



SHROPSHIRE
**FARM
NEWS**

Rod – Goodbye and Good Luck

Firstly, may I start with a few words about Rod who has, as I am sure you all know, retired after spending the last sixteen years with us – and they said it wouldn't last!

Tim and I first met Rod in early 2005 over lunch and a few drinks at Welti one hot sunny day, and rather fittingly, the three of us had lunch at the Nags Head on Rod's last day on Friday.

Covid restrictions have influenced many aspects this last year, not least gatherings, but all the girls in the office surrounded him in the carpark to say their goodbyes. I have little doubt that a more boisterous send-off awaits sometime in the future.

Rod joined us in 2005 and in last month's newsletter he alluded to many changes that he has seen in his long career. These changes seem to be accelerating! Despite more and more technology, and more and more reliance on computers, Rod was trained and worked for long enough in an environment where such toys never existed. Arguably it was a simpler world – which doesn't make it wrong - and there was a much greater reliance on clinical acumen and personality. This must have heavily influenced Rod as above all else, he is a people-person and invariably brought that aspect to any discussion; what will the farmer think about that...?, how will so and so react..?

I would like to thank Rod, not just for all the work he has done over the last sixteen years, but also for offering many different perspectives on aspects of work, business, people and life. I asked him on Friday what is greatest achievement had been as a vet. Typically, his response was about people.

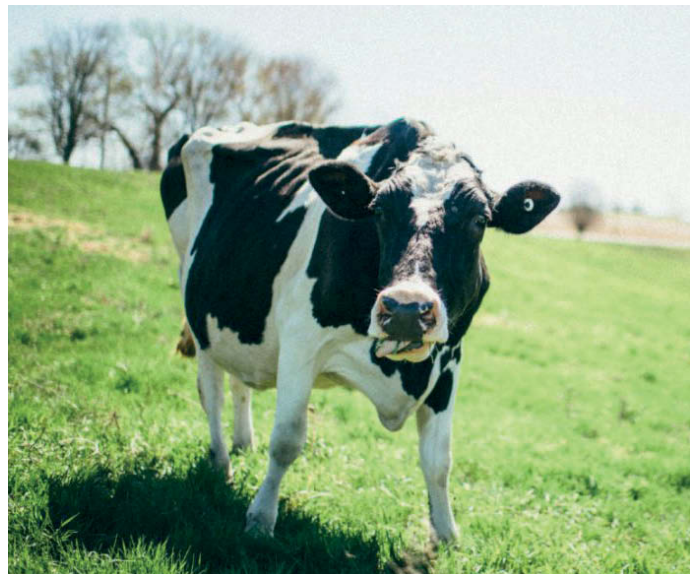
So thank you Rod, for all the ups and downs. And if you see a grey Vauxhall saloon driving around, give it a wave as chances are it is Rod, living out his grey Vauxhall obsessions!

Alistair



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Delivery Service

We are having to make a few changes to the delivery service.

From 1st July, there will have to be a minimum spend of £50 (on account) or a £7.50 charge will be applied. This will be retrospective as it isn't always possible to work out medicine costs at the time of request.

Also, whenever possible, please try not to request multiple deliveries to the same farm in a week. Many farms have a routine visit so use this options here as well.

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Hidden Losses with Mycoplasma Bovis

One of several species of *Mycoplasma* effecting cattle, *Mycoplasma Bovis* is by far of most economical significance. Found in cattle across the world, this small bacteria is unique in not having a cell wall thus making it resistant to treatment with many antibiotics. It also has the ability to adapt the proteins on its surface and wrap its self in sugars in the body making it difficult for the animals immune system to attack and kill it. These combined assets result in treatment challenges and poor clinical cure rates.

Mycoplasma Bovis is ubiquitous across the world and the UK and will often remain undiagnosed within herds. It results in diseases of both young and adult stock, can be triggered by immunosuppression from other diseases and poor husbandry and can include:

- Pneumonia in young and adult cattle, often severe and fatal in adults
- Ear infections (young calves often present with droopy ears)
- Arthritis
- Mastitis
- Eye infections
- Occasionally abortion

Diagnosis

Mycoplasma Bovis is often suspected when cattle are presented with the classic clinical signs but with a poor response to treatment.

Animals that have been infected will produce antibodies and so a simple blood test can be used to investigate individual cases or outbreaks following infection. This however does not confirm the presence of active infection.

The gold standard test is culture of the bacteria although this can be challenging. This can be useful in cases of mastitis (through individual or bulk milk sampling) and arthritis. The bacteria is very unstable out of the host and so fresh samples need to be sent for culture.

Also on bulk milk samples tests can be used to identify parts of the bacteria without the need to keep it alive as with culture.

Transmission

The bacteria is transmitted in several ways:

- Continuous close contact
- Mastitis cases causing contagious spread during milking
- Discharge from mucosal surfaces such as eyes, nose, vagina and rectum.
- Infected milk being fed to calves
- Carrier animals sporadically shedding

Treatment and Prevention

Treatment is best achieved with early diagnosis and correct choice of antibiotics for the bacteria. However depending on the site of infection and severity cure rates can vary and often be poor.

Suspected cases should be isolated away from any other cattle to minimise transmission ensuring any equipment and clothing is disinfected after handling.

Prevention is, as ever the preferred option. Purchasing stock has the greatest risk of introducing infection into the herd and so knowing the disease history of the herd of origin and enquiring as to any relevant testing is a good idea. Any purchased stock should be quarantined for a period of time, but this is by no means a way of preventing it gaining entry into the herd.

Biosecurity and secure boundaries from neighbouring cattle should always be championed for all disease prevention.

Vaccines are available if the disease becomes a recurrent problem so speak to a vet if you are suspicious that you've seen similar clinical signs in your stock or want to discuss the testing and vaccination options further.

Sean





Hypomagnesaemia / Staggers

Also known as grass tetany, staggers (not our lovely cider) is a condition caused by low levels of magnesium in the blood.

Magnesium plays an important role in nerve and muscle function and functioning of the immune system. Unlike most other minerals, magnesium is not easily released from body tissues in times of high demand, so ruminants require daily intake in their diet. Fast growing grass is low in magnesium as well as being low in fibre, so it passes quickly through the gut, reducing the time for the absorption of nutrients and increasing the risk for animals to develop grass staggers.

The condition is typically diagnosed on clinical signs such as muscle twitches, high head carriage, recumbency and leg paddling or convulsions. Onset of signs is rapid and death occurs within minutes or hours if not treated.

If animals with clinical signs are spotted and treated quickly with Magnesium under the skin, they usually respond well.

The best way to prevent staggers is by supplementing stock during the high-risk periods of lush grass growth and it can be done by adding daily magnesium in feed or water or by administration of intra-ruminal magnesium boluses.

Mihail



ROD's Jurassic Ultra Challenge

On May 22nd I completed my Ultra Challenge in Dorset. Despite the gales and rain of the Friday night, the weather did abate a little so myself and about 2000 other participants set off on our various challenges. Conditions underfoot were okay until near the end where they were muddy, slippery and treacherous.

But I succeeded, all for my good cause, SEND a COW. Would I have wanted to walk a mile further, NO! And of course the sun came out just as I finished.

Thank you to all who supported me, it's not too late on www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Rod-wood1

And thank you for all the support you have given in the past.

Best wishes, Rod.





TB UPDATE FOR MAY

Last month we TB tested 13316 cattle over 92 tests. There were 45 reactors and 23 inconclusive reactors.

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Please keep a note of the mobile numbers for the vets should you ever need them

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