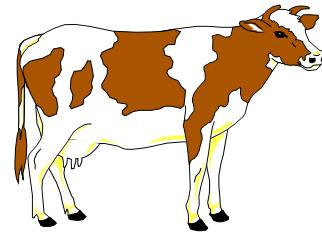


Wood Veterinary Group

October Newsletter
October 2007



BLUE TONGUE

Well, we all knew it was a matter of “when” rather than “if” and now we have it. The infection can only be spread from animal to animal by biting midges, but of course if an infected animal moves around the country there may well be midges there ready to assist in the spread. Fortunately the cold weather should come soon and that will reduce midge activity. Unfortunately there is now evidence of active spread of the disease within the UK. It would appear that a primary wave of infected midges arrived soon after the beginning of August and that there has now been secondary spread from cattle to cattle within the area. This means that slaughter will now cease and control (if you can call it that) will be simply based on preventing animal movement in areas when the disease is detected. As yet there is no vaccine available. The clinical signs to look out for are:

- **Sheep** – Sheep are the worst affected, leading to swelling of the muzzle and lips, a nasal discharge and often increased mortality. So far the disease has not been diagnosed in UK sheep.
- **Cattle** – Cattle are less severely affected and the clinical signs seen in East Anglia resemble photosensitisation, with swelling of the mouth, lips, teats and legs. There was also a nasal discharge, oedema of the head and neck, general stiffness and depressed appetite. There may also be blisters around the skin at the coronary band and hence FMD must be ruled out.
- **Horses and Pigs** – Not affected.

NATIONAL COMPULSORY LAMENESS (LOCOMOTION) SCORING

I’m not sure who dreamt up the Scheme, but it was first taken on board by Tesco when they were offering the extra few pence per litre. Now it’s become part of DEFRA Animal Health and Welfare strategy with a “promise” that unless lameness is reduced to a specific predetermined level then it will be considered as

a failure of cross compliance and you will lose a proportion of your Single Farm Payment.

I attended a meeting at Nottingham Veterinary School in early September. There were about 50 people present but unfortunately only four Vets and most people were from research, NADFAS etc. My overall objection to systems such as these is that I am not convinced that the costs (e.g. your time in doing it, external auditors etc.) will produce any significant improvement in lameness in dairy cows. In addition, incidence of lameness is a reflection of a range of economic factors within the industry. For example, as the price of milk increases and replacement costs double, you are more likely to hang on to lame cows compared to when heifers were cheap and barren cows made good money. The current proposals are:

- It’s to be called lameness scoring
- Each cow within a herd will be given a score of 0 – 3, where zero is normal and 1-3 are different degrees of lameness.
- This will need to be done every second month.

If we need to have lameness scoring, then I voted for a very simple system, something like 0 (= normal) and 1 (= lame) or perhaps 0, 1, 2 and do this twice a year initially. However, this was not accepted. I think the more complicated the system becomes, the more likely figures will be allocated at random (and on the night before the audit visit!).

If you get an opportunity to voice your opinion then I suggest that you object to any system that is not sufficiently simple that it can’t be done at the parlour exit. Bringing cows back to the collecting yard or handling area during the day will increase standing times on concrete and would actually increase lameness!

FLUKE WARNING

After a very wet summer the risk of fluke is high and hence both sheep and cattle are best treated. Cattle and sheep can both be dosed at housing, e.g. using TRODAX injection, or Closamectin, a combined fluke and worm

treatment as they will not pick up fluke indoors. Outwintered sheep ideally need dosing every 10-12 weeks, as they may be regularly exposed to fluke over the winter, especially if it stays warm.

EXCENEL VALUE

The increased milk price means that we have had to think again about the level of yield that makes Excenel appear economic. The following is based on a 15 litre/day cow, a milk price of 25 pence/litre and a 3-day course of treatment.

Drug per 600kg	Cost per dose/day	Milk withhold	Value of discard	Total cost
Excenel 12ml	£7.01	Nil	Nil	£21.03
Engemeycin 10% 25ml	£3.34	6 days (12 milkings)	£33.75	£43.77
Clamoxyl 25ml	£5.97	2 days (4 milkings)	£18.75	£36.67
Alamycin 25ml	£3.41	3.5 days (7 milkings)	£24.37	£34.6

The “break even” point for Clamoxyl is now below 10 litres (£17.91 drug and £8.75 milk = £26.66). All this assumes that you do not need milk for calves etc. I have also used the high level of dosing for Engemeycin and Clamoxyl.

COVEXIN 10 IS BACK!

After a long period of absence, Covexin 10 is back on the market. This is the broad spectrum Clostridial vaccine that includes Clostridium sordelli as well as Blackleg, Tetanus, Enterotoxaemia etc. The autumn might seem to be a strange time to be using it but if your cattle have been grazing flood pasture or if they are eating soil or flood contaminated silage, then there is an increased risk of clostridial disease. As several of you will know to your cost, blackleg infection can be picked up during the grazing season and can lie dormant until mid-winter. For cattle that were not vaccinated in the Spring, there is still logic in vaccinating at housing.

PNEUMONIA TREATMENTS

Micotil remains a “vet only” injection and while we are very happy to inject calves when visiting, the following gives suggested alternatives for this winter:

Product	Total cost	Dose per 150kg	Cost per calf
Resflor	£54.20 per 100ml	20mls s/c	£10.84
Draxxin	£116.11 per 50ml	3.75ml s/c	£8.71
Micotil	£94.07 per 50ml	5ml s/c	£9.41
Metacam	£54.25 per 50ml	3.75ml s/c	£4.07

We have managed to negotiate a much better price for Draxxin (it used to cost £135 per 50ml) which now makes it look much more attractive. Resflor is more expensive, but it has the advantage that it contains Finadyne, so really you ought to add the price of Metacam to Micotil and Draxxin to get a fair comparison. Metacam is an anti-inflammatory drug only.

FREE BULK MILK OSTERTAGIA TESTS

Ostertagia is a major intestinal worm in cattle. A significant amount of money is spent each year on controlling disease in young stock and Merial, the Manufacturers of Eprinex are now offering an antibody test that can be carried out on bulk milk.

- Clearly samples should only be taken from grazing herds
- Mixed morning and afternoon milk, stirred for 5 minutes
- Milk samples can be taken for up to two months after the end of the grazing season. After this antibody levels drop.
- Merial have shown that if milk antibody values are high there will be a significant benefit in treating cows in terms of milk yield, fertility and body condition.

Eprinex treatment at housing also produces benefits in terms of louse and mange control. If anyone is interested, please ask Wendy for a sample bottle.