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FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2024

FARMING EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY FUND

Applications for the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (FETF) 2024 are now live and you can boost eligibility potential for grant funding with veterinary advice. Farmers in England can boost their chance of receiving 50% grant funding on a range of animal health and welfare equipment by discussing their application with their vet.

The fund includes 3 grants to help farmers buy equipment or technology to:

- **Improve productivity**
- **Manage slurry**
- **Improve animal health and welfare**



Through the Animal Health and Welfare grant, farmers can increase their application score by 20% if they provide evidence that they've discussed their application with a vet. For example, application scores for funding on items such as the Alligator PRO range of mobile sheep handling systems (FETF69), the Allflex® range of EID stick readers (FEFT82SH and FEFT82CA) and MSD Animal Health's SenseHub® health and welfare remote monitoring system (FEFT315CA) and cattle automatic ID shedding gate (FEFT66) will be increased by 20% if it can be shown that the farm's vet has advised the use of these items.

Please find below a link to the official website on grants for further information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/farming-equipment-and-technology-fund-2024/animal-health-and-welfare-items-and-specifications-farming-equipment-and-technology-fund-fetf-2024>

To discuss a veterinary justification when applying for an equipment or technology grant please speak to one of the farm vets. Applications close at noon on 17th April 2024.

AI COURSE - May 2024



We are running our DEFRA approved artificial insemination course for cattle again in May. The date is to be confirmed, so look out for further details!

The course will run over 4 days, with each day split into 2 hours of classroom tuition, followed by 3 hours practical work. The course is run at the Farm Services Building at the Settle surgery site, with lunch and refreshments provided daily.

Numbers are limited as we run the course in small groups to allow a one-to-one approach. This will enable you to learn and gain the skills and confidence to serve your own cows.

For more information or to register an interest please contact us at the surgery on 01729 823538.

LUNGWORM AND CATTLE WORMING MEETING

At our recent dairy farmer meeting at Bentham Golf Club we discussed how lungworm appears to be becoming a bigger issue in adult dairy cows due to climate change (warmer, wetter summers) and changing farming practices (many dairy cows spending more time housed allowing natural immunity to wane). Concerns were also raised over ivermectin resistance developing in cattle worms.



Vaccination of first season grazing heifer replacements with lungworm vaccine (**Huskvac**) is looked upon as the gold standard and careful thought should be given to the best way of controlling gutworms while still allowing immunity to develop. Animals should not receive wormer treatments until at least 2 weeks after their 2nd dose of **Huskvac**.

First season grazing dairy heifer replacements will be turned out with no immunity to gutworms and, unless vaccinated for lungworm with Huskvac, totally susceptible to lungworm.



To keep animals healthy and maintain growth rates various control strategies are used to reduce their exposure to worms (e.g use of clean grazing), but typically the fields that they graze are the same fields that youngstock were grazed on the previous year and therefore likely to be heavily infected.

Depending on how practical it is to handle animals after they are turned out various control strategies are available, some of which allow a better immunity to develop than others. Speak to one of our vets or SQP's for more information.

Drug	Pros	Cons	Approx Cost
LONG ACTING INJECTION <i>Cydectin 10% LA Injection</i> Inject into the base of the ear Withdrawal 108 days Do not use in dairy cattle within 80 days of calving.	Easy application One application Persistent for 120 days for O. Ostertagi and lungworm This gives good growth rates and there is no worm damage to the animal Use in animals that will go for fattening.	Persistency means all worms are killed but no residual immunity developed in the animal for future protection whilst wormer is active Don't use within 80 days of lactation in dairy cattle.	£4.50 dose 200kg exc. VAT approx
LONG ACTING POUR-ON For example: <i>Dectomax pour-on 5mg/ml</i> <i>Taurador pour-on 5mg/ml</i> Apply to clean healthy skin 1ml/10kg Withdrawal meat 35 days.	Easy application Persistency means there is a good worm kill which decreases pasture contamination and increases growth rates Persists 5 weeks O. Ostertagi and 6 weeks lungworm.	Need 2 applications – one at turnout and one 10 weeks later Don't use within 60 days of lactation in dairy cattle.	75p/dose 200kg exc. VAT approx (2 doses required)
SHORT ACTING POUR-ON Apply 3, 8 & 13 weeks after turn out For example <i>Enovex pour-on, Animec pour-on</i> 1 ml/10kg Withdrawal meat 28 days	Good immunity developed for breeding stock Works by animal getting exposure to worms then killing worms before they have significant ill effects Effective against lice.	Have to handle three times after turnout Dose 3, 8 and 13 weeks after turnout Do not use Ivermectins within 60 days of lactation in dairy cattle.	21p/dose 200kg exc. VAT approx (3 doses required)
SUSTAINED RELEASE BOLUS <i>Panacur Bolus</i> Give bolus at turnout Withdrawal meat 200 days	Easy administration Give at turnout- no extra handling Allows animal to pick worms up but kills them before they affect growth rates, allows cattle to develop immunity.	Cost Not to be used within 200 days of calving.	Approx £14 per bolus

Nematodirus

We have had our first positive for nematodirus in worm egg counts from early born January lambs. Nematodirus continues to be variable across farms so it's important to assess the risk on your farm.

The advice from SCOPS is:

If your lambs are grazing pasture that carried lambs last spring **and** you answer yes to one or more of these questions, your lambs are at risk.

- Are they old enough to be eating significant amounts of grass? (generally 6-12 weeks of age but may be younger if ewes are not milking well)
- Do you have groups where there is also likely to be a challenge from coccidiosis? For example, mixed aged lambs are a higher risk.
- Has there been a sudden, cold snap recently followed by a period of warm weather?
- Have you got lambs that are under other stresses e.g. triplets, fostered, on young or older ewes.

Also, keep an eye on the SCOPS nematodirus forecast, this tells us when there has been a hatch locally.

Worm egg counts are important to see what's challenging our lambs and assess whether we need to treat for worms or cocci. We recommended checking samples from 4-6 weeks of age.

Milk Samples

We've used a few of our Mastigram tests for milk samples this month. This test can be run between milkings to let us know if a cow needs treating or not. We continue to culture milk samples for cause of mastitis, we've seen quite a range this month; E.coli, Staph aureus, Strep Uberis and Bacillus.

Calf Visits this month

Our top calf this month is a Holstein heifer with a daily weight gain of 1.46kg, she's flying on!

Routine weighing and DLWG reports are part of the Vet Tech's calf services. As well as weighing, we've been busy doing Clostridial vaccines, BRD Intranasal vaccines and disbudding, so we've seen plenty of calves this month.

To discuss any of these topics further or for more information, please speak to Anna or Karen Gardner in the Farm Vet Tech department.



LAMBING TIME ESSENTIALS



Please contact the surgery to place your order. Orders can be collected from the Settle office or the out of hours box, Bentham box or from Gisburn Auction Mart every Thursday.

- Lamb colostrum/ Lamb milk
- Iodine
- Marksman sprays/Marking crayons
- Castration Rings & Applicators
- Vet lube
- Lamb feeder bottles and teats/Feeding tubes
- Ewe prolapse harness/Lambing snare & ropes
- Injector & dosing guns, and much more!

Spring is proving challenging for spring calving and lambing so far with the long-range weather forecast looking tricky as I write this. Keeping cows and calves at foot inside for longer periods brings challenges with hygiene and disease build up which will need to be very carefully managed. Added to that straw is scarce and expensive. Turn out of strong calves with good mothers helps and is necessary. Below is an article written by our SAC Consulting specialist beef team on managing nutrition for cows after turn out relevant to more challenging spring weather conditions which we hope might be of use. Let's hope that by passing this information on that there will be a radical change in the weather with warmer drier days ahead!

For freshly calved suckler cows recently turned out to grass it is important to ensure there is enough grass cover to meet cows' nutritional requirements and if there is not, they must be supplemented if they are to milk well, keep condition and be fit for the bull. In well managed grazing systems, and some early grass growing areas, this may not be an issue. However many areas grass growth is later due to the climate, grass quality, soil nutrition or too many mouths on it during the winter months. In these situations, where grass is lacking, cows prioritise milk, they lose weight themselves and their return to oestrus is delayed.

How to decide if supplementation is required:

A lactating suckler cow needs approximately 135MJ of energy per day which is around 60kg of good quality grass (20% DM) which is around 12kg of dry matter. If grass is below 6cm then she is likely to need supplemented. Also grazing grass very short will only delay its regrowth.

Using a sward stick or ruler to measure a representative area across the field. In a set stocked system spring grass should be at least 6cm (around 2000kgDM/Ha). If fields are bare (even if the weather is good) it may be the best option to keep cattle in a bit longer and allow re-growth and prevent damage to the grass that comes from supplementing forage outside.

Think about how many cattle there are per hectare (daily demand) and what the growth of the grass is likely to be each day (daily supply) to ensure cattle are getting what they need. For example, grass in April growing could be growing at 10-16kg/Ha/day and by May it could be up to 60-70kg/Ha/day. So, in April 1Ha would meet the needs of 1 cow, in May it meets the needs of 6 cows. Check www.grasscheckgb.co.uk to estimate the grass growth in your area for the time of year.

Turnout checks:

- Grass height – check for a minimum of 6cm in the spring for set stocking. Manage stocking rates according to the growth of the grass.
- Rumen fill - the triangle area between spine, hip and rib cage on the lefthand side of the cow gives a good indication of rumen fill, if this area is sunken and an obvious triangle then the cows are not eating enough, check middle of the day after grazing, first thing in the morning it will be emptier.
- Coat changes - Are they looking sleek and losing winter hair – indication of thriving.
- Condition changes (over a few weeks)
- Grazing behaviour – look for cows grazing well for long periods and chewing the cud while resting. A sign of insufficient grass intake would be cows standing not grazing and not cudding for long periods.
- Weather - If weather turns bad for a prolonged period, time grazing will be replaced with time sheltering and supplementation with additional forage or concentrates to keep energy intake up and staggers risk low is an important consideration.

Magnesium - low magnesium risk (staggers) is highest in newly calved cows at grass. Bare fields or very fast growing, lush-grass means low magnesium intakes for cows. Stress and weather also play a role here too. Mitigate the risk by providing a magnesium supplement either via free access high mag minerals or buckets or the safest method by providing a high magnesium mineral in a barley carrier or proprietary roll which ensures each cow gets her daily allowance. If the risk is high for staggers, the cost of these mitigation measures is a small price to pay.

Well managed grass is the key to success, however good weather will tempt turnout even when grass growth is not ideal. The message is simple – if in doubt feed them – it may cost you more in the short term, but it will cost you more if you don't in the long term.

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