

## Lungworm Alert!

Although primarily an issue we see in late Summer and Autumn labs around the UK are reporting unusually early cases of lungworm this year on postmortems no doubt accountable to this lovely wet weather we're all sick of.

Lungworm is a severe respiratory condition caused by *Dictyocaulus viviparus*. It occurs when naive animals (mostly at risk- first season grazers) ingest infective larvae from the pasture. The infective larvae then migrate from the gut to the lungs, where they develop into adults and begin to produce eggs. These eggs hatch into "L1" larvae within the lung at which point they are coughed up by the calf or cow, swallowed and pass out in the faeces. These "L1" larvae develop in the dung pat until they develop into infective larvae where the cycle begins again. This life cycle normally takes around 3 weeks. Because of this 3 week life cycle, it takes time for worm burden to build up in the naive animal. As the animal grazes throughout summer this burden keeps building at which point clinical signs become evident.

Clinical signs vary but typically include signs of coughing, difficulty breathing and an increased breathing rate, loss of condition, reduced appetite and reduced milk yield.

An easy way to monitor is to get your animals running when checking on them. Usually you will hear a chorus of coughs when they stop and this can be indicative of a lungworm issue.

Wormer class is important when considering lungworm. Clear wormers are best used to prevent infection however infected animals showing clinical signs should be treated with a yellow wormer. Affected animals may also need to be treated for secondary bacterial pneumonia.

For those of you who are aware that lungworm is an issue on your farm - 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.

Please give one of the vets a call if you would like to put in place a plan for your cattle this grazing season.

## Ram Vasectomies

Vasectomised rams (teasers) are a useful tool for ensuring a successful sheep breeding season. Teasers are particularly useful for:

- Early lambing flocks, to encourage ewes to start cycling early in the season.
- Ewe lambs, to encourage them to start cycling before the rams are introduced
- Teasers can also be used to synchronize ewes at the start of the breeding season.

To be safe to use without risk of unwanted pregnancy, teasers need to be vasectomised a minimum of 6 weeks before they are introduced to the ewes, so the sooner you can get them done the better! Most rams or well grown ram lambs are suitable to be vasectomised - when choosing them consider that although they aren't serving ewes, you are investing in them for the future and their effect relies on them behaving and interacting like rams. It's therefore important to pick sound sheep with good teeth and feet, and adequate bodyweight and testicular size. Finally, it is advisable to permanently identify (e.g. management tag) teasers at the time of surgery - this will help to avoid the chance of any mix-ups that could be costly!

## Enzovax Availability

MSD have informed us that there will be a shortage of enzovax this season. For those of you who plan on vaccinating for enzootic abortions please contact us asap so we can try to arrange

## Accommodation Wanted

- 2 Bedrooms & 2 plus parking spaces
- Allows Pets
- End of August
- Potential Extras- Yard Space & Two Ponies
- Please let me know if you can accommodate.

### **Interesting Case of The Month**

Unfortunately this month we were reminded of the importance of adequate mineral supplementation in cattle in this case in store cattle being turned out to grass.

Of a group of approximately 40 bought in 12–15-month-old cattle, 3 developed a condition known as “Flying Scapulas” within 3 days of turnout. The affected animals had a sudden onset of clinical signs which included sinking of the thorax between the forelimbs and severe protrusion of the shoulder blades. This was caused by damage and bilateral rupture of the supporting serratus ventralis muscles with subsequent seroma/fluid accumulation. Although supportive treatment was attempted it was not successful and all three unfortunately were eventually euthanased. This extremely rare and painful condition is poorly understood and researched but has been generally accepted to be due to a Selenium and/or Vitamin E deficiency.

Please give us a call if you would like to discuss mineral supplementation in your herd or flock.

### **New Microchipping Laws For Cats**

All pet cats in England must be microchipped by 10 June 2024. The new rules means that cats must be microchipped before they reach the age of 20 weeks, except for unowned cats like feral and community cats. Indoor-only cats must be microchipped as well. As part of the new rules, you must keep your contact details up to date on a Defra-approved microchipping database.



### **Photosensitivity in Cattle**

For some cattle the sun is directly causing painful issues. Clinical signs of photosensitivity are seen as reddening/ulceration of the muzzle, eyes and teats, jaundice, off feed, severe irritation shown by tail swishing and laying down kicking for example, swelling of eyes and face (looking like they've been stung by a bee!), high temperature. If left to progress without intervention areas of skin necrosis (death) can occur. There are a few types of Primary (due to eating plants e.g. St Johns Wort which contain compounds that react with UV rays), Secondary (due to already present liver damage - liver fluke, abscesses, toxins etc.) or there is even a genetic condition reported in Limousin cattle, Blonde d'Aquitane and Holsteins where they lack a specific enzyme.

There is unfortunately no specific treatment similarly to sunburn! Animals should be placed in a dark shed for at least three weeks, anti-inflammatories (steroids if empty, meloxicam/emdocam if pregnant), antibiotics if there are any secondary skin infections and there are also liver support tonics available on the market, but these are infrequently used in commercial cattle.

For the sheep farmers - we see the same condition in sheep, and it has also been linked to cobalt deficiency, seen especially around the ears!

**NorCal Vets**

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