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Livestock NEWS

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farm paragon VETERINARY GROUP

XL Vets Farm

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

Staff News

Stuart Stamper

We welcome Stuart Stamper (RAMA) to the practice. Stuart joins the support team to work across all product sectors in the Procurement Team. Stuart brings over 20 years experience of working within the agricultural sector, with his most recent experience in the pharmaceutical industry. He is passionate to make sure clients have access to the right products at the right time. He is also SQP trained and is keen to discuss any wormer/VPS queries you may have.

While not at work he enjoys spending time outside horse riding or training the family labrador.

Anne Abbs

We recently celebrated Anne being at Paragon for 35 Years!

Anne was surprised with a certificate, a gluten-free cow cake and a fine bottle of Scottish single malt whisky to say thank you for her years of dedicated service.

Stop the Spread of Disease with an Effective Fly Control Plan

By Stuart Stamper

Flies can be a costly nuisance to the UK's cattle and sheep population. In addition to the irritation caused, flies can also transmit a number of diseases including mastitis, causing both financial and welfare concerns. Fly problems can occur any time between March and November, depending on weather conditions and geography, so it is important that farmers, in conjunction with their vet/ animal health advisor discuss their fly control plan before this time.

Speak to us today to discuss your Summer fly control.

Blowfly

'Strike now before you are Struck'

Blowflies are one of the most widespread ectoparasites affecting sheep in the UK, with surveys suggesting 80% of flocks will have one or more cases of blowfly strike every year.

The high risk fly strike season was historically reasonably predictable - beginning in May and ending in September. Lately we have seen the season for blowfly strike beginning as early as March and ending as late as December when Winters have been mild.

Contact us today to order your season cover at pre-season prices.

Buy 4 x 5ltrs get a free applicator

- **6 – 8 week blowfly strike prevention**
- **Treats and prevents blowfly strike & head flies**
- **Treats ticks & lice**
- **8 day meat, 5 day milk withhold period**
- **Can be used any time of the year, including off-shears**

TB Advisory Service roll out in England

By Annie Kerr

The TB Advisory Service (TBAS) is a DEFRA funded project that offers free, bespoke, practical and cost-effective advice to all eligible farmers in England to help reduce the risks associated with TB. At Paragon we now have 2 TB advisors (myself and Mrs Abbs).

The initial part of the TBAS visit always starts with a chat about the farm. TBAS has developed an app that leads the advisors through a series of questions. We look for evidence of potential TB risk pathways, such as purchasing behaviour, risk from neighbours, previous TB on the farm and those risks posed by potentially infected wildlife, predominantly badgers.

Next, we go for a walk round the sheds and feed areas in the yards, then move further afield into nearby paddocks, again to look at TB risk and potential solutions. You may be aware of any badger setts on your land but having a look at them to determine if they are active or not is important. A badger hole is generally the shape of a D on its side. There are several signs a sett may be active:

- Smooth polished sides around the entrance from holes from repeated use
- Evidence of fresh bedding (grass) near the sett entrance
- Freshly excavated soil heaps around entrance holes
- Signs of trampling and/or footprints at entrance holes and down into sett.

Badger tracks in a field

Wildlife cameras at the potential entry points can provide important information to monitor what is actually visiting yards and sheds. You may be surprised with what you see! Regular CCTV cameras can record badger activity, but this often requires searching through hours of footage. It is recommend that wildlife 'trail cameras' or 'camera traps' are used instead. These cameras have infrared sensors/ lights and only take photos (or in some cases video) when an animal triggers the camera. Cameras cost anywhere from £50 - £300 or more. More expensive cameras typically have higher image quality, detection range and build quality. For short term use at a single farm, cheaper cameras will probably be sufficient to determine if badgers

Badgers can squeeze through gaps of 7.5cm so badger-proofing your farm may require some thought and investment. Raising troughs off the ground by at least 1 metre will reduce the chance of badgers being able to snack on feed. Mineral lick buckets are like a sweet shop to badgers! So raising them off the ground makes them less easy to access and reduces the temptation. Evidence shows that by preventing access to feed and water in cattle housing, badgers have no reason to visit.

Larger setts will typically contain more badgers than small setts, but there is no simple way of working out the number of resident badgers from field signs such as the number of holes. One or two animals can potentially produce lots of field signs, and small compact setts may contain large numbers of badgers. The number of resident badgers can be estimated from trapping, or the genetic analysis of badger hair

The ibTB website is a really useful tool to look at confirmed breakdowns in the area or to look at farms before purchasing stock to minimise risks of bringing TB onto your farm. TB is controllable and a TB breakdown is not just down to bad luck.

Nematodirosis

Nematodirosis is a particularly nasty disease in lambs, causing a high number of mortalities and stunting the growth of many others. It is caused by the *Nematodirus battus* worm, which has a different lifecycle to other sheep worms. Under certain climatic conditions it can strike very quickly, with little or no warning. The main difference in the lifecycle of *Nematodirus battus* compared with other parasitic worms is that development to infective larvae takes place within the egg and infection passes from one lamb crop to the next year's crop. Cold weather delays hatching so when we get a sudden change in temperature it can trigger a mass hatch. If this coincides with the time when lambs are starting to take in significant amounts of grass (over about six weeks old), the result can be devastating. Speak to us about regular Faecal Worm Egg counts and your first lamb wormer needs.

Are your Bulls ready for the Breeding Season?

By Shona Mouncey

Despite the fact that bulls contribute 50% to the herd's fertility, they are often the forgotten members of the herd, yet assessing their fertility prior to the breeding season can play a vital part in the success, and therefore the profitability of the unit.

Although it is rare to find a completely sterile bull, studies show that approximately 20% of the UK bull population is subfertile. Whilst subfertile animals will be capable of getting some animals pregnant, they will not be achieving the targets that are necessary to maintain a tight calving period, which is an essential part of farm management. A mature bull should be expected to serve 40 cows within a 9 week block and achieve at least a 95% pregnancy rate. Subfertile bulls will result in more barren cows and an extended calving period which is a challenge to disease control as well as a nuisance. Identifying subfertile bulls without a fertility exam is difficult and by the time you scan your cows and have a poor result, it is too late for the profitability of that season. The best approach is to be proactive and have them tested before they go in with the cows.

Breeding soundness exams can be easily carried out on farm. A full clinical exam is carried out to ensure that the animal is not suffering from any disease or lameness, and is therefore physically capable of working throughout the breeding season. The next step is to assess the fertility of the bull as in this case, size does matter! Scrotal circumference is measured, the internal and external sexual organs are assessed and a semen sample is collected. Straight away on farm the semen is assessed under the microscope for motility and then stained to be examined at the practice to ensure the sperm are not deformed. Through the Paragon Advanced Breeding team, the same semen sample can be preserved and made into straws for AI purposes (after gaining the necessary license prior to collection).

Common reasons that animals fail breeding soundness exams include poor semen motility, deformed sperm, lameness and physical abnormalities which render them incapable of mating. Exams should be carried out 6 – 8 weeks prior to the start of the breeding season, as this will allow time to find replacements or retest the animal if required. Bulls which are working year round, e.g. sweeper bulls within dairy herds should be tested annually or sooner if a problem is suspected. Although it is another job to add to the list, testing ahead of the breeding season could save you hours of worrying next year and it is definitely a worthwhile investment.

Boehringer Mastering Mastitis

By Paul Kirkwood

We currently have support from Boehringer Ingelheim who are subsidising mastitis samples . Mastitis is an ever-present problem with the average cost of mastitis in the UK estimated to be around £244 per case. Mastitis can lead to reduced yields, lower milk quality and increased culling rate. Knowing which pathogens are present on your farm can help with treatment protocols and help to prevent future mastitis cases in your herd.

The support entitles farms to 5 culture and sensitivity or 10 culture samples. Milk sample pots can be picked up from Dalston and Newbiggin.

For samples to be accurate, they should be collected as described below.

1. Pre-dip and strip out quarter (3-4 draws)
2. Disinfect the whole teat including the teat end
3. Change gloves and remove the lid of the sample pot whilst trying to minimise the risk of contamination
4. Draw the milk into the sample pot whilst holding the pot at 45 degrees, half filling the pot will be sufficient
5. Remember the longer the lid is off, the higher the risk of contamination
6. Put the sample pot lid back on, record cow number, quarter sampled and date
7. Freeze sample immediately

Once you have 5 or 10 samples depending on what information is needed, drop the frozen samples into the practice to be sent off for testing.
Some farms have already sent samples off and we have received useful results and farm specific reports. The great thing about this testing is that because samples are being frozen it doesn't matter if it takes 2 weeks or 2 months to get 5 or 10 samples, and freezing doesn't have any impact on the bugs causing the mastitis.

It is worth remembering that any cases that have been treated are not good candidates for sampling as antibiotics can kill the bacteria and alter results. Ideally, sampling new clinical mastitis cases prior to treatment is more likely to give more useful information.

DIY AI & Cattle Fertility Course

Date: 27th, 28th & 29th June

Venue: Newbiggin & on farm

Cost: £525 +VAT

Lunch is provided

Mastering Medicine Course

Date: 13th June 2022

Venue: Paragon Veterinary Group, Dalston

Cost: £50 +VAT

This course is approved for Red Tractor Farm Assurance

Lunch is provided

Flock Health Club

We will be holding our next flock health club meeting in May which will be about understanding and interpreting pre-lambing bloods and parasites. These meeting are exclusively for our flock health club members.

If you would be interested in joining our flock health club, please speak to Rhys or Shona at Newbiggin or Annie at Dalston.




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