



Suckler Herd Group Farm Walk



Thursday 14th September 2023

FAI Farms, Northfield Farmhouse, Wytham, Oxford OX2 8QJ

3pm onwards

Burgers & drinks provided

- Farm walk/tour for 1 hour-1.5 hours by the Farm Manager talking about the cattle (Aberdeen Angus) and how the different groups and the grazing are managed
- Presentation on pneumonia by Zoetis rep
- Open discussion/chat led by Evan

Look forward to seeing as many of you there that can make it!
Please let us know if you haven't already confirmed your attendance



Show Success for Jenni!

This show season Jenni our AI tech/TB tester had success showing her Simmental cattle at the local shows.

NorCal received 1st at Bucks County Show and reserve in the any other continental class at Henley Show and Princess Ivy (in the photo) was awarded best calf!

Ragwort and hemlock poisoning alert

Over the last few weeks, the APHA has diagnosed both ragwort and hemlock water dropwort poisoning (HWD) in cattle and pigs – make sure you're familiar with the symptoms.

Clinical signs of ragwort poisoning include weight loss, oedema and diarrhoea, with raised liver parameters on biochemistry testing. It is usually associated with disease when gathered in silage or hay, however, consumption of the growing plant is also a risk.

Clinical symptoms of HWD poisoning include sudden death and neurological signs, with plant sections often identifiable in the stomach contents. HWD tends to grow in wet areas around field margins, and near ditches and streams.

Lungworm

We are entering the risk period again for lungworm in grazing cattle. Although normally associated with being a problem in calves in their first grazing season it can under certain circumstances be a problem in subsequent grazing seasons. Symptoms are usually seen in young cattle in their first grazing season in the later part of the summer. The nature and severity of lungworm infection depends on the number of larvae that are ingested and the immune response of the animal.

The spread of disease is aided by the fungi *Pilobolus*. This fungus thrives in warm and wet conditions, growing on the surface of dung and the lungworm larvae attach to these spores. The spores explode and spread the larvae up to 3 metres on the pasture from the faeces.

Clinical signs of disease include intermittent coughing particularly after moving stock. Moderately affected animals will have coughing bouts even when they are resting and may show signs of increased difficulty in breathing. Heavily affected animals have an increased breathing rate accompanied with opened mouth breathing with head and neck outstretched. The tongue will also appear as they try to cough. The cough will be the harsh deep 'husk' cough. Cattle can lose condition rapidly. Yearling and adult cattle can be affected if they fail to develop adequate immunity as calves.

Lungworm will be susceptible to all anthelmintics on the market and there are no known cases of resistance. However for treatment we prefer a yellow class of wormer due to its mechanism of action - other classes can cause huge numbers to die at once blocking the airways. Secondary bacterial pneumonia with a high temperature is a common complication and this is when you will also need to treat with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories. Call us and we can advise accordingly.

If you are continuously worming for gut worms this will also remove lungworm and not allow for natural immunity to build up therefore cattle are at risk of lungworm infection when the activity of the wormer ends. Therefore, care needs to be taken when using long acting anthelmintics in the 1st grazing season because you may limit the animals' exposure to lungworm larvae and cattle will remain susceptible to reinfection the following season due to not developing natural resistance.

There is a vaccine available (Huskvac) - Young calves can be vaccinated after eight weeks of age with a double dose 4 weeks apart however these calves should not be exposed to any lungworm for at least two weeks after the 2nd dose. Please call us to order/if you have any queries.

Preparing for Autumn Calving - Vaccinating for Calf Scours

With many of you preparing for the start of autumn calving it may be beneficial to have a think about whether you had many cases of scours in calves in spring or last year. Scour is one of the most common causes of death in calves less than one month old and pregnant cattle can be vaccinated against rotavirus, coronavirus and E.coli (K99) from 12 until 3 weeks prior to calving.

This is especially a good idea for those of you which have a history of scour problems. Calves who have gut damage from scours will not achieve the same daily growth rates and will take longer to reach your weight targets.

Antibodies produced by the cow from the vaccine will be stored in her colostrum and will be passed to the calf in the colostrum at their first feed - it is important to note that antibodies produced by the cow or heifer will not transfer to the calf before birth. Therefore, it is again vital to follow the 1,2,3 rule and ensure that in the **1st 2** hours a calf receives at least **3** litres of good quality colostrum as the ability of the calves' gut to absorb antibodies begins to decrease from 2 hours after birth.

Vaccination does not protect against cryptosporidium however calves with who have a co-infection with crypto and rota or coronavirus are severely more affected. If scours are an issue, it is always worth the cost to collect samples for us to test to identify the cause and best treatment and prevent infections once the other calves hit the ground.

Please give us a call to discuss vaccinating against scour or how to effectively deal with an outbreak should one occur.

Sheep Scab

Sheep scab is one of the most contagious parasitic diseases of sheep in the UK and is caused by an allergic reaction from the sheep to the mite *Psoroptes ovis* and its faeces causing huge economic burdens through production loss.

Repeated intense scratching and skin damage leads of wool loss and eventual skin damage and skin scabbing. Sheep will lose body condition and can potentially progress to seemingly fitting behaviour.

Scab cannot be seen and can only be confirmed by a skin scraping or blood test. When it is confirmed in one sheep it must be assumed all are infected and all treated accordingly. The mite spreads through contact and can live on fence posts, housing, lorries and anything the sheep has been in contact with for 17 days - this makes biosecurity, animal handling and hygiene considerations a high priority as the mite can persist in the flock in this way.

All sheep in the group should be treated at the same time. Treatment involves either injections (more than a one-off jab!!) with a 'clear wormer' Macrocytic Lactone or ideally obviously dependant on the time of year dipping in an organophosphate. Injecting while a lot of the time considered easier brings the risk of roundworm resistance so this must be considered. Dipping also will kill any lice present.

Prevention and good biosecurity are key for scab. Poor fencing with neighbouring flocks and bought in sheep pose the greatest risk therefore double fencing is best used where possible. Where there is common grazing or risk of contact between sheep communication is vital to ensure that all sheep in an area are treated at the same time. Bought in sheep should be treated and as always quarantined before introduction to the main flock - as is best practice for all disease.

If you suspect scab in your flock let us know and we can advise on treatment or decide if further tests are advisable to differentiate between lice and scab.

AHWR updates

Simplifying the application process

Following feedback DEFRA have decided to try to streamline the application process and have removed the need to complete an expression of interest.

That means if you want to apply for a Review, all you'll need now is your Customer Reference Number (CRN) and your password.

To learn more [the full guidance can be found on GOV.UK](#). They will continue to improve the application process with feedback from those who use it, and the next step will be to offer the Review to non-BPS receiving applicants.

Changes to the Review's BVD testing requirements for cattle

From speaking with vets and farmers and observing what happens on-farm, DEFRA have seen that it is common for vets to carry out 5 tests for BVD rather than the 6 that funding has been offered for – which is well-established practice across the industry because it is a requirement of the BVD Free and CHECs schemes.

To avoid any confusion for vets and farmers, the decision has been made to lower the minimum number of tests for a Review from 6 to 5.

Farmers who have already applied for a Review have already been contacted by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) who will update their terms and conditions to reflect this.

To support BVD elements in the Review, DEFRA are pleased to report that work on the new voluntary endemic disease eradication and control programmes is progressing well with a view to launching it next year.

This is really important as BVD costs the cattle industry at least £10 million every year.

The impact of diseases isn't just felt by the cattle sector. Porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS) costs the pig industry over £50 million. Endemic diseases cost the sheep industry more than £80 million each year.

Further info @

<https://defrafarming.blog.gov.uk/2023/08/23/annual-health-and-welfare-review-making-it-easier-to-apply-comply-and-export/>

Handling Facilities for Upcoming TB Tests

Now that we are coming up to a busy period of TB testing we would like to remind you all of the importance of adequate handling facilities for cattle. For all tests there should be proper handling facilities that are well maintained and in good working order – ideally a suitable race and crush.

Makeshift gates and hurdles are not sufficient and will cause increased testing time or result in the test being stopped and postponed for safety. Please have a check in the next few weeks and see that everything is as it should be!

NorCal Vets

Farm, Smallholder & Game Birds

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