



**December 2017 Newsletter**

# Tibbs and Simmons

Farm Animal Veterinary Surgeons

It is amazing to see the huge variety of products people use in teat preparation and disinfection, often I wonder whether we truly understand what we are trying to achieve with the products we use. I have summarised the criteria for pre and post dips which are quite different despite products being sold to do both jobs! Different active ingredients have different roles, which it is important to match to the specific herd situation.

Pre-milking teat preparation is now widely accepted as being an important part of the whole milking process. As well as fore-milking to detect mastitis, an effective teat preparation process before attaching clusters can benefit in a number of ways, including: removal of dirt and muck from teats, disinfection of teats and stimulation of the cow to enhance milk let-down. An ideal pre-milking product should be a dip, providing a better chance of decent coverage. It must be an effective cleaner, enabling dirt as well as the product to be removed easily with a paper towel. The disinfection must be fast, as bacteria need to be killed prior to unit attachment. It should provide stimulation to speed up milking and assist in improving teat skin condition.

Post-milking disinfection is also a critical point of the milking process. Here we aim to provide protection from infection by using a barrier film; persistence of the disinfection is more important than the speed of kill. Post-milking treatment should also provide an emollient to improve teat skin condition which is vital in preventing mastitis bacteria colonising the skin.

It is around this time of year as temperatures are dropping that we start to see itchy sheep. The two main causes are Scab (mites) and Biting or Chewing Lice. Clinically they can be hard to differentiate without taking samples/skin scrapes. Treatment is also different; Scab requires treatment with either Dectomax or Cydectin 2% or equivalent products or dipping with a suitable product. Treatment for Lice requires a pour-on or spray product such as Crovect or Ecto-fly. Treatment with the wrong product can be costly and time-consuming so it is worth knowing what your sheep have. Ensure the whole group are treated and be careful if applying a pour-on to long fleeces in the winter as this can result in under-dosing. Consider where the parasites arrived from and plan to avoid this in the future; a quarantine protocol would be helpful. Itchy sheep can lead to significant economic losses due to poor feed intakes. If you have itchy sheep then please contact us for the most suitable advice.

It always surprises me that another year has passed and I find myself wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. We have had a great year in the Practice and have very much enjoyed looking after the needs of your herds and flocks! We look forward to working with you in 2018.