

Newsletter November 2017



Some dry autumn weather has been very welcome to extend the grazing season. We are seeing a few cases of staggers due to the poorer grass quality. Any lactating animals should be supplemented.

Probably the question we are asked the most commonly on our rounds is “How is TB?” or “What is TB like around here?” I often wish that I could offer good news in response but generally my reply has a negative connotation. There is an array of stats available to assess the situation. Below are government stats for Avon and Somerset with a comparison of year ended July 17 with July 16.

Avon & Somerset	Total tests	New TB incidents	Total Reactors	Confirmed slaughterhouse cases	Restricted herds
2016	6503	461	3422	129	815
2017	5917	391	3045	62	711

This table shows an improving picture all be it still fairly dismal. It is difficult to know whether the badger cull in West Somerset and South Gloucestershire is having an effect on this data. I had a feeling that our practice did not follow the same trend, so I gathered together some data from our own client’s herds showing year to end of October 2016 and 2017 shown below.

Tibbs & Simmons	Total tests	Total cattle	Skin test reactors	Reactors per 1000 cattle tested
2016	805	79000	316	4
2017	804	88000	441	5

Unfortunately, I was right with my thoughts as illustrated above our reactor rate has gone up by 1 reactor per 1000 cattle tested, and we are doing far more testing than ever before. I do not have the data available on the numbers of restricted herds within the practice but this does seem to fluctuate. Our reactor numbers can be skewed significantly by some big breakdowns with high numbers of reactors.

Those of you that scan your ewes are just starting to commence scanning of the early groups. After plenty of grass through the autumn we would hope for some good scan results this year. Scanning is very worthwhile as it allows you to group and feed according to the birth numbers. This can help reduce diseases such as twin lamb disease, fatty liver and vaginal prolapses.

Those of you that use the drug collection box at Clare’s may well be aware that the box has moved (as has Clare!). It is now located in the Old Dairy inside the sheeted metal door; on the left hand side of the yard as you drive in.