

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2024

SUMMER MASTITIS

Summer mastitis is a condition which is usually seen in non-lactating cows and heifers during the summer months. However, the undeveloped udders of young heifers, bulls and bullocks can also be affected.

SICK COW CAUSED BY SUMMER MASTITIS

Bacterial causes include *Arcanobacterium pyogenes*, *Peptostreptococcus indolicus*, *Streptococcus dysgalactiae* which act together to cause summer mastitis. Transmission of infection is thought to be by the head fly. These flies live in bushes and trees, and can only fly during mild, damp, humid conditions and low wind speeds. Therefore cases tend to be associated with fields next to woods and high hedges.

CLINICAL PRESENTATION

Maiden, in-calf heifers and dry cows should all be well supervised during the summer months. Summer mastitis is often sporadic and early signs can be missed as clinical illness is often unobserved during the early stages. During the early stages of the disease the affected teat/s will alter in length and diameter, the heifer/cow will often show no signs of being sick for up to a week after developing the mastitis. Often large numbers of flies cluster around the affected teat orifice causing considerable irritation with frequent kicking. Obvious swelling of the affected quarter is associated with development of more generalised signs of illness including isolation from the group, stiffness and reluctance to walk, lack of grazing giving a gaunt appearance, joint distension of the fetlock and hock joints, rapid loss of body condition

The affected quarter will be swollen, hard, painful and hot, with an extremely enlarged teat. The udder secretion is often thick and clotted with a foul smell along with green/yellow pus. If prompt treatment is not administered cattle can abort, serious cases are fatal. Even after prompt treatment, the affected quarter may be permanently damaged. Illness leads to the birth of weakly calves which have a high mortality rate. Colostrum sourced from another cow or artificial colostrum is strongly recommended for these calves.

TREATMENT

Speaking to one of the farm vets and discussing the cow's condition will allow consideration of the best treatment. Antibiotic injections, intramammary antibiotics as well as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs administered for several consecutive days will treat the infection, swelling and pain. Stripping out the affected quarters should be done as often as is practically possible but be careful as this will be painful due to the swelling of the teat/gland and kicking is common.

PREVENTION

Reducing exposure to flies: Grazing at-risk animals on higher, more exposed pastures away from wooded areas and high hedges will help to reduce the number of flies around the cattle. Synthetic pyrethroid pour-on fly control products (*e.g. Butox Swish, Spotinor, Flypor*) will also help to keep flies away from susceptible cattle. Antibiotic dry cow tubes and teat sealants: Whilst most farmers are reducing their overall use of antibiotics by only treating animals which are already sub-clinically infected (*e.g. high cell count cows at drying off*), at peak summer mastitis risk periods, the use of antibiotic dry cow tubes alongside teat sealants at drying off may be considered as part of a control programme. To discuss the various control options, please speak to one of the farm vets.



BLOWFLY STRIKE - HIGH RISK



Blowfly strike is caused by the larvae of *Lucilia sericata* (greenbottles), *Phormia terraenovae* (blackbottles) and *Calliphora erythrocephala* (bluebottles). The life cycle is broken up into three distinct stages; the egg, the larvae and the adult. Flies over-winter in the soil as pupae, and emerge as temperatures rise during the spring. Adult female flies lay eggs on desired laying sites such as dirty back ends, footrot lesions or open wounds. Eggs hatch into first stage larvae within approximately 12 hours. These larvae feed on tissue, grow and moult twice, becoming mature maggots in 3 to 10 days, depending on temperature and humidity. Third stage maggots then drop to the ground and pupate, and so the life cycle begins again.

We have already had several reports of blowfly strike within our practice area. Now is the time to be on high alert. Managing worm burdens helps to prevent dirty backsides through scouring. 'Dagging' or 'crutching' decreases the amount of faecal matter build up which will help reduce the risk of blowfly strike. Hooves which are in good health and are free from footrot or severe scald will also assist in reducing the risk of blowflies becoming attracted and laying eggs. In addition to the above points there are chemical based products which can be applied onto the fleece that will prevent the incidence of blowfly strike.

Blowfly strike has a serious impact on the **welfare** of sheep within the UK, as well as having a major impact on productivity. Figures from 2015 suggests blowfly strike costs the sheep industry **£2.2 million** per year.

LOSSES ARE INCURRED FROM:

- Welfare
- Loss in productivity (weight loss and decreased milk yield)
- Fleece damage
- Deaths
- Treatment costs; including product, labour and time

Flocks should be carefully checked **at least once a day** throughout the blowfly season to look for any signs of blowfly strike. It is often necessary to handle animals and part the fleece to fully appreciate the extent of disease.

EARLY SIGNS OF STRIKE

- Irritation
- Nibbling at tail head
- Increased swishing of tails
- Rubbing
- Further signs of discomfort in lame animals

SIGNS OF SEVERE STRIKE

- Discoloured/damp fleece
- Fleece loss
- Separation from flock
- Sick animals
- Death

For information or to discuss blowfly strike prevention, please contact the surgery and speak to one of the farm vets or SQP's.

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE PATHWAY APRIL 2024 UPDATE

In February 2023 the Animal Health and Welfare Review was launched. Since that time we have worked alongside our clients to complete what is required in order to claim for the Sustainable Farming Incentive grant.

The Animal Health and Welfare Review was updated in April 2024.

"It is now easier to apply for the Review. Farmers no longer need to register or be invited to apply. On average, applying now takes less than 2 minutes and it only takes a little over 3 minutes to claim funding once the Review is complete. There are now more than 5,000 agreements and more than 2,500 farmers have completed their Review, and been paid."

The Review is now open to non-BPS claimants who meet the other eligibility criteria. In addition the Annual Health and Welfare Review now also satisfies [the veterinary attestation requirements for exporting produce to the EU.](#)"

Going into the summer the Disease Eradication and Control Programmes are going to be introduced in addition to the Animal Health and Welfare Review. Farmers will be able to apply for financial support to prevent and reduce endemic diseases and conditions, building on the initial advice given in the Review.

If you would like to take advantage of the Sustainable Farming Incentive Grants, please contact the surgery.

BESTICO FLY CONTROL

In last month's newsletter we touched on Bestico Fly Control.

Throughout May our team of vet techs have visited several farms which have chosen to implement the 'fire and forget' service. After an initial veterinary assessment of the holding, a written report is passed onto the vet techs who then take responsibility for ordering the required insects and equipment to naturally control flies on the farm.

Biomite (Fly egg predators)

Predatory mites targeting fly eggs in any fly breeding areas during the summer months.

Biofly (Fly larvae predators)

Fly larvae control for tanks, channels, collection pits and lagoons.

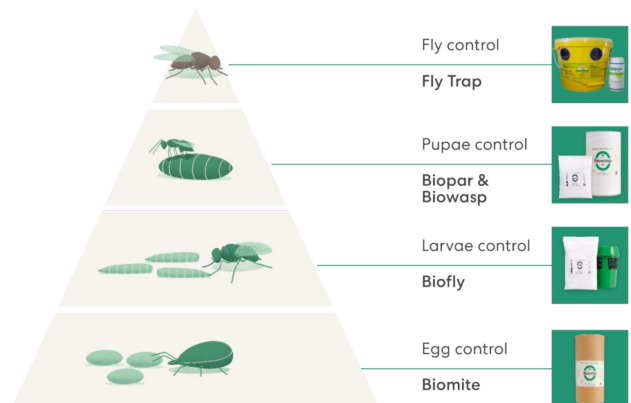
Biowasp (Fly pupae parasites)

Fly pupae control for buildings with deep litter, calf pens and hutches, muck heaps etc.

Bucket Trap (Bucket fly trap)

An innovative bucket trap intended to target the adult life stage of flies around the farm yard. When combined with BESTICO's fly bait, it is extremely effective at capturing high volumes of adult flies.

For more information about the Bestico fly control range, please contact the surgery.



FLY CONTROL PRODUCTS FOR CATTLE



Early season fly numbers may seem low, but they will be laying large numbers of eggs so that when conditions become suitable a low fly count can become a big problem in just a few weeks.

Treating cows early in the season before their numbers have multiplied rapidly is optimal for control of fly numbers.

We have a range of fly control pour on products in stock, please contact the surgery to discuss.

PARASITIC WORM CONTROL IN DAIRY YOUNGSTOCK

Sheep farmers have been made aware of the increasing problems associated with the emergence of anthelmintic resistance in their flocks, and will routinely carry out worm egg counts on pooled dung samples (made up from 10 samples from individual lambs in the group) to determine if their animals require an anthelmintic treatment. Further to this, carrying out a post treatment faecal egg count identifies if a product has been fully effective and checks for evidence of resistance developing to the product used.

In cattle herds the same principles of testing dung samples at strategic times through the summer to determine the worm burden, the need to treat and the effectiveness of the product used (even if wormed with a long acting worming bolus or injection at turnout) still apply.

Dairy youngstock which have no immunity to worms are often turned out onto the same pastures each spring which are likely to have been contaminated by previous year's grazers, and the fact that the same class of wormers tend to be used every year means that there are concerns over the development of resistance to cattle wormers.

Planning ahead to late autumn/winter, we can diagnose the need for a fluke treatment. A blood sample from 6 stirks or replacement heifers that have just finished their first grazing season will tell us if there has been any exposure to fluke. The test indicates exposure down to 2 week old fluke so if the results are negative then this shows that there is no need to administer a fluke dose saving you time, money and man power.

Speak to one of the farm vets or SQP's to discuss worming control programmes for your cattle and when to carry out worm egg counts on dung samples.



SHEEP VACCINE AVAILABILITY



Clostridial Vaccines

There are currently significant supply issues with lack of availability of most pack sizes of Heptavac P and both pack sizes of Ovivac P, although we do have stocks of Bravoxin 10 and Ovipast currently available. To discuss your Clostridial and Pasturella vaccination programmes for lambs through the summer contact the surgery for more information.

Abortion Vaccines

Enzootic abortion vaccines (Cevac Chlamydophila and Enzovax) are currently in short supply. Please contact the surgery and discuss likely vaccine requirements this summer.

Toxoplasma vaccine (Toxovax) needs to be ordered well in advance and when it arrives only has a 2- week shelf life. Whilst we don't know of any future supply problems if you know how much you will need and when you want it delivering it would be a sensible precaution to order it now even if you don't want delivery until later in the summer.

DALEHEAD VET GROUP FIGURES

Although we are still getting the odd lambing down at the surgery, we have made an executive decision to declare lambing time 2024 finished!

Once again our vets have earned their cake and biscuits, keeping busy with lambings, calvings and caesareans for both species. From the 1st January—31st May this year our 6 Farm Vets working day and night have performed:

- 71 calvings
- 102 cow caesareans
- 228 lambings
- 210 sheep caesareans

Although the weather wasn't on our side, we've done it - now bring on the sunshine!



THE DALEHEAD AI COURSE



We are running our DEFRA approved artificial insemination course for cattle at the practice:

Date: Monday 24th June to Thursday 27th June

Time: 10am-4pm.

Each day will be split into two hours in the classroom followed by three hours of practical work.

Numbers are very limited due to running the course in small groups. This allows us to deliver a high quality programme enabling a more one-to-one approach setting you up with the confidence and skill to serve your own cows.

If you are interested please contact the practice for more information.

SELEKT PUMP SERVICING CLINIC—FREE OF CHARGE



Free SELEKT
Pump Servicing
Clinic

Date	Thursday 20th June 2024
Time	9.30am - 1pm
Venue	Dalehead Veterinary Centre, 22 Station Rd, Settle BD24 9AA
Servicing	Drop off your SELEKT pump prior to the clinic or come along on the day. The SELEKT Territory Manager will be on hand to service your pump, offer advice on cleaning and maintaining it and answer any questions you may have about using the SELEKT System.

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