



# SHROPESHIRE FARM NEWS

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As I write the silage wagons are starting to roll and the phones have suddenly gone a bit quieter. After such a difficult grass growing season it is timely to have a think through the pasture management and forage supply on your farm. You are constantly being told, correctly, that grass is the cheapest feed source for your cows but do you know how much of it you actually grow?

Assessing the productivity of your pastures is not really your vets job but we often see the effects of overestimating the value of pasture when pd results start to suffer during the summer. There is nothing in grass that will make a cow not get in calf (bar perhaps extreme urea levels). However variable intakes due to weather, poor quality grazing, insufficient cover on new breaks will all limit the total intakes of grass and freshly calved high yielding cows are most at risk. Buffer feeding can help but can also make matters worse if the cows give up on poor grazing and substitute buffer for grass. The key things to consider are: Am I maximising the amount of grazed forage I am producing from my farm? How much am I wasting? Am I buffer feeding the right cows?

Don't forget you can have a more efficient farm if 75% of your cows graze your pastures to the optimum residual levels and get no buffer with 25% of the cows inside on full tmr, rather than have 100% of your cows out grazing inefficiently and relying on a buffer that most of them don't need. Many of you have the option of doing some wholecrop which can be used as a safety net when forage stocks are low but also means you can plant productive leys that are going to give really good grass yields in following years. Managing your farm assets as a whole and not just individual parts is the key to good stock management, efficiency and profitability.

Tim

## SCHMALLERBERG VACCINE

The vaccine will be available in the next few weeks and our advice is to vaccinate. Cattle from 2 months of age will require, two doses of 2ml, with an interval of approximately 4 weeks by intramuscular injection and sheep from 4 months of age, by subcutaneous injection of one dose of 2ml.

Please note this is a refrigerated product and we shall only stock what is required so please phone the practice with your order.

Enzovax/Cevac Chlamydia and Toxovax vaccine are available. Remember to vaccinate at least 4 weeks before tupping. Please ring your order through.

## SKILLS WORKSHOP WEEK 8TH - 12TH JULY

Please see the enclosed brochure of the day courses we are holding in July.

## AI COURSE SEPT/OCT

Please phone the practice to register your interest.

## DID YOU KNOW.....

A Vasectomised tup can still get your ewes in lamb up to six weeks after his op. So if you are planning on vasectomising one of your tups start planning now!

## KEXXTONE BOLUS

Several dairy farms are now using the Kexxtone bolus, to protect high risk cows from the health impacts of ketosis. It is important to choose the correct animals for treatment, as blanket treatment is not appropriate. Only dairy animals which are at risk of ketosis will benefit from improved health and subsequently regain performance which would otherwise be jeopardised. Speak to one of the vets about if; how; and in which animals to use this new product.

James



## BLOAT - NOT JUST A LOAD OF HOT AIR.

With the arrival (finally) of a bit of warmer weather, the grass is really beginning to grow. This does however mean that we are entering the time of year where we have to be particularly watchful for cases of frothy bloat.

There are two main types of bloat: Gassy and Frothy. In gassy bloat, animals suffer from a build-up of free gas in the rumen. This can be down to an (often rapid) overproduction of gas in the rumen (i.e. in grain overload), or due to a reduced ability for the gas to go elsewhere (i.e. in cases of choke with something like potatoes). Free-gas bloat can occur year-round, although it is most common in fattening animals when levels of concentrates are high.

In contrast, Frothy bloat occurs when the breakdown products from leguminous plants (such as clover) cause foam to form on top of the rumen contents. The gas produced in the rumen should normally be belched out, however, because of these products, it is incorporated into this foam and so builds up. It can occur at any time, but it is most common in spring or autumn, when cold wet weather, followed by warm sunshine

leads to very rapid grass (and clover) growth. It is one of the most common causes of death in adult cattle, and should be treated as an emergency.

Factors which can increase the risk of developing bloat include:

- Grass based feeding systems – especially if using new grass leys.
- Reducing the amount of concentrate fed – For example, a reduction of 1.5kgDM of concentrate will be replaced by 10-12kg fresh weight of grass/clover.
- Early rotation onto leguminous pasture.

If cows are receiving water medicated with a bloat prevention agent, then anything that reduces a cow's water intake (i.e. rain – cow gets more moisture from grazed grass and so needs to drink less) will mean they do not get the required dose of bloat treatment.

## TREATMENT

As already stated, bloat is an emergency. In the first instance it is always worth passing a stomach tube.

If the cow is suffering from gassy bloat, this will allow the built-up gas to escape, which at the very least will buy some more time if other treatment is required. In some cases it may be necessary to place a trocar and cannula (red devil) through the side of the cow, into the rumen to release the gas.

In cases of frothy bloat there is usually little to no release of gas when the cow is stomach-tubed. Sometimes an amount of foam (often green) is seen when the tube is removed. In these cases, anti-foaming drenches (i.e. BIRP) should be given. These are easy to give and have a much smaller dose than old-fashioned remedies.

If there is an outbreak of frothy bloat, all cattle on that pasture should be removed and put onto a high fibre diet (hay or straw) ASAP. Any cows showing signs of bloat should be treated with an anti-foaming agent.

## PREVENTION

- Avoid using high risk pasture at high risk times, especially pasture high in clover.
- Stagger turnout with buffer feeding. Keep up fibre intakes



(straw). The emphasis should be at/around milking time so that the cows have a fuller rumen before they go onto the field.

- Hold cows back after milking before they go onto a new break. This will mean all cows will go out together and the top layer of grass is distributed more evenly amongst all cows. There is a risk that some cows will have to wait 2-3 hours after milking before they can feed, and so they will be hungry and gorge on grass. However, to offset this, they should be given access to straw and medicated water throughout this 2-3 hour period.
- New paddocks should be introduced to the cows in the morning after milking, and then moved forwards in the middle of the day, on the basis that there is a full assessment of the cows before moving the fence.
- Administer anti-foaming agents. This can be via a medicated water delivery system. There has to be plenty of water troughs available to increase the opportunity to drink the medicated water. To encourage the cows to drink, salt blocks can be arranged around the parlour.

One final note, as we've already discussed frothy bloat is most common during periods when grass is rapidly growing (such as now). Grass growing in this way also puts cows under a high risk of developing Hypomagnesaemia – Grass Stagers. Keep an eye out for it, as we've already seen a fair few cases. Keep a bottle or two of Magniject close to hand, and remember to never give it on its own into the vein!

Nathan

## MOON WALK 2013

On the evening of May 11th, I along with 18000 people mostly women, and some men “walked the walk” of the London Marathon course in aid of raising money for Breast Cancer, all of us having to wear bras.



It wasn't til two weeks before the event that my mate who volunteered me for it informed me I would also be wearing a skirt. So at midnight after a torrential downpour we set off on a 26.2 mile hike around the sites of London, a city that doesn't seem to sleep to finish in brilliant sunshine the following morning.

I had many offers for my skirt, an above the knee little chiffon number on route. Hard but very enjoyable, and very sore ankle at the end, in excess of £5million was raised which will go up as donations come in.

A tip for all you men that have bad backs, having been seeing a chiropractor over the past few weeks for a neck/back injury sustained TB testing, my 38B bra certainly helped..... worrying!

Rod



## LITTLE BO PEEP!!

We promised a picture of Nathans stag do and here it is. Apparently there was a loose flock of sheep in Bristol that weekend being shepherded across the roads and parks by Lil' Bo Peep (Nathan)!!

## BLOWFLY STRIKE

With summer finally here the flies are sure to be out in force following a late hatch as a result of the prolonged cold weather. Unfortunately this also coincides with a delayed nematodirus hatch. This means that your ewes and lambs may be at an increased risk of blowfly strike especially as these flies look to lay their eggs in areas of soiled fleece. Less commonly; virulent footrot lesions, lumpy wool and areas of urine scalding can provide suitable habitats for maggots.

There is nothing worse than seeing a sheep suffer from strike



## SEASONAL INFERTILITY IN PIGS.

With the cold start to a British summer it is difficult to think that in a couple of months we could be experiencing Seasonal Infertility in pigs again.

This is seen as a reduction in fertility and fecundity at a particular time of year, usually summer and early autumn, presenting as;

1. difficulty in coming on heat, delayed puberty attainment in gilts, extended weaning to oestrus intervals in sows, and higher anoestrus rates in both.
2. higher rates of early pregnancy failure, seen as irregular returns at 25-35 days after breeding.

Sows are more likely to be at risk if;

- a) they are parity 6 or more

and death of an affected sheep can lead to prosecution.

To prevent strike this summer examine flocks regularly and make sure that you are up to date worm control and check that your wormer is working properly. Should you require advice on worming or require a visit to tailor a programme please contact the practice.

Susceptible animals should all be treated with a suitable fly product. We recommend using Clik pour-on because of its longer duration of cover. Other suitable products include Crovect and Neem Pro Riddance. Neem Pro Riddance also claims to offer protection against culicoides, the midge which can transmit Schmallenberg virus.

When using Clik, apply half the dose along the spine with the rest in an arc around the crutch and tail. It is best applied before expected challenge and should protect for 16 weeks.

In established cases of strike Coopers Spot On can be used.

Finally, with fly numbers soon to boom we recommended getting any castrates or de-horns done as soon as possible.

**Barry**

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- b) they take longer than 5 days to return to oestrus after weaning
- c) they are weaned early
- d) they wean less than 8 piglets.

There must be some relationship between higher environmental temperatures and longer daylight hours, but the cause isn't fully understood. It does seem to be more common however in sows that are already difficult breeders. It is thought sows may ovulate early, and that hormonal support for early pregnancy may be reduced in the early weeks, resulting in pregnancy failures.

Management aids may help, maximising nutrient intake in lactating sows, providing cooling, additional boar stimulus for oestrus, reducing overcrowding, making sure sows are not overfat which will reduce litter size, among others, plus good oestrus detection and accurate scanning.

**Rod**