



# SHROPSHIRE FARM NEWS

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### Going to the livestock event?

As well as being there to support the Higgins family and their Wilderley herd (GOOD LUCK!) in their effort to claim the NMR Gold Cup, James will also be doing a stint on the XLvets stand where one of the attractions this year is the opportunity to have a free herdcheck lite report done for your herd.

#### What is Grassroots Herdcheck?

Do you feel that you are getting the most out of your milk recording information? The monthly recordings give you huge amounts of cell count information but do you always get the chance to sit down and work out what to do with it all? Which high cell count cows need treating or drying off? Which ones are you most likely to get success with? Is there a pattern to the cell counts that means you can make changes? How is my farm performing in comparison to the last few months and to everyone else? Is my dry cow treatment working? These questions can all be answered for you with the aid of Herdcheck, a new XLvets service that analyses your recording to pull out the most relevant information. There are already nearly 100,000 cows being analysed by this program, sitting alongside your current recording service.

#### How does it work?

Once you sign up we will get a free quick monthly email to let us know what your headline figures are. This tells us your cell count, your proportion of cows with cells over 200,000 and also your fat and protein percentages and the proportion of cows with protein below 2.9% (probably energy deficient) and above 5.5% fat (probably ketotic and energy deficient). This information comes free but where these flag up problems we can get access to a more detailed report with action lists for problem cows and analysis of where these problems are coming from. These reports are chargeable and can be downloaded monthly, quarterly or only when problems arise. **PTO**

### SHOW TIME! MINSTERLEY SHOW 18TH AUGUST

The Show looms closer and we would like to invite you all to our marquee and help us celebrate our 10 years as a practice. More details to follow.

### SKILLS WEEK 8-12TH JULY 2013

Have you booked your place yet? Please ring the practice if you would like to attend, places are limited.

### HEIFER REARING - YOUR FUTURE MILKING COW

Rod will be holding a meeting on 7th August 12- 2.30pm, Venue to be confirmed. If you would like to register your interest please phone the practice.

### YMCP POWDER

The Americans have been using YMCP powder very successfully for quite a few years as a fluid replacement in fresh calved cows to encourage initial appetite and milk production. We have been using YMCP powder for a few months now and have also found that it works well. Generally the cow drinks the fluid herself without the need to use a stomach pump, which is a huge advantage. Buy a tub of 20 doses in July and August and receive 2 extra sachets free. James will be able to fill you with any technical detail you need to know about the product.



We already have some farms using this service and finding it useful and we intend to offer this service to all our farms that milk record. As I say you only get charged when you get a report so we would encourage you to sign up and have a look at what's on offer.

As well as all the other attractions at the livestock event there will also be the opportunity for you to get a free herdcheck cell count report done on your herd. All you have to do is visit the XLvets stand and sign a permission form to allow XLvets to process your latest milk recording data.

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## HEIFER MASTITIS

The following article is written by Winston Mason, a farm animal veterinarian from New Zealand who is locuming with us for a couple of months. Winston has been a valuable member of the team over the last six weeks and we hope he will come and work with us again.

### HEIFER MASTITIS

Clinical heifer mastitis affects up to 15% of all heifers in the first month after calving, with each case costing approximately £230. Even more worrying is that between 30-75% all heifers have an intra-mammary infection before calving. Although the vast majority of these are due to non-harmful coagulase-negative staphylococci, these can still result in elevated SCC and increased risk of clinical mastitis at a later date.

A variety of bacteria have been grown from clinical cases, with environmental bacteria, in particular *Strep. uberis*, being the most common. However, in herds with high bulk SCC and herds that have a high incidence of *Staph. aureus*, there tends to be more *Staph. aureus* in the heifers.

Mastitis in a heifer readily responds to treatment as long as the appropriate tube/injection is administered. However, even after treatment, there are many consequences of a case of heifer mastitis, including:

- Increased risk of culling by the end of the season
- Decrease in milk production for the remainder of the lactation for both clinical and subclinical mastitis.
- And not to be forgotten, the effect mastitis has on the life-time behaviour of the heifers

### PREVENTION AND CONTROL

OrbeSeal heifers approximately 4-6 before calving (see below)

Feeding waste milk to calves can increase mastitis risk later in life. Avoid feeding waste milk to replacement heifers.

Not surprisingly, improving calving area hygiene will decrease mastitis risk.

2-3 times weekly teat-spraying pre-calving can be very effective at reducing environmental mastitis. As this practice relies on bringing heifers through the milking parlour, it results in heifers that flow through the milking parlour a lot easier after calving.

Remove calves as soon after calving as possible and prompt milking. Twice-daily removal of calves and immediate milking resulted in almost 50% fewer clinical mastitis cases.

Fly control, particularly when *Staph. aureus* and summer mastitis are a known problem

Vitamin E and selenium supplementation improves udder health and can reduce mastitis in certain herds

Udder oedema greatly increases mastitis risk—check that the sodium and protein provisions in the pre-calving heifer ration are not excessive. If severe, milking before calving reduces the risk of infection.

Intra-mammary and injectable antibiotics just before, or at calving, are very effective at preventing clinical mastitis in certain cases; however, from a cost-benefit and an antibiotic residual perspective, this practise should only be used in the face of an outbreak. Contact a veterinarian before attempting this.

### ORBESEALING HEIFERS

OrbeSeal approximately 4-6 weeks prior to calving has shown to reduce new intra-mammary infections by 74%, and decreased clinical mastitis by 70% - I have personally

## CONGRATULATIONS!!

Nathan & Lucy tied the knot on Saturday 22nd June.

We wish them all the very best for their future together.





sealed many herds that have had even greater reductions. If >10% of heifers are experiencing mastitis in the first month of lactation and/or a large amount of environmental mastitis, then OrbeSealing is likely to be cost-effective.

Although at first impression it seems a daunting task putting your face near the hindlegs of a pre-calving heifer, after personally sealing hundreds of teats (still with my original set of teeth), I can say that it is not as big of a hassle as you may think. All you need is patience and meticulous hygiene! Please contact the practice for more information on how to administer OrbeSeal, and to find out whether it is right for your farm.

**Winston**

## SCHMALLEMBERG VACCINE

The first vaccine against Schmallenberg (SBV) has arrived in stock and is now on sale.

Many of you will be aware that we had our fair share of Schmallenberg cases this spring with numerous caesarians for congenitally malformed lambs and calves but other more vague symptoms of the disease in cattle have included fever, diarrhoea and milk drop.

Bovillis SBV is an inactivated vaccine licensed for cattle and sheep available in 20ml and 100ml vials. Cattle can be vaccinated from 2 months of age and will require 2 doses of 2ml approximately 4 weeks apart by intramuscular injection. Sheep can be vaccinated from 4 months of age and require a single injection of 2ml under the skin. The vaccine is unlicensed for use in pregnant animals so should you wish to use it in pregnant stock, please speak to one of our vets first.

Bovilis SBV is a refrigerated product and we shall only stock what is required so please phone in advance with your order.

Our advice is to vaccinate and those lambing early should consider vaccinating as soon as possible; at least 3 weeks prior to tupping.

Remember: Do not forget your fly control as part of an SBV prevention strategy. 'Neem Pro-Riddance' is the only product with a claim for culicoides, the midge that spreads SBV.

For more information please contact the practice.

**Barry**

## JOHNE'S DISEASE UPDATE

As we have discussed in previous issues of our newsletter,

Johne's disease is a slowly developing, untreatable disease in cattle and sheep, which can cause reduced production, weight loss and scours. Its financial implications can be far-reaching and long lasting – and once established within a herd, the disease can take decades to deal with. During this time production can be seriously affected – a Johne's disease positive cow can produce 25% less milk in a given lactation. The disease can be difficult to diagnose and interpret. For this reason, regular testing, thorough risk assessment, and careful stock management are crucial, in order to try and control and limit the potential implications of this disease. With a view to helping Shropshire farmers do this, we have been visiting farms and undertaking Johne's Control Plans. So far we have had a good uptake of this service, but since it is estimated that up to 65% of UK farms may be affected, we would like to see more farms tackling this issue. Johne's is one of those diseases that you may not know that you have until you look for it – but if you have ever had an older cow that has started to look poor, scoured a lot, and lost weight and faded away, this could be the reason. Also herds with high levels of Johne's often have high levels of mastitis, lameness and poorer fertility. If you would like to discuss this disease further please call the practice.

**Nathan**

## NEW FACE

We are creating an annual intern system to bring on a new graduate who we believe already has the skills and interest to make a good farm vet. The first recipient of this position is Emily Denton who is a new graduate vet, qualifying this summer from Nottingham. Emily has seen practice with us on numerous occasions, some of you may have already met her during those times and with that in mind she was our choice to offer the Internship.



We have never employed a new graduate before but believe that this is the best way to bring on and encourage best practice and technique. You will see her out with our vets doing various jobs before coming out herself.

We hope that you find this a novel and innovative approach to the problem of veterinary recruitment in farm practice.

## ENZO AND TOXO VACCINE:

Just a quick reminder, but anyone that needs to vaccinate their ewes and ewe lambs for Toxo (*Toxoplasma*) and Enzo (Enzootic abortion – *Chlamydia*) need to get cracking, as they should be done at least 4 weeks prior to tupping. Both diseases pose a significant risk to people, especially pregnant women and people with a reduced immune system. Ewes that abort due to Enzo tend to do so in the last 3 weeks of pregnancy. They are usually infected during the previous lambing period, and if non-pregnant ewes are infected they will abort in their next pregnancy. Toxo infection on the other hand can either cause repeating ewes, or abortions towards the end of pregnancy. Non-pregnant ewes that are infected with Toxo do not generally abort in the following pregnancy.

Both Toxovac (for Toxo) and CEVAC Chlamydia (for Enzo) are administered as a single 2ml injection in the muscle. Toxo protection lasts 2-3 years and Enzo for 3-4 year. The vaccines can be given at the same time, but should not be mixed together.

How do you know if you need to vaccinate? If you had any cases of Toxo or Enzo in last year's lambing season then you should vaccinate any susceptible girls before tupping. As most abortions in sheep are due to an infectious cause, if you had an abortion/stillborn/weak lamb percentage last season of greater than 3% then it may be worth you vaccinating. This is because Toxo and Enzo are two of the main infectious causes of abortion in sheep. If you have had no problems with Enzo



in recent years and truly have remained closed in that time, then your risk is fairly small; however, if you have bought any replacements in at all there is a risk. Toxo can exist in the environment, carried by rodents and birds, and if these are eaten by cats, it can then be spread to sheep. This explains how Toxo can affect farms that have been truly closed for many years. Cats should be kept away from pregnant ewes and their feed-stuffs. If you would like any further information regarding this subject please contact the practice.

Nathan

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## THE BADGER CULL

It seems a long time ago that I worked in East Devon, West Somerset – TB testing was four yearly with no reactors, and a Badger was mostly seen as a wise old character in “Wind in the Willows”. I now wonder how many of those farms will be on 60 day testing?

Part of that area will now be included in the badger cull, which started on June 1st in West Somerset, and also West Gloucestershire. Over the coming months, within a six week period, (there will be a legitimate cull of up to 5000 badgers in these designated areas.

The onset of the cull has brought the debate to the fore again, with fresh parliamentary debate, and much coverage in the national press, radio and TV, with “Countryfile” doing a good section on the disease in Ireland where culling and vaccination are being carried out with some degree of success in controlling the disease.

Time will only tell if the cull by shooting will be successful, or be allowed to be successful and I have my doubts it will be allowed to be. Our view is that a cull is essential along with movement controls of cattle and increased biosecurity. To us, the epidemiology, previous cull results and known case histories thoroughly implicates the badger and the need for their control in an overall TB control strategy. In the meantime, the debate over vaccination of cattle and badgers goes on. Vaccines don't work against infected badgers, and are extremely expensive however oral vaccination may be more successful. A cattle vaccine has been ten – fifteen years away for many years, and is still some way off.

If the cull achieves anything, perhaps its legacy will be for everyone to focus on a sustainable TB policy which allows clean cattle and clean badgers to live in harmony, and allow the farming industry to carry on being the guardian of the countryside they wish to be. Perhaps then I can get back to reading to my grand- daughter about wise old badger, and Toad of Toad Hall.

Rod