the IBR virus they remain carriers for life, with disease outbreaks often occurring during times of stress such as calving or extremes of weather. Once infected, up to 10% of in-calf cows can abort in the second half of pregnancy during a disease outbreak.

Economic significance

Abortions.

Death.

Increase in the number of pneumonia cases in calves.

Potential to cut annual milk yield per cow by 173 litres, or cause a four-week delay in beef cattle reaching slaughter weight.

Results from DairyCheck and BeefCheck show that the majority of cattle tested in 2009 were positive for three of the most commonly seen infectious diseases – BVD, Leptospirosis and IBR.

Disease control

One of the most common ways of bringing disease into a herd is via newly purchased cattle of unknown health status. Affected animals can shed the disease within a herd which means uninfected cattle, herd replacements, for example will be highly vulnerable to infection.

Vaccination can help enormously to reduce circulation of the BVD, Leptospirosis and IBR within a herd. The widespread use of live marker vaccines has helped other European countries control IBR effectively. Exposure levels in Holland for example, are reported to be below 10% where live marker vaccines account for over 90% of IBR vaccine use.

If you are looking to export cattle or semen, the roll-out of live marker vaccine will certainly make life easier as use of vaccine is determined by the rule in the destination country. But even if you are not exporting livestock, IBR control is imperative purely on financial grounds.

National Infectious Disease Check

In order to help control these endemic diseases, Highgate Veterinary Clinic is taking part in an initiative called National Infectious Disease Check which aims to diagnose and reduce the level of BVD, Leptospirosis and IBR infection in UK herds.

As part of this initiative, bulk milk or blood testing with DairyCheck and BeefCheck (subsidised diagnostic services from Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health) allows you to identify the disease status on your farm so that an appropriate control programme can be put forward to reduce the risk and economic consequences of disease.

Please speak to Mark about taking part in the National Infectious Disease Check to help control these economically significant diseases.