

Sleeping Parasites on Cattle Pasture

Whilst we are all desperate for rain so that stock have something to eat, it would be worth considering what effect the unusually dry summer is having on pasture worm burdens during dry conditions, worm eggs and larvae remain dormant in cowpats. This means that the pasture worm burden is effectively low. Those of you undertaking monthly worm egg counts on youngstock will probably notice that worm egg counts have been noticeably lower this year. As there is no rain to help break up the pats however, the cowpats and the parasites within them accumulate on the pasture during the summer months. This results in two situations occurring:

- 1) Youngstock will be exposed to lower parasite burdens during the dry months, and will therefore develop much less immunity to parasites.
- 2) When the rain does eventually come, there may be a very large number of larvae developing and getting washed out onto the pasture.

The combined effect of this is that a large number of larvae may infect youngstock with relatively low levels of parasite immunity in the late summer and autumn. This could contribute to poor growth rates and potentially diarrhoea in the autumn. If substantial rain is not seen until very late in the grazing season, it can result in large numbers of larvae entering the gut walls and 'hibernating' there until the spring. In this latter situation, youngstock can suffer from life threatening diarrhoea and gut-wall damage when the parasites emerge *en masse* the following spring.

To address this, it is particularly important this year that monthly worm egg counts are taken from at risk youngstock throughout grazing season. This will allow rapid increases in the whole worm burdens to be picked up early and appropriate treatment administered.

It will also be particularly important to ensure that youngstock receive an appropriate wormer at housing. Ivermectin pour-on products are particularly popular as they are cheap, treat external parasites, and are also active against worm larvae 'hibernating' in the gut wall. It is not just youngstock that are at risk. Whilst most adult grazing dairy cows are immune to gut worms, every year we see a number of severe lungworm outbreaks in both youngstock and adult cows.

Lungworm is problematic to forecast at the best of times, as the pattern of disease can be quite unpredictable. The potential for mass emergence of lungworm larvae from cowpats this year means that extra vigilance will be required after any rain arrives. Whilst the lungworm vaccine is highly effective, it relies on natural exposure to boost immunity, and therefore a late larval emergence this year could mean that even vaccinated animals that have not been exposed to lungworm during the dry summer are susceptible to disease.

In summary, **keep a very close eye out for cattle coughing at grass**, and be aware of potentially high gut worm burdens later than you would usually expect in the year! If in any doubt, contact your vet immediately – lungworm can kill quickly.

Haemonchus in Sheep

This worm is also known as the Barber's Pole Worm and we don't see it very often in this area. However, the hot weather has increased the risk this year and we have already seen it on one farm where it has not been diagnosed before. The clinical signs are due to blood loss, and include weakness, sheep getting out of breath when gathered, anaemia and death. **It does not cause scouring.** Often the worms can be seen in the abomasum on post mortem of a dead sheep, but worm egg counts are also used as very high counts are seen when these worms are present. Only certain products are effective against this worm, so please contact us for advice if you are concerned.

Ovine Abortion Vaccinations

Just a reminder to get your ewe vaccinations ordered especially if you are vaccinating for toxoplasma as well as Enzootic Abortion. The vaccines should be done one month before the tup goes in. If you had abortion diagnosed this year and you need advice on vaccination, or if you had abortions and no diagnosis was reached please ring us at the surgery for more advice. For those of you that routinely use antibiotics to prevent this condition be warned that the general push from society and the authorities e.g Farm Assurance schemes is to reduce the use of antibiotics prophylactically (especially when there is a viable alternative) and so this practice is going to be more and more difficult to defend. We as a practice will have to be much

more stringent about repeatedly handing out antibiotics for issues like this. (or words to that effect). Also, over the life of a ewe it is cheaper to vaccinate than use antibiotics.

Cyclex Disinfectant

We are stocking a new disinfectant called **Cyclex** which is clinically proven against the oocysts which cause both **coccidiosis and cryptosporidia**. It is a good all-purpose disinfectant that is effective against all the common bacteria/viruses/fungi that we encounter and if used at the particular concentration of 3% v/v or 30mls in 1 litre of water it is effective against coccidiosis and crypto.

Painkillers at Disbudding and Castration

The British Cattle Veterinary Association have recently released a statement which says that they believe all calves should be routinely provided with pain relief for pain associated with disease or husbandry procedures. Specifically, they recommend giving anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) in addition to local anaesthesia at disbudding and castration. Farm First Vets support this view and we will continue to provide this medication when we carry out these procedures. Dairy farmers who supply Tesco will find that this is now a requirement in the revised standards. We would encourage all our farmers who castrate, disbud or dehorn their own calves to use NSAIDS as well as local anaesthetic when carrying out these procedures.

Kling-on Blue We are seeing a lot of lame sheep at the moment and we have decided to get some Kling on Blue back in stock. This product is an alternative to formalin and antibiotic footbaths for both Footrot and CODD. Kling-on Blue contains copper sulphate for antibacterial activity, organic acids, zinc sulphate for horn quality and a colloid-former which gives a viscous footbath which binds to the foot. The benefits of this formulation mean that foot bathing does not need to be as frequent, once a week to start and then once a fortnight for control. Other benefits include reduced use of antibiotics and of products which have disposal issues. Please contact us if you would like more information on control of lameness in your sheep or Kling on Blue.

Staff News

We are looking forwards to Kath Gray joining us on 20th August. Kath is a very keen new graduate from Nottingham University who has worked on a variety of farms since she was 15. I'm sure you will join us in wishing her all the best as she starts her veterinary career here with FF vets, here's to a long and happy association with the farmers and livestock of S E Wales!

Usk Show

As usual we will be attending Usk Show and we look forward to welcoming you to our stand for a chat, cup of tea and piece of cake, (or a cold drink, if the weather warms up again).

Relief Milker Required in the Usk area. For more information please phone Mob: 07772871860.

Joke

The Lone Ranger and Tonto walked into a saloon and sat down to drink a beer. After a few minutes, a big tall cowboy walked in and said "Who owns the big white horse outside?" The Lone Ranger stood up, hitched his gun belt, and said, "I do..... Why?"

The cowboy looked at the Lone Ranger and said, "I just thought you'd like to know that your horse is just about dead outside!" The Lone Ranger and Tonto rushed outside and sure enough Silver was close to death from heat exhaustion. The Lone Ranger got the horse watered and soon Silver was starting to feel a little better. The Lone Ranger turned to Tonto and said, "Tonto, I want you to run around Silver and see if you can create enough of a breeze to make him cool down and feel better." Tonto said, "Sure, no worries Kemosabe" and took off running circles around Silver.

Not able to do anything else but wait, the Lone Ranger returned to the saloon to finish his drink. A few minutes later, another cowboy struts into the bar and asks, "Who owns that big white horse outside?" The Lone Ranger stands again, and says, "I do, what's wrong with him this time?"

"Ya left your injun runnin!"

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