



TB Testing Arrangements

You may have received letters in the post from AHPA and lechyd Da which may have confused you about who you should contact when you are due to have a TB test. **If you need to arrange a test, please ring our office as usual on 01873 840167** and speak to our office staff who will be able to book you in, as they have done in the past.

Nematodirus Warning

We are now approaching the peak risk period for Nematodirus on lowland farms and a high risk Nematodirus warning has been issued for Wales. If you have lambs aged 6- 12 weeks of age, grazing pasture that was grazed by young lambs last year, you should consider treating for this worm, which affects only young lambs and not adult ewes. For this particular worm a white drench (benzimidazole) should be used, as resistance is not a problem with this parasite. Injectable wormers have little effect on it, so should be avoided at this time of year. Nematodirus cannot be diagnosed using worm egg counts because immature larvae cause severe gut damage and scour before egg-laying adult worms develop. The parasite may hatch later on upland farms, so you may need to delay treatment if you farm higher ground. Please contact us if you are concerned about the risk and want more advice on treatment.

New Dairy Drenching Products

In recent years, "pump-drenching" of cows has become a common procedure. It is used as a treatment for various conditions such as toxæmic mastitis, and to reduce the risk of certain diseases, particularly after calving. There are two systems of equipment and formulae which are widely used: Selekt and Agger's. Up until now we have mainly been using the Agger's version, but we have decided to change to the Selekt system. The formulae available for pump-drenching into cows are similar in the two ranges, but the Selekt formulae offer a number of advantages. They come in colour-coded packs and one of the principal ingredients has been processed to improve its solubility, so those of you who use these products should notice that the Selekt brand is easier to dissolve. The Fresh Cow and Off Feed formulae contain more calcium and more propionate, giving a better reduction in the risk of hypocalcaemia, ketosis and secondary problems like metritis. We are also able to offer the Selekt products at a more competitive price per sachet.

The Selekt pump-drenchers are the ones with a stainless-steel pump body and blue fittings. The Selekt pump-drencher is lightweight, robust and easy to use. Other than the hose, which can be purchased, the manufacturer offers spare parts and servicing free-of-charge to practices which use the full Selekt system. If you have one which has started to leak or which has been broken, let us know. We can now get it repaired for you free-of-charge.

Staggers Risk

Over the weekend we have had some rain and the forecast is for the weather to warm up, so it is likely that we will see a flush of grass growth and cases of hypomagnesaemia or grass staggers. Remember to supply your sheep and cattle with a source of magnesium at turnout. This may be in the form of minerals on feed, in water, boluses ad-lib blocks or molasses licks. It is sensible to always have a bottle of magnesium with you to give to any animal that you find showing signs of staggers, as they can die very quickly, before the vet arrives. The injection should be given under the skin, NOT in the vein.

Blowfly strike

Is most commonly caused by the common greenbottle (*Lucilia sericata*). A single female fly can lay up to 200 eggs in the wool which then hatch to form larvae which feed on the skin and underlying tissue leading to extensive damage. Eggs can hatch rapidly if conditions are right, so apparently clean sheep can become heavily infested within 24-48 hours, meaning daily flock inspections are necessary. Blowfly strike tends to occur around the animal's rump, but can occur on any part of the body. An infestation produces a strong odour which in turn attracts more flies to lay eggs. A heavy infestation will cause increased temperature, increased breathing rate, loss of condition and appetite, anaemia and toxemia, followed by death if not treated.

While it is impossible to completely eliminate blowfly strike there are a number of steps which can be taken to reduce the risk:

- Faecal soiling especially of the rump attracts adult flies, so reducing the level of soiling by dagging the area will help to prevent problems.
- Faecal consistency is important as watery faeces will attract increased number of flies, so all lambs should be wormed as necessary to ensure firm faeces.
- Docking of lowland lambs will help to reduce faecal soiling of the back-end and tail.
- The odour of footrot will attract adult flies to lay eggs in the inter-digital space, so treatment of lame sheep will also aid in prevention.
- Daily flock inspections will allow observation and treatment of affected animals before the animal becomes ill.
- Finally insecticides can be used to control the problem.

There are a large number of insecticide products licensed for the treatment and prevention of blowfly strike. Some are specifically for treatment of blowfly and some are only to be used as a preventative, while some are dual-purpose. The preventative products work by killing the larvae when they start to feed, and vary a great deal in their duration of activity from 6-16 weeks. However, no matter how long the label claims to protect for, it is always advisable to closely monitor the flock for signs of strike. Please feel free to speak to us for further advice on the right choice of product for your flock on 01873 840167

Sheep Meeting - The Knockout Dose

We are holding a meeting on how to use the new generation of wormers to maximise flock performance in the short and long term. The meeting, sponsored by Zoetis, is to be held at the King of Prussia on Tuesday 12th May at 7.30 pm. Refreshments will be provided, so please confirm your place by contacting the surgery on Tel: 01873 840167

The Month's Joke

A classroom full of first year Veterinary students were participating in their first day of anatomy class. For the lecture, the professor begins by unveiling a dead cow under a white sheet laying on an operating table. The professor tells the class "In Veterinary Medicine, there are two qualities you must possess – the first of which is a strong stomach. You cannot, under any circumstance, be disgusted by anything involving an animal's body."

For example, the Professor pulls back the sheet and sticks his finger right up the dead cow's rectum, pulls out his finger and sticks it in his mouth. The students just stand there, paralyzed at what they see. "Now, go ahead and do the same thing, each of you," the professor says.

Freaked out, the students take several minutes but eventually take turns sticking their fingers up into the anal cavity of the dead cow, and then sucking on them. Once everyone is finished, the Professor continues on with his lesson... "Now, the second important quality you must possess is a keen observation. You see, I stuck in my middle finger up the cow's bum, and I sucked on my index finger... Now, learn to pay attention."