



SHROPESHIRE FARM NEWS

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British summer time is officially here though you would be forgiven for thinking we were still at the end of March. Some herds, not all through choice, are out grazing what limited grass there is and fingers crossed that come the middle of May everyone will have turned out onto fields full of grass. It's hard to imagine that this time last year a few of you may have thoughts about taking your 1st cut of silage shortly.....

On that theme drilling should be complete and the maize going into the ground shortly. Ironically all we need now is a little rain!

With turnout there are the usual suspects of associated problems and not least grass staggers, of which we have already seen several cases. More about this and how you can prevent it over the page.

This spring has also come with its fair share of displaced abomasums and associated disease not least because most forage will have been wet and acidic and therefore of low quality. Correct nutrition and management during the dry and transition periods are critical to minimising your chances of displacements.

A further precautionary note with regard to turnout over the next month or two; should we get rain followed by warm weather and therefore a rapid growth of grass comes the risk of bloat. Bloat will require emergency treatment. More on this issue next month.

News Just In.... A new bolus called 'Kexxtone' is now available to reduce the incidence of clinical ketosis. Speak to any of the vets for more details about how to use this exciting new product.

ARE YOU READY FOR TURNOUT

Have you ordered your Huskvac vaccine yet or do you need your second doses? Get in touch with the office to confirm your order.

HERD HEALTH PLANS

We are experiencing a number of requests to sign HHP's just before a farm assurance visit. We would politely remind you that the HHP document should be an important working document for improving the health status and reducing the incidence of disease and production loss in your herd. Time set aside to complete a HHP is necessary, where we can discuss your herd performance and provide an objective overview. With our experience and technical knowledge we can propose practical and cost effective solutions to improve the health, welfare and productivity of your system. So please, if you can give us some notice, we can go through your HHP with you; have it updated; typed and printed; then we would be most grateful!

DIARY DATE: Sheep Worming Workshop

Worming, wormer choices, calibration, dosing and resistance.

Date to be confirmed (end of May) – check out the website and office for details. All welcome.

Supported by Novartis.

DID YOU KNOW....

Sheep can recognise up to 20 different human faces and they prefer a smiling face to an unhappy one!

GRASS STAGGERS

When cows are eventually turned out this spring following the cold wet weather, they will be at a high risk of grass staggers, a nervous disease caused by low blood magnesium. Factors which increase the risk of grass staggers include rapidly growing spring ryegrass, high moisture content in the grass and application of potassium fertilisers which reduce magnesium uptake in the grass.

Cows have no stores of magnesium and therefore require supplementation during this risk period. Supplementation can be achieved through the addition of magnesium to the feed or inclusion in concentrates, using slow release magnesium boluses or by adding magnesium chloride flakes to drinking water. Remember however that wet weather may mean cows are less likely to drink from the trough and will therefore not receive as much magnesium as you think they should be. Grass staggers is an emergency and veterinary treatment must be prompt!

Treatment consists of 400mls of 5% magnesium and calcium solution (red top) given intravenously and 400mls of 25% magnesium (silver top) under the skin (never intravenously). Recumbent animals which do not rise within 2 hours have a very poor prognosis.

Barry



INTRODUCING CRIS

Some of you will have already met Cristopher Martinez, our new tb tester. Cris is Spanish and comes from the same village as Raquel. So you could say from good breeding and sound stock! He too has a good sense of humour... that all important skill when it comes to tb testing. We would like to welcome Cris into the team and there will be more on him at a later date.



SCHMALLEMBERG UPDATE AND ADVICE

At the time of going to print we have no news on the Schmallenberg virus vaccine. Our advice is, improve the ability of animals to counter attack the disease by promoting general stock health and vitality by:

- providing good nutrition -optimising mineral and trace element levels
- controlling internal and external parasites.

See the *Schmallenberg factsheet* on our webpage also the article in *Livestock Matters* or the Defra website for further information.

General advice on applying any product - first and foremost to read the instructions! Check the withhold period, dosage rates, application and storage instructions. Make sure the applicator/drenching gun is calibrated before and during use. This means it is working properly and administering the correct amount. Also don't under estimate the weight of your animals. Always dose to the heaviest in the group. It will not give you adequate protection if not applied at the correct dosage. Don't apply on wet animals. Needless to say it will not absorb into the skin but just run off. We are here to help you make the right choice of product so please ask any of us . Currently we have stock of Butox

Swish and Neem Pro Riddance at competitive prices.

WHAT THE FEC SHOULD WE BE WORMING WITH?

Faecal Egg Counts – Make the most of your lamb crop by worming wisely Faecal Egg Counts – Worm effectively, worm economically, worm responsibly. Faecal Egg Counts Whilst grass is still very thin on the ground, there are more and more lambs out in the field. As we head into May we expect to see an increase in scouring lambs out at grass. With this in mind we want to remind everyone that we do now offer an in-house faecal egg count (FEC) service. This service can be used to:

- Get an indication of the level of worm burden sheep have been facing – Do you need to worm them in the first place? If you do, we can recommend what class of wormer you should be using. If not, then we will say that!
- Conduct a Post-drenching efficacy test (PDET) – this faecal egg count is done 7-14 days (depending upon the wormer used) after a worming treatment, and should give an indication of how well a used treatment has worked (although poor dosing technique or calibration will also affect this).
- If the wormer isn't killing at least 95% of the worms in your lambs, then you possibly have a degree of resistance, and it might be worth doing a FECRT
- Faecal Egg Count Reduction Test (FECRT) – a mini wormer trial carried out on farm, where a selection of lambs are treated with a different class of wormer in order to find out what wormers work best for your lambs. To do the test we need 3g of faeces. This should be collected fresh from 10 lambs (average looking lambs – don't just pick the best or worst), with a pinch of faeces from each going into the pot. We can do worm eggs and are hoping to be able to do cocci as well. For fluke egg analysis we will still need to send the sample to the VLA. The fresher the sample the better. If you can't get it into us until the next day keep it in a sealed bag, in the fridge.

The worm faecal egg count test will cost £10 + VAT, and if brought in before 12pm then the results will be available later that day.

Each year we hear of cases where lambs have died despite worming, as the product used has been inappropriate. Let's work together to avoid that scenario and discuss worming management in your flock before selecting a wormer. We aim to be able to stock a wormer from each of the 5 different classes, at a competitive price, meaning that you will get the advice and wormer you need at the right price.

Nathan

NEWSLETTER FEEDBACK

The aim of our newsletter is to keep you informed of relevant and important information and to provide advice on topics on a monthly basis. We would like to thank you for your feedback which was encouraging and positive. However, a few of you would like to see a few jokes or light hearted articles to lift the mood. So, if space permitting we will endeavour to fulfil your request..... here goes...

A farmer decides that his 3 sows should be bred, and contacts his buddy down the road, who owns 3 boars. They agree on a stud fee, and the farmer puts the sows in his pickup and brings them down the road to the boars. He leaves them all day, and when he picks them up that night, asks the man how he can tell if it 'took' or not. The breeder replies that if, the next morning, the sows were grazing on grass, they were pregnant, but if they were rolling in the mud as usual, they probably weren't ... Comes the morn, the sows are rolling in the mud as usual, so the farmer puts them in the truck and brings them back for a second full day of frolic. This continues for a week, since each morning the sows are rolling in the mud. About the sixth day, the farmer wakes up and tells his wife, "I don't have the heart to look again. This is getting ridiculous, AND expensive. You check today." With that, the wife peeks out the bedroom window and starts to laugh. "What is it?" asks the farmer excitedly. "Are they grazing at last?" "Nope." says the wife. "Two of them are jumping up and down in the back of your truck, and the other one is honking the horn!"

Hopefully next month's newsletter will include a photo or two from Nathan's stag do which should be good for a giggle!

Zoe



'STAMP OUT SCAB'

As we mentioned in our December newsletter sheep scab has once again become rampant in the UK and is a serious welfare concern. Within the practice there have been several cases through the winter.

Following on from last years Sheep Health and Welfare Conference in Worcester, and voices for an industry led programme to tackle scab, this summer will see the launch of the 'Stamp Out Scab' campaign run by Adas.

Throughout the rest of 2013, vets and consultants will deliver a training and awareness campaign on sheep scab aimed at all of those involved in sheep production. This campaign will ensure that the whole industry works together to reduce the impact of scab.

Meeting dates will be published shortly.

Barry



REAL WELFARE FOR RED TRACTOR PIG PRODUCERS

Those of you who are in the Red Tractor Farm Assurance Scheme are aware of the new criteria that has been brought in on April 1st this year to assess certain welfare indices. This will mean that on the quarterly visits I will need to also spend time looking at five areas, mainly:

1. Hospital pigs – Pigs that are assessed as hospital pigs and should be in hospital pens, not the pens they are in.
2. Lameness – The number of pigs that are considered lame in sample pens.
3. Tail lesions – Indicative of active tail biting.
4. Body lesions – Including scratches, teeth marks etc.
5. Enrichment – The number of pigs actively involved in enrichment use.

NEMATODIRUS ALERT

The prolonged winter means that there is a greater than usual risk of Nematodirus infection in this season's grazing lambs. This is because the delay in the warm weather means that the worm larvae will be hatching later in the season, when more lambs are starting to graze. It is crucial that susceptible lambs are covered with an appropriate wormer. Faecal egg counts are not as useful when considering Nematodirus infection, as a severely affected lamb may be negative for the eggs on sampling – as the disease is caused by immature worm larvae, before they are old enough to produce the eggs that the test looks for.

Check out the Nadis website for their parasite forecast and webinars: <http://webinars.nadis.org.uk/distributors/nadis.aspx>.

Nathan

For those of you who are still lambing remember to administer an antibiotic for assisted lambings.

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The sample of pigs that are to be looked at this stage are finishing pigs mainly over 50kg. An assessment will be based on the number of finishing places a unit has in a year and a sample number of pigs will be looked at 3 or 4 times a year, depending what is agreed between farmer and vet. What I will need to know before visits is the number of finishing places, number of finishing pens and the number of pigs in each of these pens so that it can be decide which pens will be looked at to reach the sample number. Data will be assessed to decide if there are any welfare problems, and will be sent anonymously to a central data bank to benchmark against other producers, in order to improve national standards.

I will attain the relevant information from you before your next visits which will mainly be in May and August. Any queries please get in touch.

Rod