

Newsletter September 2017



Tibbs and Simmons

Farm Animal Veterinary Surgeons

Welcome to the autumn! The summer seems a distant memory; the autumn will no doubt bring the usual array of seasonal issues. Lungworm is one such problem that has been a real issue this year. If you have youngstock coughing at grass then drop us up a dung sample, it may well be that they need worming even if wormed relatively recently.

As we move towards housing we need to start thinking about pneumonia prevention. We are holding a meeting on the 13th September to discuss pneumonia and some novel vaccines that have come to the market. Please let us know if you would like to attend.

There has been a big drive within the industry to increase the usage of pain relief during procedures such as disbudding, de-horning and castrating, in addition to local anaesthetic. There is a multitude of evidence out there now to show that although calves may appear relatively normal afterwards, there is a significant check in growth rates that can be mitigated by the use of pain relief as well as reducing stress and the associated diseases such as pneumonia. Cattle are naturally stoic animals that naturally do not display pain so we tend to assume that it is not required. We would certainly recommend an injection of Metacam at the time. There are other products that may be easier to give such as soluble aspirin for baby calves or a pour-on that can easily be applied when in the crush. I often think we are too reluctant to administer pain relief after a difficult calving; there is no doubt that pain relief will help a cow get back to her feet, increase appetite and therefore have a beneficial effect in terms of reducing the risk of ketosis and immune suppression. We have products available such as Carprofen with no milk withhold time so no worries in terms of the bulk tank. A sensible rule of thumb would be if you need the calving jack then the cow needs some pain relief. I have been reliably informed that giving birth is painful! Don't forget that Metacam does have a 5 day milk withhold and I am reliably informed that it is something that dairies are now looking for.

There are some changes due to come into effect from October for your Red Tractor Dairy Assurance. The main changes surrounding animal health involve medicines, with a recommendation that annual drug usage is reviewed with a vet, with protocols in place to use as little of the highest priority critically important antibiotics as possible. We have been working towards reducing the use of the critically important antibiotics in the Practice for some time so this shouldn't be too painful!

Alongside this there is a recommendation for the herd health and performance reviews to be undertaken by a vet and that this should be on an annual basis rather than every 18 months.

We will be running an AI course this month, if you are interested in learning this skill then please get in touch.

We will be at the Dairy Show at the Bath and West, on the 4th October, please come and say hello and have a cuppa.

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