



FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2021

FERTILITY MEETING

In November we had the pleasure of hosting Professor Mark Crowe from the University of Dublin. He is an expert in Bovine Fertility. Here are the key messages from his talks:

- Healthy Fresh cows should return to cyclicity and show heat ready for service at approximately 42 days in milk.
- Unhealthy Fresh cows (uterine infection, ketosis, high cell count, lameness etc) will have a delayed return to cyclicity – meaning you have less chance to serve them by 100 days in milk.
- The same is true for conception rates. In one study healthy cows had a conception rate of 54%, whereas lame cows – 23%, High Cell count cows – 30%, cows with ketosis – 23%, and cows with a uterine infection in the first month of calving – 33%.

So if our Fresh cows are in any way unhealthy we will have less chances to serve them and when we do serve them the chance of them holding is halved! So what can we do about it?

- Transition cow management is really important; ensuring an appropriate body condition, maintaining a high dry matter intake and minimising body condition score loss after calving is essential for both cows returning to cyclicity but also minimising negative energy balance and ketosis.
- Undertaking a **Vital 90 Day Assessment** and utilising **Kexxtone** boluses will help with this.
- Lameness and cell counts should be addressed as soon as possible and treated promptly – especially at drying off. Use this opportunity to **cure** high cell count cows and **trim and treat** lame cows if necessary.
- Fresh cows should be checked regularly; ensure they are up and eating to maximise dry matter intake and minimise negative energy balance, and assess housing (**Vital 90 Day Assessment**) to ensure it gives them the best opportunity.
- **Routine Fertility visits** - present Fresh cows for examination to ensure they are clean at 3 weeks in milk and present cows that haven't shown a heat by 42 days in milk – by doing this we can ensure they get 3 opportunities to be served by 100 days in milk.

By working on the above points we can ensure our cows return to cyclicity and show strong heats ready for service as near to 42 days in milk as possible, and we can ensure that when we do serve them they have the best possible chance of conceiving.

To discuss **Vital 90 Day Assessments**, **Kexxtone** boluses and **Routine Fertility Visits** please contact the surgery.



WHEN IS IT TIME TO TEST MILK??



The housing of milking cows and seasonal weather has brought a rise in clinical mastitis cases and raised somatic cell counts in several of our clients' dairy herds. It is important in any mastitis outbreak that we take samples from the affected quarter(s) before treatment is started in order to identify the pathogen for future reference. This way we can treat promptly with the appropriate antibiotics, reduce antibiotic resistance and also help to identify whether it is an environmental or contagious pathogen. We can culture milk samples for bacteriology in our lab at the surgery giving you a result in 24-48 hours.

Aseptic milk sample collection

It is imperative for the samples to be collected as hygienically as possible to avoid any contamination and misdiagnosis.

- Wear clean gloves. Teats and udder should be washed with warm water and thoroughly dried.
- Pre-dip or disinfect teats with rapid-action disinfectant, leave for 30 seconds and wipe dry
- Wipe teats with cotton wool soaked in surgical spirit. Strip the teat five times and wipe again with surgical spirit
- Strip the teat four times horizontally into the sterile pot – the pot does not need to be filled.
- Take care that nothing comes in contact with the mouth of the pot or falls inside the pot as this will contaminate the sample.
- Collect each quarter into a separate pot and label clearly with the farm, cow ID, quarter and date.
- The pot should be closed before removing it from beneath the teats.
- Samples should be refrigerated ideally until they reach the lab. If samples will not reach the lab within 24 hours, they should be frozen and kept frozen until they reach the lab.

Following on from bacteriology, samples can be tested for antibiotic sensitivity. This testing allows us to identify which antibiotics are most effective against the causing agent, allowing the most effective treatment to be prescribed. With increasing antibiotic resistance it is **vital** that we are using targeted antibiotic therapies for disease on farm.

Along with in-house bacteriology testing we also have a De Laval somatic cell count tester at the Settle Surgery. This technology allows a quick turn around identifying which cows have a high SCC due to subclinical mastitis or to monitor the cell count of a quarter after it has been treated for mastitis.

For more information or discuss a case further, please contact the surgery.

FLOCK CLUB MEETING

Kepak's Julie Finch and Chris Staines were guest speakers at the first face to face Flock Club meeting since Covid-19 restrictions. Elanco vet Matt Colson along with our own farm animal vets delivered an interactive presentation on the main causes of abattoir rejections.

Abscesses from injection sites were discussed at length and the impact that this has on carcass value, especially if the most valuable parts of the carcass are affected.

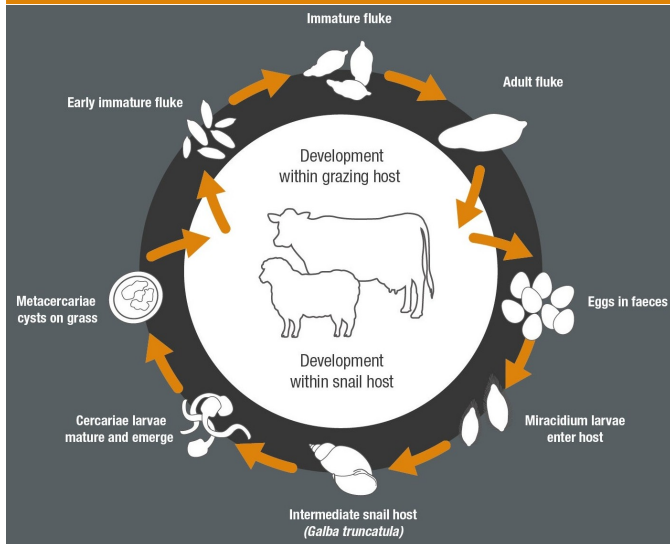
Liver damage from tapeworms as well as by fluke was discussed including the importance of targeted parasite control for fluke and regular worming of farm dogs. It was explained how preventing canines from scavenging carcasses aids in preventing tapeworm eggs being deposited on livestock grazing.

Respiratory infections were highlighted and the importance of parasite control, vaccination, good ventilation and prevention of overstocking.

The group looked at **parasite control** and **nutrition**. The importance of a robust immune system through adequate protein, energy and mineral intake and using the right parasite control product when required to avoid the development of resistance.

The message from Kepak was "Since animal health is one of the key ways to improve flock productivity AND reduce methane emissions/animal or per kg, prevention is definitely better than cure. A win:win for everyone!"

FLUKE UPDATE



Once again we have been blood testing sentinel livestock locally to monitor for 2021 fluke emergence. As many of you know, this testing informs us when we have 2 week old fluke in the lambs, therefore allowing us to time our dosing accurately.

The last samples were taken in the second week in November and showed **1 positive animal**, the remaining 17 were all negative. Neighbouring practices have also been sampling and revealed similar results.

The cold spell the other weekend will have hindered the fluke lifecycle resulting in a low risk of fluke all season.

The farms we would have concern about in terms of fluke are farms with unknown status of fluke and which have had poached or flooded areas where sheep have been grazing for the last few months.

The fluke dosing regime needs to be tailored to your farm. Please phone and speak to one of the farm vets for individual advice, an update and a dosing plan.

COLD CALVES COST CASH!

Most of us (other than the very hardy!) have now reached for our a warm winter coats. The cold affects us, but do you know how the cold temperatures impact your young calves' immune systems and growth rates?

As a general rule, when the air temperature drops below 10°C at night, the calf uses extra energy just to keep warm, therefore its growth rate will be reduced. If the calf is in a draft or has damp bedding, the temperature at which it starts to use this additional energy to keep warm will be higher. The use of calf jackets to keep young calves warm to help maximise their growth rates is becoming increasingly popular and is proving to be very successful! As vets we encourage farmers to have good ventilation in calf buildings to remove stale and humid air, helping to reduce the incidence of respiratory disease. Calf jackets act as a barrier to the elements without restricting air flow in the housing unit.

Energy is essential for growth, calves need both fat and protein in order to grow and if to be replacement heifers, be ready to be served by 15 months and calve at 24 months. Energy is also essential to fuel the immune system – if the calf is utilising energy to keep warm, their immune systems will be less effective and they are at an increased risk of getting pneumonia or scours.

By spending a little now, whilst they are calves, we can save a **lot** when they eventually start to contribute to the tank.

When the temperature drops below 10 degrees – NOW – we can support calves in 3 easy ways:

- CALF JACKETS:** A direct way to stop heat loss from the calf, and they are reusable! Wash between use.
- DEEPER BEDDING:** Extra straw allows calves to nest, they need to be able to bury their legs in clean, dry straw.
- INCREASED MILK FEEDS:** For each 5 degree drop below 15 degrees air temperature, feed calves an extra 50g of milk replacer or 0.33l of whole milk.

We currently stock 'Cosy Calf' Jackets at a price of £21.00 plus VAT per jacket (direct debit/cash sale price).

For more information on the benefits of calf jackets and protocols for when they should be used, please speak to one of the farm vets on a farm visit or call the surgery on 01729 823538.



UPCOMING EVENTS



OUR ANNUAL SHEEP MEETING!

Monday 24th January 2022 @ 7.30pm

Venue: North Ribblesdale Rugby Club, Settle BD24 9RB

To Discuss: 'Reducing lamb losses around the time of birth and the first 2 weeks of life'

Further details in the January 2020 Newsletter. Book your place now! Extra discounts available on lambing list products for attendees on the night.

PRACTICAL LAMBING COURSE FOR BEGINNERS

Thursday 6th January 2022 @ 6-9pm **Venue: The Farm Building, Settle Surgery**
Including discussion and practical demonstrations on lambing techniques, colostrum requirements and stomach tubing of lambs.

Cost £30 +VAT

To book a place please contact the surgery.



Settle Festive Opening Times

Thursday 23rd December	8.30am-6.30pm
Friday (Christmas Eve)	8.30am-4.30pm
Saturday (Christmas Day)	CLOSED
Sunday (Boxing Day)	CLOSED
Monday 27th December	CLOSED
Tuesday 28th December	CLOSED
Wednesday 29th December	8.30am-6.30pm
Thursday 30th December	8.30am-6.30pm
Friday (New Years Eve)	8.30am-4.30pm
Saturday (New Years Day)	CLOSED
Sunday 2nd January	CLOSED
Monday 3rd January	CLOSED

Bentham Festive Opening Times

Thursday 23rd December	4pm - 6.30pm
Friday (Christmas Eve)	CLOSED
Saturday (Christmas Day)	CLOSED
Sunday (Boxing Day)	CLOSED
Monday 27th December	CLOSED
Tuesday 28th December	CLOSED
Wednesday 29th December	4pm-5.30pm
Thursday 30th December	4pm-6.30pm
Friday (New Years Eve)	CLOSED
Saturday (New Years Day)	CLOSED
Sunday 2nd January	CLOSED
Monday 3rd January	CLOSED

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS ON THE FARM

T'was the night before Christmas, and all round the farm,
All beasts were settled, quiet and calm.
The sheep in the fields, the cows in the shed,
Each and every one, tucked up in bed.
Up came the sun on Christmas Day,
But t'owd farmer and his wife, still had to bed and hay.
Cows to be milked, calves to be fed,
By gum when it's cold, it's a job getting out of bed.
When all was done up, it was time for a beer,
After all, there's only one Christmas Day each year!
Once family had gone, and all food consumed
Night-time drew in, and milking time loomed.
But whilst in the shed, doing his checks,
T'owd farmer took stock and called 'ring the vets!'
He'd been met with the sight of a calving cow,
And with the size of those feet, it needed a tow!
The vets came out in their usual hurry,
Fighting their way through the wintry snow flurry.
A spatter of lube, and a good old pull
Then out came the calf... a great big blue bull!
With a gesture of thanks, and the season of merry,
T'owd farmer gave vet some mince pies and a sherry!

**WE WOULD LIKE TO WISH YOU ALL A VERY MERRY
CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR**

DECEMBER
2021



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