



Saturday Mornings Now we're heading into the lambing and calving season we will be open on Saturday mornings, starting from Saturday 16th February through until Saturday 27th April. Opening at 8.30am and closing 12.30pm.

Metacam use at Calving Giving birth is a painful event for cows. This pain could lead to a reduced feed intake, altered metabolic and immunological status, and a host of other diseases that could seriously limit her productive herd lifespan. A recent Canadian study has shown that dairy cows given a single dose of Metacam at calving produced 0.64 kg/day more milk over the first 90-120 days of lactation, were less likely to have subclinical mastitis at first test and were less likely to be culled or have died before 60 days in milk. Also work at Nottingham university has suggested that NSAIDs at birth reduce inflammatory mediators and could reduce some types of lameness post calving in cattle. For this reason, we would recommend that all cows should be given Metacam at calving (remember the 5day milk withhold). We now have 250 ml Metacam bottles in stock, which cost about £18 less than buying the equivalent amount in 100ml bottles.

Lameness in Beef Cows A recent study by the University of Liverpool found that approximately 1 in 5 beef cattle slaughtered at 30mths had foot lesions at post mortem. The lesions were severe enough to have caused that animal to be lame when slaughtered. The most common conditions seen in these feet were sole bruising, slurry heel (erosion of the horn on the heel), digital dermatitis and white line disease.

Visible and non-visible lameness are welfare issues and can have serious impacts on productivity, as the pain and discomfort can lead to reduced feed intakes and weight gain. This leads to increased finishing time and less overall profit.

When focusing on ways to prevent and treat lameness in beef herds, we first need to look at the 3 key factors causing lameness: environment, cattle comfort and nutrition. The type of lameness condition seen is influenced by all of these factors, so by looking at these areas on each individual farm, we can help to pinpoint areas to work on to improve lameness rates in the herd.

Environmental issues increase the risk of cases of digital dermatitis, foul, sole ulcers and musculoskeletal injuries. The best way to improve the environment is to ensure that there is no build-up of slurry, especially in areas where the cows stand for long periods e.g. at feeders. Standing in slurry irritates the skin and prolonged exposure to bacteria increases the risk of infection. Cracks and uneven flooring can also cause abnormal forces through the hoof and therefore exacerbate foot lesions.

Cattle comfort is important for preventing cases of solar bruising, foot abscesses and musculoskeletal (muscle/bone) injuries. The most common issue is overstocking, especially at the feed face, around water troughs and in loafing areas and yards. If there is shortage of space, pushing and bullying can cause excessive pressure through the feet when turning sharply or standing abnormally.

Nutrition is a key player in all lameness conditions seen in beef cattle, especially in finished cattle which may have had episodes of acidosis due to inconsistent or unbalanced feeding. Acidosis causes a hoof to be more susceptible to bruising as the horn becomes softer. The production of more acidic faeces can increase irritation and bacterial load, predisposing the foot to digital dermatitis, foul and slurry heel.

In all cases of lameness an NSAID should be used to provide pain relief and anti-inflammatory action, which will help to prevent production losses. There are a variety of products available e.g. Metacam and Ketofen, some of which have very short meat withhold times.

As this is a brief overview of the lameness issues encountered on farm, please call us on 01873 840167 if you require more information, including advice on issues such as medication, stocking density, feeding or housing design.

New Products



Lamb Boost is a mineral drench supplement for lambs and provides essential vitamins and minerals for natural management of immunity and gut health. Formulated to support activity, vitality and appetite in newborn lambs.

Calf Boost is an oral paste product formulated to help to support growth, immunity and health in young calves. Calf Boost also contains a prebiotic

TM Boost is a feed supplement to support performance, health and fertility in cows. Can be used at a number of periods including prior to flushing, at insemination, after calving, at drying off, 10 days before calving, for cows and calves that need a tonic or at times of worming or vaccination.

Electrolyte Boost is a calf electrolyte, used to assist recovery. Electrolyte Boost contains antioxidants, amino acids, glucose and structural carbonates for gut repair.

Requesting Vets for TB tests As we are now getting into a very busy time of year for calving's and lambing's, and we need sufficient experienced vets to cover emergencies, please be aware that the clinical vets will not be able to carry out large TB tests. We have two very competent TB testers, Nuria and Jose who are able to test quickly and to a very high standard and we would politely request that you are accommodating at this time, when these vets are booked to do your tests.

Big Medicines Orders If you are going to place large orders for medicines, please can you ring a day in advance so that we can ensure that we have everything you need in stock and to avoid large queues at the desk while we prepare the order.

FC Meeting and Clinics The very popular **Responsible Use of Medicines Meeting** will be held for a third time at 7pm at the Three Salmons, Usk on 19th February. Booking is essential so if you want to attend please ring the office.

There is still funding through Farming Connect for laboratory testing, health planning and advice on use of Medicines. Please contact us for more information.

Photo Quiz Any ideas who is doing the John Travolta impression on the right? One small clue, he has much less hair now!

