



TB news

You should now all have been written to by APHA detailing the new 6-monthly TB testing measures. As a reminder, to remain on 12-monthly testing, farms can qualify for earned recognition if the herd has been in existence for at least 6 years, and have not had a TB breakdown in the past 6 years, or if the herd is registered for a CHECS TB health scheme and has achieved level or above (see www.checs.co.uk for more details). CHECS entry level TB accreditation will not be sufficient.

We have British Cattle Veterinary Association Approved TB Veterinary Advisor status (Or BATVA for short). This, combined with our input in delivering the TBAS risk assessment visits and advice to participating farms means that we have all the qualifications required to help you achieve CHECS accreditation.

In order to cope with the inevitable increased workload, we are taking on an approved TB tester. More details will follow in due course, but this will involve some on-farm training with our own vets. Approved TB testers need more supervision than vets, and training will need to take place on a number of farms, but the relatively small number of animals per farm required for training purposes should not unduly slow down testing and we appreciate your understanding with this.

Staff news

After a short delay, we're pleased to welcome Henry Saunders to the veterinary team. Originally from Kent, and graduating from Surrey University, Henry has a keen interest in farm work and is already enjoying the improved scenery and farm animal opportunities the South West has to offer.

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Fog Fever

Fog fever is an acute pneumonia of adult cattle. It is a confusing term as it is not associated with fog, or a fever, but it is more common in the autumn, especially if animals are moved from dry summer pastures to lush grass such as silage aftermath.



Severe breathing difficulties result from an indirect toxic effect of the lush grass. Rapidly growing grass is high in protein, including the essential amino acid L-Tryptophan. This is converted in the rumen first to 3-methyl indole. This is absorbed into the blood and travels to the lungs where it is responsible for destruction of the cells which line the small airways. It is this destruction of cells which restricts the ability to transfer oxygen and carbon dioxide in and out of the blood accounting for the breathing difficulties.

Clinical signs

Affected animals tend to be quiet, and stand with their necks stretched forward, often with froth around the mouth. They don't often cough, but will have a rapid breathing rate, up to around 80 breaths a minute. Some animals are affected so quickly that they may present as sudden death. Animals which recover do so over 2 weeks and can develop air under the skin, which eventually resolves by itself. The diagnosis is usually made on the clinical signs and history, but it is important to rule out other causes of breathing problems, such as lungworm or IBR.

Treatment and prevention



There is no specific treatment for fog fever, but many farmers will try to move animals off the associated pasture. This needs to be done very gently, however, as even mild exercise can cause death in severely affected animals. Anti-inflammatories may be of some benefit, but antibiotics will be of no use. Prevention relies on pasture management. Animals coming off rough pasture into lush grass should only be allowed to graze for a few hours a day initially, or could be

strip grazed to limit access. Conserved forage could also be supplied, but intakes of this can't be guaranteed. Another strategy is to allow sheep or young-stock to graze the pasture first, reducing the volume of grass available to adult cows. These animals are unlikely to be affected as they are physically unable to consume the amount of lush grass necessary to achieve a toxic dose.