



SHROPSHIRE FARM NEWS

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BVD free, A new national campaign.

You will shortly be seeing the launch of a new national campaign in the press to eradicate BVD. Why?

Ask yourself if you know any Scottish/Irish farmers that are easily parted (sober or otherwise) with their cash?



Our near neighbours in Ireland and Scotland are already well down the path of BVD eradication and there are national programs in many other EU countries. The farming communities in both these countries are not only complying with but leading these campaigns. Well the reason is that with the exception of TB, BVD is the most costly economic disease of cattle. BVD causes massive fertility losses through abortion and early embryonic death, poor conception rates. It is also a powerful immunosuppressive contributing to much higher levels of other disease loss. **But I vaccinate for BVD so I don't need to worry?** Well vaccines are a very important part of BVD control but a recent survey showed that approx. 50% of BVD vaccine is used incorrectly, be it stored incorrectly, jabbed incorrectly or boosters administered at the wrong time. BVD is also unlike many other diseases in that a persistently infected carrier animal (PI) will transmit huge doses of BVD virus and will infect any proportion of animals in a herd that have no immunity. Even a small proportion is enough to allow for BVD to persist over months and generations. Therefore even a well vaccinated herd can still have an occasional problem.

The good news is that BVD is a very well understood, logical disease and that the tests and vaccines available are very good. 5 simple steps can eradicate BVD from your herd.

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AI TRAINING COURSE 9-12 APRIL

There are still a few places available on Tim's popular course. If you have ever fancied doing your own AI'ing then this is the course for you.

£445 plus vat. Please phone the practice to book.

LEPTAVOID/SPIROVAC DEMYSTIFIED!

We are currently stocking Spirovac as opposed to Leptavoid making you a saving of 46p (on account price) on each dose. Spirovac provides protection against the serotype affecting cattle, which includes 2 strains of Leptosporosis, as is the case with Leptavoid. However Leptavoid was licensed in the days when you could claim cross protection on the data sheet whilst Spirovac was licensed more recently and you cannot claim cross-protection on the data sheet under new licences. If you have administered the first dose of the primary course with Leptavoid you must finish with the second dose of the primary course with Leptavoid. We can order Leptavoid in for you for these animals or for any other reason. It is safe to boost cows with a single dose of Spirovac who have had a primary course in previous years with Leptavoid. If you are in any doubt, please contact the practice.

DID YOU KNOW....

All vet students during the course of their training have to complete 26 weeks of placement in practice. A big thank you for your participation and patience, in being part of their integral training.

Cont'd...

1. Check your status.
2. Test for Persistently infected (PI) animals.
3. Eliminate PI's from the herd.
4. Protect the rest of the herd by vaccinating correctly.
5. Understand how BVD may come back into your herd and have a monitoring program to detect any re-emergence of BVD as soon as possible.

BVD can, and will be, eradicated nationally in time, however the benefits for your herd are available to you right now. We will be holding some BVD meetings in the forthcoming months to explain the benefits of BVD eradication and the options for going about it. Please speak to any of our vets to find out more.

Tim

MOT & SERVICE - BULL PRE-BREEDING SOUNDNESS EXAMINATION (BBSE)

The role of the bull As we move towards the end of the spring calving it is worth a quick look forward to the mating season. At this time of year, the forgotten hero (or villain depending on how calving has gone) is the bull. If the bull fails to fulfil his role in just a couple of months, farm profitability may be severely hampered for several years to come. The only role of a bull is to achieve pregnancies reliably. Achieving acceptable pregnancy rates in a herd relies upon good nutritional management; effective disease control; successful heifer integration into the herd and on the identification of fertile bulls.

A **bull pre-breeding soundness exam** is an essential tool to help ensure the future profitability of your herd. They can improve pregnancy rates by 9% on farms where bulls are tested. The exam includes a physical examination, semen sample collection and analysis (under a microscope). This entire service is carried out on farm, during a single visit.

Bulls are tested 4-6 weeks pre-breeding. Reasons for testing bulls include:

- annual pre-breeding test
- evaluating problem bulls
- newly purchased bulls
- insurance claims.

Definition of "Fertile bull"

A bull should be able to breed prolifically, achieving multiple pregnancies. The BCVA recommends the following; 60% of 50 disease free, normal cycling females, pregnant in first 21

days of mating, as diagnosed at 42 days scan.

- 90% of 50 disease free, normal cycling females, pregnant in first 63 days of mating, as diagnosed at 42 days scan • Upgraded to 65% and 95% recently by vets involved with bull management in Scotland.



Costs of Sub-Fertile & Infertile Bulls

20-30% of bulls are sub-fertile or infertile, resulting in more culls.

A longer calving pattern leads to greater disease pressure and loss of calves.

Later calving cows mean more barren/culls the next 2-3 seasons. An infertile bull will get replaced, sub-fertile bull keeps costing money!

Benefit of compact calving blocks – dairy and beef

Larger, uniform groups of calves for sale, improves feed efficiency, finishing and marketing.

Improved disease control and vaccine management – rota/corona/cocci/parasites/pneumonia.

Improved ability to rear own replacement rates Improved herd fertility - more fit cows to breed at start of mating. Reduced dystocia. Eases calving workload and management. Reduced bull cost per calf born.

Mating Loads

Range, depends on breed, age, and can range from 25 to 60. It is important to avoid boredom, exhaustion and excessive competition between bulls.

Please phone to book your Bulls MOT - Remember, your Bull is half your herd.

James



A NEW MILK PREGNANCY TEST

In the last 6 months a new milk pregnancy test has been available to farmers in the USA and it appears likely that it will be coming our way soon. This is the first new technology for pregnancy testing for use on dairy farms since the advent of ultrasound scanning and is obviously something that is going to be in the news in the not too distant future .

Firstly, is the test of any use?

The milk test is for a pregnancy specific protein that the live foetus produces, and is detectable from approx. 28 days of pregnancy but is only reliable from 35 days. The trial data that we have seen indicates that the test is sufficiently accurate however these trials are currently being repeated in the UK. The test will probably be available as a stand –alone service or as part of your monthly recording.

Secondly, are there any drawbacks?

The protein that the foetus produces reduces by 50% every 60 days after pregnancy ceases, therefore there will be cases where cows that have recently aborted or have a dying or dead calf in the womb will still appear positive on a milk test. The other weakness of the test is that it cannot tell you how far in calf the animal is or if she is going to have twins. This will continue to be possible only with a scanner for now. The other consideration will be the accuracy of your milk recorder as obviously you will only get the correct result if the samples are correctly identified and no cross contamination occurs. There is also a grey area in the test results for cows that need to be rechecked.

So when should it be used?

Although ultrasound scanning will still probably remain the most versatile and accurate way of examining a cows fertility status, this new technology will have it's place. Don't forget what your main reason for pd-ing is. ie. to detect those animals that are not in calf **AND TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM QUICKLY.** In this circumstance we will still have to examine and scan non-pregnant animals and intervene with appropriate treatments. So if we are still on farm, scanning non-pregnant animals, it will probably still be sensible to present your served cows for scanning as well. Where we do see the test being of real value, is to screen all cows perhaps a month prior to drying off to pick up those odd cows that have been pd-ed in calf but have lost them. It would also be a very useful tool to prevent disputes if you are selling or buying in calf cows.

In the long run, we need profitable farms for us to have a

business, so rest assured that if this test is proved to be cost effective we will help you get the best out of it!

Tim

JOHNE'S SEMINAR - DESIGNING A MAP FOR THE FUTURE...

On Wednesday 20th February, we held a well-attended, and informative evening seminar in Bicton, on Johne's Disease and what it means for Shropshire farmers. We discussed why the disease could be massively important when considering the future profitability of farms; and how farmers, vets and others in the industry need to work together to try and control this debilitating disease.

In discussing Johne's control we looked at risk assessment, practical Johne's testing methods (ie since bulk milk samples are fairly useless when estimating Johne's levels on farm – a targeted 30 cow screen is much much better!) and Johne's Control Plans.

We were joined by Chris Spence from NML who gave us an over-view of some of the different options to consider when testing for, and monitoring Johne's disease. The later part of the evening (before the fantastic food!) comprised of a very interesting and lively discussion of testing and management strategies – what to do, how to do it, and what to do next!

One interesting point of discussion that has cropped up since the meeting is the question of how long you should wait to do a Johne's milk/blood test following a TB skin test (as the TB test injections can have an impact on interpreting a Johne's test). Ideally you should wait 3 months, but if needs must you can do the test 6-8 weeks after the skin test (according to NML). If you milk record, you should be able to arrange your regular milk recording days to take this into account, as long as you tell them when your test is happening in advance.

If you would like any further information, or would like to discuss Johne's control within your stock, please contact me at the practice.

Nathan

Thanks to those of you who have sent back the newsletter feedback form and your views. Please keep them coming.

Zoe

SUBSIDISED TESTING FOR YOUR FLOCK

By now the majority of you will have either finished your lambing or be well under way. Hopefully most of you will have come through unscathed from the challenges faced this season however we are aware that many of you have had both barren rates and abortion rates higher than usual. With Schmallenberg being the buzzword it becomes tempting to jump to conclusions and assume that it must be the cause of these problems. What it is important to understand is that there are other, possibly more so, significant causes of abortion and even more importantly they are things that we can do something about.

This spring MSD will again be running their Flock Check service which offers subsidised testing on blood taken from aborted ewes for Enzootic Abortion (EZA).

Results from last year's Flock Check showed that once again EZA and Toxoplasmosis continued to be the most commonly diagnosed cause of abortion in the UK despite there being effective vaccines available. Once EZA enters your flock it can be notoriously difficult to remove and has a serious economic impact.

If you have had any ewes which have aborted or failed to lamb then they should be blood sampled within 3 months of lambing and tested for EZA. To comply with the scheme we would test 6-8 barren or aborted ewes from flocks not yet vaccinating for EZA. The lab tests will be free but there will be a charge on time for sampling. This scheme will run until the 31st July.

For more information or to organise sampling please contact the practice.

BARRY



ALL IN, ALL OUT AND DISINFECTION:

In all disease situations and especially so in housed livestock, the seriousness of disease is a balance between environment, management and challenge, whether it be in the fattening houses for pigs, weaner pens, calf pens and even lambing pens in younger stock, or in bedded areas and cubicles in dairy cows in the case of mastitis. Reducing the challenge of disease by reducing or trying to eliminate infectious agents can play a considerable part in disease management. Where it is practical, an all in, all out system of housing is of great benefit here in that it firstly gives the housing a rest, and secondly and more importantly, it gives a chance of cleaning and disinfection to try and kill all infectious agents. A good cleaning policy would be as follows

- 1) Remove all organic material from the buildings
- 2) Faeces, and especially pig muck contains fat which will be water resistant and protect bugs, so it is important first to scrub, power hose all surfaces with a detergent first to remove this fat layer.
- 3) Leave to dry properly, especially porous surfaces such

as wood will absorb water and so won't take up the disinfectant

- 4) Then wash thoroughly with a disinfectant and power hose, and then leave the building and contents to dry thoroughly before restocking is undertaken.
- 5) Consideration has to be given to fan housing, which may hide bugs being carried on moist dust.
- 6) White washing walls may also then be of benefit.

The benefit in pig housing and calf rearing pens will be of enormous value, but even doing cubicle housing say every other year when the cows are out at grass and the sheds can be rested for weeks should play a part in reducing environmental mastitis.

Rod



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