



SHROPSHIRE FARM NEWS

IN THIS ISSUE: August 2013

- Hot Rod on another Big Adventure!
- Summer Mastitis - "August Bag"
- Skills Week Workshop coverage
- New Team Member
- SureCalf Vaccination Scheme
- Top Breeding Soundness

SUMMER MASTITIS - "AUGUST BAG"

It's that time of year again, especially after this hot spell and the emergence of flies now.

Summer mastitis is a name given to a type of mastitis that tends to occur during the warmer sunny months, in dry cows and heifers at pastures. It is spread by flies, most commonly the sheep headfly, *Hydrotaea irritans*. Several bacterial varieties are involved, but notably *Arcanobacterium pyogenes*, which produces the characteristic yellowy foul smelling pus associated with the condition. Teat damage can be a contributing factor, and once a quarter is infected, spread can occur from teat to teat or between animals.

Symptoms: initially are a swollen, infected teat or quarter, with flies being attracted to its unpleasant odour and yellow secretion. If unchecked, the cow will become progressively ill, running a temperature, swelling of the hind legs, lethargy and in extremes, abortion or even death.

Treatment: few quarters will survive the infection, so the aim is to save the cow and try and prevent abortion.

Most important is regular stripping of the affected quarter to remove as much of the infection as possible with care to dispose of infected secretions so that they are not a risk to other cattle. Antibiotic therapy and the use of anti-inflammatories to reduce the pain and swelling are used in combination with this.

Control:

1. Antibiotic cover, will significantly reduce the chances of infection, using Dry Cow therapy and good hygiene at administration

PTO

CONGRATULATIONS!!

A massive well done to the Higgins Family of Wilderley Hall Farms on winning the NMR/RABDF Gold Cup at this year's Livestock Event. A tremendous achievement, testament to a great deal of hard work and dedication.

MINSTERLEY SHOW

Please come and join us anytime throughout the day for a drink, but food will also be served between 12-3pm.

HEIFER REARING MEETING

August 7th – heifers are the future of the herd so we will be conducting a session focused on how to prepare each heifer for a successful milking life. This meeting will be at Dorrington village hall, 12-2.30pm; please contact the office to book a place.

SHEEP BREEDERS - PLEASE BE AWARE

Just to advise that unfortunately Chronogest Sponges no longer come with free applicators. You will now need to order them in separately.

DIY AI THIS AUTUMN

Save time and money on your cattle breeding and production. There are some spaces left on our next fully Semex accredited cattle AI course. Please phone the office for more details.

DID YOU KNOW

Increasing the yield of utilized grass dry matter from 8 to 10 tonnes reduces the cost of grazed grass by nearly 20% from £100/ha to £80/ha.



Continued from Page 1

2. Teat sealants will offer good protection to the teat end to prevent infection, whether in conjunction with/without Dry Cow Therapy. The use in heifers is now showing benefits and I would refer you back to the article in last month's newsletter.
3. Fly control: regular treatments with pour-on treatments such as Swish will minimise exposure of the teats to flies. Keeping cattle away from fly-friendly environments, such as sandy soils, tree cover, and water where flies breed will also benefit.
4. Maintaining good teat condition, regularly checking and treating if necessary.

Little can be done to save the quarter once infected, so prevention is better than cure.

Rod

SKILLS WEEK JULY 2013, 'THE FIRST OF MANY?'

In the second week of July we held our first ever Shropshire Farm Vets Skills Week. This was a series of 5 separate one-day workshops covering a wide range of important farming issues. On each day the morning was spent at Dorrington Village Hall, covering the theory side of things, then after lunch courtesy of Ed Potter, we headed to a local farm for some more practical sessions.

On Monday's session, James and Rod covered Mastitis and Cell count control – the latest thinking on how and why mastitis and high cell counts occur and how to prevent them. The afternoon practical workshop covered correct milk sampling techniques, CMT testing and usage, and the correct use of teat sealants in cows and dairy heifers.

Tuesday's workshop was run by Tim and James, covering cattle fertility and key strategies to increase pregnancy rates which improve efficiency of the dairy unit. The session focused on reproductive physiology of the cow, AI timing and technique, correct semen handling protocols, and how to improve submission rates by accurate and cost-effective methods of heat detection.

The session on Wednesday was run by Alistair and covered calf rearing and safe medicines use. Here the focus was on attention to detail, and how to use this to give you an edge on the rest of the market. Having specific, designated staff for calf rearing, good colostrum management and feeding protocols and a wide range of other factors were all discussed. In the afternoon these areas were looked at again in practice on

one of our local client's farms. On Thursday, Nathan focused on "more lambs less worms". Methods of shortening lambing periods (such as using teasers or sponges), vaccination against causes of abortion and intelligent worming strategies were discussed. The on-farm session included body condition scoring, vasectomising a tup, faecal egg count collection (how and why) and correct calibration and use of worming equipment.

Finally, on Friday Roel ran his bovine lameness and practical foot trimming workshop. This involved some theory covering the '5 step Dutch routine Foot Trim' and how to do it; and how this applies to the anatomy of the bovine foot. This was then followed by practical foot trimming sessions on dead feet and then live cows. The course also covered the main conditions to look out for and how to best treat them, as well as covering the wider subjects of locomotion scoring and how reducing lameness on-farm can save you large amounts of money.

Over the course of the week we had 25 people attend and the sessions were well received by all. A huge thank you to everyone who attended, and also to the farms that hosted the afternoon sessions. Feedback has been very positive, and there is clearly an appetite for more of the same.

We intend to do more of these training sessions in the future, so if you are interested please let us know and if there are any areas that you would particularly like us to cover, please drop us a line at the practice

Nathan

HOT ROD

Another one off the bucket list for me! What was supposed to be part of a stag weekend last September, white water rafting at Bala, had to be postponed through my mate's injury. I also took my first trip on a motorbike to get there!

So a 6a.m start saw us set off on Dave's 2.3litre Triumph Rocket, and at this stage I was more worried about the bike ride than rafting, but soon sat back, relaxed, and enjoyed the scenery passing us by. We arrived in Bala for a biker's breakfast in thick mist, but this was soon burnt off by the emerging sun.

On arrival at the white water centre we were kitted out with wetsuits, helmets and buoyancy aids, and then acquainted with our raft joining four others. At the top of the run we went through safety procedures, rowing techniques and what to do if one of us went in, before launching into the water for the first of four runs. Descending the first rapid, I looked behind



me to find no instructor (no-one told us what to do if he went in), but to my relief on a second glance, his head emerged over the back of the boat and he hauled himself back in. Three more runs, I managed to get into the front so had the water straight in my face as we hit the rapids, fantastic fun, backwards, sideways, forwards over white water.

A great ride back over the hills on a beautiful summers day, with of course the obligatory pub stop, wonderful scenery, and a great day out.

Next, wilder water, am told Austria is good, or rafting with the Crocs on the Zambezi.

Rod

WELL DONE JAMES!

After 2 years of hard work, we are proud to announce that after passing his exams in December last year, James went to Liverpool University for his graduation ceremony in the middle of July. James now holds an MSc level Diploma in Bovine Reproduction, a further qualification which has helped farm vets turn research into practical application in the field since the 1980's.



Technologies such as ultrasound scanning for pregnancy in cattle, embryo transfer, bull breeding soundness examination to name but a few, all entered forward looking farm practices via this course in the UK.

NEW TEAM MEMBER

Hi All

I would just like to introduce myself to you, as the new Practice Manager. My name is Jayne Weaver (soon to become Mrs Watkins – just to confuse things).

Although I come from a very different background – the charity KIDS, I like to think I have a wealth of managerial experience and transferable skills, and am very keen to learn more about this new and exciting field.

I originate from Stourbridge, so having a slight black country accent, should make me fairly easy to identify! I will be attending the Minsterley Show on the 17th August, which will be a great opportunity for me to meet as many of you as possible – please drop by to say 'hello'.

I Would like to thank Zoe, my predecessor, for showing me the ropes, and the rest of the fabulous team here at Shropshire Farm Vets, for giving me a very warm welcome.



TEAT SEALANTS

Following on from last month's Skills Day, and the article on the use of Orbeseal in heifers, we are pleased to say that quite a few of you are gaining extra benefit by reducing mastitis rates in heifers. Studies suggest at least a 70% reduction in heifer mastitis rates and some of our clients have achieved a 95% reduction. Orbeseal has great effects on udder health but can also be a dangerous product with incorrect administration. Zoetis (Pfizer) have always been excellent with farmer education as well as sorting out any problems.

If you haven't noticed yet, Orbeseal has an alternate now – "Boviseal", now with a UK licence. Within the next couple of months a further similar product is going to be released which will stir up the market even more. Please be assured that we will be keeping a close eye on all these changes and keep you informed as to effects, company backup as well as securing a better price point, but in the meantime we will be continuing to stock Orbeseal until we are happy that the other products are compatible in every way.

The potential benefits of Orbeseal are well known. If you do not already use Orbeseal, please speak to one of us.

SURECALF VACCINATION SCHEME

Following a successful pilot programme in Scotland the SureCalf vaccination scheme is being rolled out across the rest of the UK. This scheme aims to maximise calf value for both buyers and sellers.

The programme requires that all calves are vaccinated pre-sale against three key respiratory diseases – RSV, PI3 and IBR – as well as BVD. Each calf should receive two doses of **Rispoval 4** three to four weeks apart. This will then provide the calves with protection for the next six months. Calves are then registered with the programme and the seller receives certification to prove they have vaccinated their animals. This is passed on with the calves to the buyers.

Sellers can be confident that they have done all they can to optimise their calves value and minimise the impact of respiratory disease whilst improving animal welfare.

Despite the extra costs, data shows sellers and buyers can reap significant returns with SureCalf animals expecting to attract a premium of up to £40 per head.

Buyers can have peace of mind that they have purchased an animal which is less likely to suffer from the setbacks of respiratory disease and therefore more likely to grow faster and finish earlier, delivering a better return on investment.

For more information please contact the practice or visit www.surecalf.co.uk.



IMPORTANT NOTICE

We are conducting a study about bovine tuberculosis to better understand the dynamics of the disease and, with this purpose, Raquel will be using some data from our farms which will be treated anonymously, whilst complying with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The study aims to give better advice to our farms going through a bTB outbreak. If you would **NOT** like your data to be included, please let us know as soon as possible.

Find us on social media



www.facebook.com/ShropshireFarmVets



www.twitter.com/ShropFarmVets

TUP BREEDING SOUNDNESS

Within the practice our lambing season is now spread over 6 months. This means that for some of you tupping will soon be approaching and it is essential that your rams are working to full capacity.

Levels of fertility within a group of rams can vary significantly. If, by chance, infertile or low fertility rams are dominant, they will always suppress the mating ability of a subordinate ram that could well be of high fertility, with a consequent reduction in overall flock fertility.

Too much reliance is then based on the use of a large number

of rams to cover up for those that may not be of a high standard.

We offer full breeding soundness examinations including physical exam and semen testing if required. This can all be done conveniently at the practice.

Any discerning buyer of a valuable ram should always have a breeding soundness examination of the animal carried out.

For those of you who plan on using a teaser then, if you haven't already, now is also the time to have him vasectomised. Remember that once vasectomised these teasers can remain fertile for up to 6 weeks and as such should be kept separate from ewes until this time has elapsed.