

Newsletter July 2017



TB continues to provide its fair share of hassle for all involved in the testing process. We have a few new rules being implemented this month. The most likely rule change to trouble you is the change on how Inconclusive Reactors (IR's) are interpreted. For a while now, when a reactor is found at a test any IR's at that test are automatically re-interpreted at severe interpretation so may well end up as severe reactors that will be taken with the original reactor. This has now been extended to any IR's from historic tests as well as any cattle that are included as traced from another TB breakdown.

We as providers of TB testing are coming under ever more scrutiny and are now subject to un-announced audits on farm on either day of the test. Your co-operation in this situation is gratefully received, but it does reinforce the need for animals to be presented to us in suitable facilities to allow efficient clipping and measuring. We have to provide a test result for all animals on your CTS list or provide an adequate reason for them not being tested. Most holdings have good control of their animal records but those of you who could improve need to be aware that this rule change could inadvertently mean that your test remains incomplete and therefore potentially overdue and may also trigger a tag inspection.

Some better news is that Reactor removal and slaughter is being re-tendered and welfare is now a consideration with regard to travelling distance for pregnant and high yielding cows. This may also speed up the removal process.

A few of our farms have been using 'Imrestor' a new immunity stimulating injection used at the time of calving. This product is based on a human drug to help combat the effects of chemotherapy on the immune system. In cattle a similar drop in the capacity of the immune system happens at calving. The white blood cell count of the cow drops, the cows own antibodies are diverted into the colostrum and the mechanisms to counteract infection are inhibited. In nature this occurs to allow the new born calf to take priority to allow for the survival of the species but is not necessarily in the cow's best interest. This immuno-suppression explains why most of the worst cases of ecoli mastitis and downer cows happen at calving. As the product is relatively new to the UK, there is limited data but already we are seeing a rise in Wk 4 Daily milk yield (+3.7 litres), 30 day cumulative yield (+100L), 100 day cumulative yield (+270L), and 305 day projected yield (+330L).

The injection does not work by increasing yield directly but by helping the cows fight infection and disease. Its primary claim is in preventing mastitis but it will also act to help the cow deal with other infections. It stands to reason that the benefits will be greater if the levels of challenge are high so we would expect that Imrestor would be really useful in situations where you know your system is going to be under pressure such as when you have a glut of calvings or in those winter months especially when it is muggy and humid. We are not saying don't address these housing issues but if you are stuck with your system in the short term here is something that can help. The manufacturers, Elanco are so confident in this product that they will give a **MONEY BACK GUARANTEE** on this product for a limited time only. If you begin using Imrestor and do not see a benefit in mastitis reduction and/or yield your money gets paid back. All you have to do is supply your milk records and mastitis data. Please let us know if this is of interest to you.

It is a shame to hear of the closure of the Agricentre branch at Redhill as often many of you would combine a visit to us with one to pick up some goods from them. We are exploring stocking a wider range of animal health products to help fill this gap. We can offer a range of wormers and fly products at reasonable prices with next day collection. Please let us know what would be useful for us to stock and we will look at the feasibility.