

NorCal News...



Happy New Year!



CASE OF THE MONTH

This month during a routine TB test, Becca was asked to look at a lame Heifer, who over the past year had been treated several times for foot infections plus many visits from the foot trimmer!

The poor girl was still lame after all of this, but her medial (inside) claw was in good condition, so we made the decision to remove her right front lateral claw.

On the second part of the TB test, Becca and Hannah set out to do the procedure.

The animal was restrained in the crush and the leg was placed on a footrest and tied down securely. A ratchet strap was placed above the knee and tightened so that it could be used as a tourniquet. Local anaesthetic was given intravenously just below the fetlock, as well as underneath the skin where the incision would be made. A cut was made 1cm above the coronet band and the scalpel was used to cut down until we reached the bone. Then, using cheese wire, the claw was removed by cutting through the bone – job done!

No stitching was needed, just a good pressure bandage, antibiotics and pain relief and a lot of care afterwards to keep it clean and healing well!

Claw amputation can seem brutal, but it is an operation used as a last resort after all other treatment has failed. It can only be done if the animal is sound on the other claw and on the other feet too!

TB testing is a great opportunity to have a quick health check of all your animals and identify any issues. Plus, there's a vet on hand to help you out and answer any questions.

This heifer has recovered very well and is now walking better than ever!



Sheep and Copper

Managing copper levels in sheep is a bit of a challenge, as having either too much or too little copper can have adverse effects on a flock.

1. Copper poisoning

Sheep are very sensitive to copper, although different breeds respond to it differently. Some breeds are very prone to copper poisoning, and copper should only be supplemented in these breeds with extreme care, or not at all. These breeds include Texel, Suffolk, North Ronaldsay and some continental breeds.

Signs of copper poisoning include weakness, aimless wandering, and head-pressing followed by yellowing of the gums, eyes and/or skin (jaundice). Post mortem examinations of animals that have died from copper poisoning can reveal very typical changes to the kidneys and liver, and we can send a sample of kidney to the lab to confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment options for copper poisoning are limited, and there is very low likelihood of recovery of affected animals. However, the important thing is to identify the problem so that it can be addressed to prevent future cases. Often, the problem is a feed source containing a high level of copper. The most common cause of this is sheep being fed concentrates or minerals that were designed for cattle, as these will contain too much copper for sheep. However, some other feeds can have high copper levels, such as forage from land that has had large amounts of pig or poultry manure as fertiliser.

Continued overleaf.....

2. Copper deficiency

Many breeds of sheep can suffer from copper deficiency and so require supplementation, but this has to be approached with caution. Sheep are particularly susceptible if grazing on soils that are either low in copper or high in molybdenum, iron and/or sulphur, as these three can combine to lock up the available copper.

The most common sign of copper deficiency in sheep is swayback in young lambs, but it can also be seen as poor fleece ('steely wool') in growing lambs. It can also result in poor growth and poor immune function. There is no effective treatment for lambs with swayback, so once again the emphasis is on prevention. Ewes from at-risk farms can be supplemented with copper during pregnancy (either alone or alongside other trace elements). However, because of the risk of toxicity supplementation must be carried out with care.

CCN (Cerebrocortical necrosis)

CCN is a common neurological disease and has been diagnosed on a couple of farms over the last month, one particular case being in 4-5-month old growing steers. It is often seen in growing animals (cattle, sheep, goats and deer all being affected) on high concentrate diets, or where there have been sudden changes to diet. This can be more frequently seen during the winter months when cattle are housed and being fed concentrate, sometimes ad lib, rather than out grazing.

Clinical signs are:

- Dull
- Depressed or isolated from the herd
- Staggering
- Blindness
- 'star gazing'
- Seizuring in later stages
- Death

Diagnosis is due to clinical signs and the response to treatment, this being **IV Thamine** (Vitamin B1) for 3 consecutive days, as soon as clinical signs are observed. Post mortems can be useful if there are multiple cases on farm.

Any neurological signs on farm should be investigated by a vet.



Follow us on Facebook



NorCal Vets Thame

Pearces Yard, Aylesbury Road,
Thame, OX9 3AS
Tel: 01844 260 616
Mob: 07725 039 093 (Evan)
thame@norcalvets.co.uk

NorCal Vets Wantage

Unit 8a Elms Farm Business Park, Grove Road,
Wantage, OX12 7PD
Tel: 01235 429 767
Mob: 07711 923 909 (Jono)
wantage@norcalvets.co.uk