



Newsletter

October 2021

TB - Staff news

Please give a warm welcome to the newest member of the farm team, Kimmy Middleton-Pfiffer. Due to TB workload, which is only going to increase as 6-monthly testing starts to come around, we have taken Kimmy on an Approved TB tester (ATT). Some of you will already know Kimmy from her previous work with Stanton Dairy Supplies, and coming from a local dairy background, she is already well versed in TB testing from the receiving end...

Approved TB testers require more supervision initially than vets, and I will be bringing her along to some of my TB tests in the coming months as part of her training. The limited number she is allowed to test per farm during her training means this should not unduly impact on the testing time.

Johne's control plans deadline approaching!

It feels like I've had Johne's control plans coming out of my ears for the past fortnight, but I know there are still a few dairy farms out there who haven't done one yet. The minimum requirements are :

- 1) A veterinary risk assessment
- 2) Determination of herd status
- 3) A written management plan

The determination of herd status requires a minimum of 30 milk samples taken at least 60 days after any TB test. These can take up to 2 weeks to get results from the lab. Only once all the requirements are met can we sign the declarations required by the milk buyers - who want these done by.....

31st October!

Medicines meeting

Save the date - 24th Nov 12:00

As Covid restrictions lift, we're going to make a start holding farmer meetings again. Our first priority is to hold an approved medicines course as it is a Red Tractor requirement for dairy farms, and recommended for beef and sheep farms. As we're holding this indoors numbers will be limited. Cost £5 to cover Fish and Chips lunch.

Orchard Vets Glastonbury

Tel: 01458 832972
www.ovg.co.uk

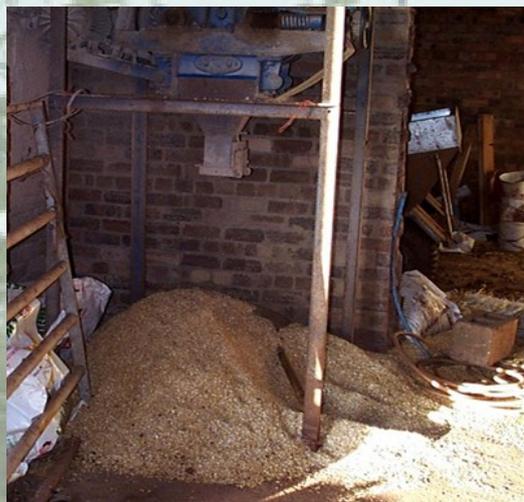
Toxoplasmosis

Toxoplasmosis is one of the most common causes of infections fertility losses in sheep. It results from infection of susceptible sheep with the protozoan parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*. The sexual cycle takes place in cats while the asexual cycle can occur in a range of species including sheep. Infection during early pregnancy may be manifest as embryo/early foetal loss with an increased number of returns to service after an irregular extended interval or an increased barren rate, often above 8 to 10 per cent. Often the highest number of barren sheep is in the youngest age group. Toxoplasma infection during mid pregnancy results in abortion or production of weakly live lambs near term often with a small mummified foetus. The mummified foetus has a dark brown leathery appearance and is about 10 cm long



Diagnosis

Diagnosis of toxoplasmosis is usually based on identification of specific changes in the placenta in combination with the detection of high levels of antibodies in ewe blood. Antibody may also be present in the foetal fluids and can also be detected in newborn lambs before they have sucked colostrum. Blood samples can be useful in showing exposure to the parasite and we can occasionally do this at a subsidised cost. Blood sampling of the ewe alone is not sufficient as a definitive diagnosis, however, as a positive result merely indicates past infection not that the current abortion is due to toxoplasmosis.



Management/Prevention/Control measures

All sheep feed should be stored in vermin-proof facilities to prevent contamination by cats and other vermin. It is usually only kittens which shed the parasite so farm cats should be neutered. Charities such as Cats Protection can often help with provision of humane cat traps and neutering vouchers for this. Older cats are of relatively low risk and can help greatly with vermin control. Vaccination provides excellent immunity to natural infection and should be administered at least three weeks before the breeding season. As it is a "live Vaccine" care should be taken when administering the product; the detailed safety instructions provided by the manufacturer should be followed closely. The vaccine costs a few pounds per dose

but as a single vaccination effectively provides lifelong immunity this makes it very cost effective per pregnancy.

Infection of susceptible women during pregnancy can result in infection of the baby which may cause serious eye and brain damage, which is one of the reasons pregnant women should avoid contact with lambing/aborting sheep and should not handle the vaccine.