



# SHROPSHIRE FARM NEWS

It's mid-March as I write this, and for once in a while I have a quieter day – which last weekend was the same, but at least I got to see the second half of England beating Wales. As I look out of the office window, the fog is trying to lift slowly but it is cold. The sun has shone at last over the past few days, and some of those winter acquired field lakes are now turning into puddles. Some of the organic herds have turned out, but if the temperature creeps up a little sustained grass growth should continue. This time last year we were covered in snow, but other than a few nights of ground frost we have had no winter of note. By the time you read this, I hope that won't have changed. Lambing has progressed reasonably well so far, with some big singles about, and now it is pleasant enough for the lambs to be turned out.

Although ground temperatures are still low, a bit of warmth will soon put us in a position where parasite problems can occur, especially with the wetness of the ground. Last autumn, after a dry spell in mid-summer, we still saw and are still seeing Liver Fluke problems and it will not be long before we could start seeing snail activity again as its intermediate host. Those dairy herds that drenched in early winter with an adult-only flukicide should be considering drenching again before turnout to kill any fluke that have developed from immature larvae to adults in the interim.

Schmallenberg: hard to say how it has been this spring. Some midge activity has persisted over the winter with the absence of a cold spell, and as yet the deformities in lambs we saw last year seem to be absent. There have been suspicious cases in some cows, and cows returning with positive blood titres, but the true disease status at present, is to be honest, who knows! Perhaps it will die out before I learn how to spell it.

Some of us attended an interesting meeting on mastitis at the market, and about trial work done on farms in Devon (by the practice where I started out) on the use of an E.coli vaccine for mastitis with some affects also against Staphs. The on-licence recommendation of this vaccine is to use it 45 and 10days pre-calving and 50days post-calving on all cows, but for the ease of management in this trial, cows were vaccinated every 90days. Though there was no noticeable difference for the first six months, there was an improvement in mastitis rates and severity after that. There was also a positive effect on milk yield as well. Coincidentally, there also seemed to be an improvement in strept. uberis infections as well, though there are no claims against this by the vaccine. It is worth consideration but is not a substitute for good management and mastitis control.

Enough of my ramblings, hopefully we'll have a sunny weekend to look forward to, well done to Ireland and BOD for their win in Paris. And a Man United win over Liverpool, dream on, that will make Graham Hamner smile.

Rod

## IN THIS ISSUE: April 2014

- PGE in lambs
- In house calf scour testing available
- Huskvac update
- Recycled manure as bedding: pros and cons

## TB TENDER PROCESS

As of 19<sup>th</sup> March, the TB tendering process has been delayed (again!) for another six months. It appears that the Invitation to Tender will be made available in mid-summer with the intention to still have a tender in place for the end of this year. Watch this space!

## SEPTEMBER SKILLS WEEK

Skills week will be running again from Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> – Friday 19<sup>th</sup> of September. Courses will be running on mastitis, lameness, foot trimming, safe use of medicines and calf health. Venues TBC nearer the time. Please contact the practice for more information.

## SPACE

Some may have noticed that Spunhill next door to us are now closed. They made a decision to close their Hanwood shop and direct sell everything from Ellesmere. Happily this has worked to our advantage and shortly (hopefully by the time you read this) we will have spread into this space. Until we know the outcome from the TB tendering process we do not plan to make any substantial alterations but will at least be able to use the office and kitchen rather than piling on top of each other. The girls are looking forward to having their own loo!

## OPENING HOURS

Monday to Friday – 8:15am-5:30pm  
Please note the surgery is closed both Saturday and Sunday so please try and order any medicines in plenty of time. A vet will be available 24/7 for emergency calls.

Shropshire Farm Vets

Unit 3, The Depot, Hanwood, Shropshire SY5 8NY

T: 01743 860 920 F: 01743 861 934 E: farm@shropshirefarmvets.com W: www.shropshirefarmvets.com

**XL**vets  
Excellence In Practice



## PARASITIC GASTROENTERITIS (PGE)

PGE is caused by a variety of different gut worms. It can cause major economic losses and welfare issues in grazing sheep so therefore it is important to consider your management strategy for the upcoming grazing season.

Firstly it is important to consider whether lambs will be placed on a 'clean' pasture (last year's pasture that has been re-seeded or grazed by cattle) or a 'contaminated' pasture, as different plans are required for these situations.

For 'clean' pasture the main aim is to stop the gut worms of the ewes from infecting the pasture with eggs which would turn into larvae and cause disease in the lambs. Ewes that have just lambed usually have an increase in egg production due to them having lowered immunity. The ewes themselves are unlikely to show any signs of illness but the result will be a large number of scouring lambs. To prevent this problem, all ewes should be treated with a suitable short-acting wormer before turnout onto clean pasture.

For 'contaminated' pasture ewes should be treated with a longer acting anthelmintic before turn out so that they themselves don't become infected by the larvae on the pasture. It is also important to remember that lambs may need treating two or three times at 3 weekly intervals in May or June, the timing of this will be dependent on the weather.

Clinical signs to look out for include diarrhoea, weight loss, reduced weight gain and in acute cases, sudden death. If you are at all concerned please ring the practice and chat with one of the vets or bring in a faecal sample for us to do a worm egg count, which can be done at the practice.

For up to date disease information and a parasite forecast visit [nadis.org.uk](http://nadis.org.uk).

*Emily*



## THE IMPORTANCE OF BIOSECURITY

With recovery from the recent flooding still happening and another notifiable disease hitting the news (African swine fever cases have been found in Lithuania, Poland and Russia) biosecurity is the buzz word of the moment. Many of us will now be turning animals out however, this doesn't make strict control any less important: stringent disease control means better welfare and helps to cope with the ever increasing cost of farming.

Infectious disease can be introduced into your animals in a number of ways: through buying in apparently healthy animals (acting as carriers), via equipment/farm personnel, by nose to nose contact at boundaries, other species (e.g. wildlife, dogs), contaminated water sources/feedstuffs and many others.

So how best do we combat good biosecurity? Many people will talk vaguely about quarantine and remember a section of their flock/herd health plan (F/HHP) mentioning it. Although traditionally thought of as a tick box exercise the F/HHPs can be a great place for protocols and interventions to be implemented and, as they have to be carried out anyway, gaining something from them can only be a positive. Please ring the practice to arrange for us to come and help update yours.

So, quarantine. Firstly, if it seems too good to be true, it probably is! Buying animals in, many people are unaware of the disease background from the farm of origin. Any information that can be gained before purchasing will make for more informed decisions. Once new stock arrive on the farm (and this means coming back after being to shows etc. too) isolate them for two to four weeks. If complete isolation is not possible ensure there is no nose to nose contact, shared feedstuffs or water troughs. Protective clothing used for isolated animals should be fully disinfected/changed entirely before dealing with the main stock. If a specific disease is suspected then testing for this while the animal is in isolation is far preferable to when they have already introduced it into the main herd/flock.

Calving/lambing areas and sick pens. I had a lecturer at University that would always liken this to a human hospital – you would never stick the maternity ward in with all your sick, infectious people – the same applies for animals. Often young stock are the key to the future of your herd/flock and so giving them the best start, when they are at their most vulnerable, is vital. Sick pens and calving/lambing pens should be kept as far away from each other as possible. Full disinfection between animals going into a pen and again of protective clothing is imperative.

There are many, many other things that can help with disease prevention: double fencing boundaries, seeing calves before the routine, ensuring clean storage of bulk feed etc.

If you have any questions please contact the practice to arrange a visit.

*Emily*



# HUSKVAC AND LUNGWORM

"MSD Animal Health regrets to inform you of the temporary delay to the supply of our Bovilis Huskvac vaccine. We would like to reassure you that we are doing our utmost to return fully Bovilis Huskvac to the market as soon as possible and we expect weekly release of batches during April.

Please accept our sincere apologies for the inconvenience this delay causes."

Some of you will know that we have had loads of hassle juggling Huskvac and by the time you read this I really do hope that we have some in stock. Once again, MSD have managed to cock up the delivery of a vaccine and at time of writing (18<sup>th</sup> March) none of the wholesalers have any at all. Both MSD and the wholesaler \*think\* that they might have some in the first week of April. This may or may not be too late for you if you use Huskvac. A normal course would be a dose at six weeks and again two weeks prior to turnout. Some clients will not have any order filled and some will be caught between administering the first dose and not able to get the second!

Since I am trying to predict the unpredictable with MSD, what to do...?

Previous experience shows that having a six week gap between administering the two doses of Huskvac has no or little effect on the efficacy of the vaccine – this gap however is not licensed and all efforts should be made to follow manufacturer's instructions (if at all possible) for best effect.

Farms that need to use Huskvac but cannot will have to have some form of monitoring programme in place such as faecal analysis; however, beware. Severe clinical effects from lungworm can occur at two weeks, a full week before eggs are visible in the muck. A very rapid approach to treatment may be needed – peak time is August/September but we see cases from June to November.

Use of strategic wormers or possible long acting wormer – both requires care in dairy heifers due to long milk withhold on some products and worming should only really be done when necessary.

Careful grazing management may work but lungworm can also "just appear" by nature of the lifecycle. Certain fungi can propel the lungworm larvae into the air, so having no previous history of lungworm doesn't necessarily mean that you are immune from this problem.

Over the last few years, MSD have managed to make a mess of just about every product, (especially vaccine) they supply and despite us moving to other companies for equivalent products, unfortunately they do have some

unique products which have no alternate, of which Huskvac is one. We can only hope that they pull their collective fingers out of their collective backsides and get back on track.

A prize will be given for the best acronym made from MSD. Popular so far is 'Might Sell Drugs...'

*Alistair*



## FARMING FUNNIES

A life-long city man tired of the rat race decided he was going to give up the city life, move to the country, and become a chicken farmer. He bought a nice, used chicken farm and moved in. As it turned out, his next door neighbour was also a chicken farmer. The neighbour came for a visit one day and said, "Chicken farming isn't easy. Tell you what. To help you get started, I'll give you 100 chickens."

The new chicken farmer was thrilled. Two weeks later the neighbour dropped by to see how things were going. The new farmer said, "Not too well. All 100 chickens died." The neighbour said, "Oh, I can't believe that. I've never had any trouble with my chickens. I'll give you 100 more." Another two weeks went by and the neighbour stopped by again. The new farmer said, "You're not going to believe this, but the second 100 chickens died too." Astounded, the neighbour asked, "What went wrong?"

The new farmer said, "Well, I'm not sure whether I'm planting them too deep or too close together."

## RECYCLED MANURE SOLIDS

There has been some interest over recent months in the use of recycled manure as a bedding material for housed cattle. Using a waste product as a sustainable alternative product should hopefully reduce bedding costs. Several farms in the country have installed recycling machinery to produce a suitable product to use on their own farms.

Slurry is handled to separate the solids out, which is then processed through either screw or roller presses to produce the manure at 32-34% dry matter content. In the US, this is then composted over some period to produce a drier, more stable material which can be stored. In the UK recycled manure is a more unstable product and needs to be used straight away.

Under E.U regulations, manure is classified as an animal by-product, which under permissible disposal routes animal bedding is not listed. It is widely used in Holland and Denmark whereas in this country DEFRA have met with other stakeholders to undertake a study in its use and interpretation of the relevant legislation. A study initiated in October 2013 and finalised at the end of last month hopes to be presented to DEFRA sometime this month.

Recycled manure has either been used as deep bedding or sprinkled on mattresses in cubicles. So far, where the system has worked there has been an improvement in hock scoring (suggesting better cow comfort), some improvement in mastitis, and an increase in lying times which are all positive outcomes.

What they need to find out is the long term implications on disease and human health such as direct handling and the respiratory factors of dust and ammonia concentrations to those working in this environment.

Recycled manure has the potential for a high pathogen load which could include Salmonella, Campylobacter, Strept



uberis and other bacteria which have implications for the health of other cattle. The risk of Johnes disease to other cattle is also a concern if there are cows excreting this bug in the herd, and its spread to others through the recycled manure.

There is also the potential risk to the consumer from zoonotic pathogens in slurry surviving the pasteurisation process if they enter the milk. There will be an increase in the risk of resistant organisms from recycled manure and with that what effects there will be on antibiotic resistance in cow and consumer.

There are a lot of questions to answer, but perhaps the key is going to be public perception when the Sun prints a headline "Cows bedded on their own S—t". And what the Supermarkets views on this will be.

Watch this space; the answer may be coming soon.

Rod

## CALF SCOUR: THE IMPORTANCE OF A RAPID DIAGNOSIS

New born calves (0-6wks) suffering from diarrhoea can be costly to treat and, if cases prove fatal, will be a significant economic loss for your farm.

Risk of scour outbreaks can be minimised significantly through certain steps such as sound hygiene/biosecurity, vaccination protocols and good colostrum intake practices.

The four main pathogens which can cause calf scour are E.coli, Coronavirus, Rotavirus and Cryptosporidium. These can now be tested for 'in-house' through a faecal sample at the practice and a result is available within ten minutes. Advice then can be given on an individual farm basis, on the appropriate treatment and best preventative measures to be taken.

The cost per test is £18+VAT.

For further information please contact the practice.

David



### Find us on social Media



[www.facebook.com/ShropshireFarmVets](http://www.facebook.com/ShropshireFarmVets)



[www.twitter.com/ShropFarmVets](http://www.twitter.com/ShropFarmVets)

Shropshire Farm Vets

Unit 3, The Depot, Hanwood, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 8NY

T: 01743 860 920 F: 01743 861 934 E: [farm@shropshirefarmvets.com](mailto:farm@shropshirefarmvets.com) W: [www.shropshirefarmvets.com](http://www.shropshirefarmvets.com)

**XL**vets  
Excellence In Practice