

Newsletter December 2016



The drive towards global reduction of antibiotic use shows no signs of going away. I am pleased to report some progress within our practice. We have almost completely eliminated our use of the most protected class, the fluoroquinolones which includes Marbocyl, Forcyl and Baytril. We have now radically reduced our usage of the 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins including Cephaguard, Cobactan, Excenel and Cemay. There is still some work to do here, but many of you have now adopted alternative products. The final class of critically important antibiotics is the macrolides; this class includes products such as Tylan, Draxxin and Zactran. Whilst there are alternatives available, this class is widely used in calf pneumonia with good results. The only realistic way of reducing our use of this class is to up our game with preventative measures.

A significant quantity of Zactran has been prescribed by this Practice for off licence use to treat footrot in sheep. We now have a licenced product for use in sheep footrot; Draxxin is a very similar product to Zactran. We will now be required to prescribe Draxxin instead of Zactran where it is indicated for foot rot in sheep. Of course we will remain mindful that this is still one of the critically important antibiotics, so should only be used where absolutely necessary.

Arla have led the way with milk buyers in reducing our reliance on Dry Cow Therapy. This is one of the few times a preventative antibiotic is given to un-infected cattle. Arla's stick will become firmer in this area and a minimum of 10% of cows will be required to receive no antibiotics at drying off. With good records and a meticulous technique this should be easily achievable and can save a significant amount of money where a sealant alone can reduce your mastitis rates in fresh calvers.

If you feel that you are driven to reduce your farm's reliance on antibiotics then please feel free to ask; we would be only too happy to help highlight preventative measures that could be adopted.

It was good to see a number of you for our meeting on Dairy cow lameness. I think that the take home message was that lameness is initiated around the time of calving. So anything you do at this time that has a negative effect on the structures of the foot will increase the chance of a case of lameness around 80-100 days in milk. We plan to hold a more practical session in the New Year, so if anyone is interested please call the surgery.

The Early lambing flocks are now starting to scan for pregnancy; so far I have heard mixed reports. If you have a number of barren ewes at scanning or just disappointing twin numbers then it may well be worth taking some bloods to check for signs of abortion. Please give us a call to book this in.

Many thanks for your custom over the last year, it is much appreciated. We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year .