

Farm First Vets Newsletter July 2016

Controlling subclinical ketosis with monensin (Kexxtone bolus) can reduce

antibiotic use by up to 25% This work by the University of Toulouse has shown that using a monensin bolus in cows at high risk of getting subclinical ketosis led to a 25% reduction in antibiotics to treat and cure conditions associated with the metabolic condition. The results were presented at the European Buiatrics Forum in Rome last month.

“There is much global concern and debate over the threats to human and livestock health from antibiotic resistance and the use of antibiotics for livestock,” says Fiona Anderson MRCVS of Elanco. “Vets and livestock owners all have a part to play in ensuring we safeguard veterinary medicines and use antibiotics responsibly. This study shows that using monensin in the form of a bolus could be a powerful way to cut antibiotic use in the dairy herd.

Ketosis and subclinical ketosis usually occur in early lactation when energy demands to produce high quantities of milk exceed energy intake. This results in an excessive negative energy balance. Fat is mobilised to fill the energy gap, but if too much fat is mobilised it leads to the production of high levels of ketones which cause clinical and subclinical disease. Clinical ketosis is rare with symptoms including nervous cows with reduced yield. Subclinical ketosis often goes unnoticed as it has no visible symptoms yet it is very common. It can affect up to 30% of cows in early lactation with a large variation between herds.

Cows affected by subclinical ketosis are at a higher risk of getting infectious diseases which require antibiotics to treat and cure. They are also at higher risk of developing displaced abomasum, retained placenta and cystic ovaries. They consequently face a higher early culling risk. Subclinical ketosis also lowers milk production, reduces conception rates and lengthens calving intervals. A study from 2015 found that for a 100 cow herd with 30% ketosis, the direct and indirect costs can be around £10,416 or around £347 per affected cow.

Fiona urges any farm where subclinical ketosis could be an issue to discuss control and testing strategies with their vet. “Developing an effective strategy to highlight cows at risk of subclinical ketosis and to prevent the condition occurring could make a big impact on the productivity and profitability of dairy farms and reduce antibiotic use,” she says.

“If ketosis is an issue targeted administration of monensin in a Kexxtone bolus to cows at high risk of developing ketosis reduces the incidences of ketosis by 74%. The bolus is given three weeks before calving and provides coverage during the main risk period for the condition. Kexxtone uses monensin to improve rumen function and increase glucose delivery. This ultimately increases the energy available and buffers the dairy cow against the tendency to drop into negative energy balance.”

There is currently an offer on Kexxtone boluses for new and lapsed users, whereby if 5 boluses are purchased you will get 5 boluses free of charge.

Vasectomised Rams are a useful way of shortening the lambing period and encouraging ewes to mate one or two weeks earlier than they would normally do, and each year more of our clients are making use of them. A ratio of 1 teaser to every 100 ewes is advised. Cross bred/“mongrel” rams are usually best as pure-bred rams tend to get lazy. The best teasers are those with high libido and ideally they should have had some mating experience. Teaser rams should be left after the operation for at least 6 weeks before being used as a teaser. Ewes which have been deprived of the sight, sound and smell of rams for 4 to 6 weeks prior to breeding season should be mixed with the teaser ram. After 14 days the teaser should be removed and the fertile rams introduced. The ewes will usually be served over an 8 to 10 day period, starting about 4 or 5 days after the fertile ram is introduced. The lambing period can be reduced to 4 or 5 weeks with the bulk of lambing occurring over 2 to 3 weeks. Although some people leave the teaser ram in for fewer than 14 days, the period of ewes’ exposure to the teaser should always start 14 days before mating. The teaser ram should not be left in for more than 14 days.

Remember the spread of oestrus will be more compact in a teased flock, so a higher than normal ram to ewe ratio should be used to achieve optimum results e.g 1 ram to 30 ewes. Farmers should also ensure their system will cope with a more compacted lambing .e.g sufficient number of lambing pens etc. If you would like any rams vasectomised or would like to discuss their use, please contact us to make an appointment. The surgery costs £75 +vat, including drugs. Significant discounts are available for multiple rams done on the same day.

Spotinor Farm productivity and animal welfare can be improved by the all-important early application of an external parasite treatment in cattle and sheep. If treatment is delayed until significant numbers of adult flies are visible, it is already too late to adequately control fly numbers. Rapid reproduction of the existing population will already have commenced, and thousands of eggs and larvae will already be present on farm, ready to develop and compound the problem.

Did you know?

>>It only takes 10-20 head flies to have a negative economic impact on farm.

>>The horn fly will feed on blood from cattle up to 40 times per day - this could lead to blood loss and constant irritation for the animal.

Spotinor is a Deltamethrin spot on treatment which is easy to apply and the simple dosing regime negates the need to weigh animals before treatment and so saves time and labour. Deltamethrin as an insecticide is known for its speed of action and potent kill –effective against flies, lice and other external parasites. The dose rate is cattle 10 ml, sheep 5 ml and lambs under 10kg 2.5.ml. We have a very competitive price on this product, so please ring us for a quote.

Cyclospray We are now stocking a larger size of oxytetracycline spray, a 422ml can which is cheaper than buying two of the smaller cans, which contain 200ml. The active ingredient is exactly the same as in the smaller cans. We are also trying out a spray called TAF spray on a couple of farms. This product contains a completely different antibiotic to the other sprays that we have used in the past. It is licensed for use in cattle, sheep, goats, horses and other animals. We think it could be useful for spot treatments of digital dermatitis in cattle and CODD in sheep on certain farms, so if you would like to know more please speak to one of the vets.

Calf Pneumonia Vaccines Just a reminder that to protect young cattle at housing they need two doses of vaccine, the second of which should be given 2 weeks before they come in. If you had problems with pneumonia last winter and would like to discuss vaccination protocols please ring us. **One of the vaccine, Bovipast RSP has an offer of 50 % of the first doses free to new users.** This vaccines protects against Pasteurella and two viruses, RSV and Pi3

Bluetongue Vaccine The UK is once again at high risk of seeing cases of Bluetongue. Very shortly we will be able to supply Bluetongue vaccine. If you are interested in vaccinating your sheep or cattle, please ring us for more information. The vaccines are being widely used abroad and are safe to use in pregnant females.

Nat's Air Ambulance Challenge Natalie is part of a group who are taking part in the Dirty Dozen South Wales - a 6K race with many daunting obstacles. The team are raising money for the Wales Air Ambulance Charitable Trust. This is a vital service that saves lives and you never know when you may need it. Please follow the link below and donate whatever you can, or you can sponsor them in the surgery. You can also TEXT DONATIONS.... CLYT60 £1 (or whatever you would like to donate)

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Clythadirtydozen>

Twitter If you want to follow us on Twitter the place to look is #@farmfirstvets

Joke A bus load of politicians were driving down a country road one afternoon, when all of a sudden, the bus ran off the road and crashed into a tree in an old farmer's field. Seeing what happened, the old farmer went over to investigate. He then proceeded to dig a hole and bury the politicians. A few days later, the local sheriff came out saw the crashed bus and asked the old farmer, "Were they all dead?"

The old farmer replied, "Well, some of them said they weren't, but you know how them politicians lie."