



Newsletter

November 2021

Medicines meeting

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 to ten farmers. The cost is £5 to cover Fish and Chips lunch.

The meeting is not about teaching you to suck eggs, but will give you an overview of storage, use, legalities of going "off-label" and withdrawal period pit-falls. It will also include some recent research to keep it relevant.

Brassicas as winter feed

There has been renewed interest in feeding brassicas to livestock (growing and adult) during the winter. Not only will brassicas help to reduce feed costs, but they can reduce pressure on forage stocks. There are, however a few risks which need to be managed:

Iodine deficiency. Most brassica crops are low in iodine, and should not be fed to pregnant animals in the last trimester of pregnancy.

Redwater. Kale can contain high levels of the amino acid compound S-methyl cysteine sulphoxide (SMCO), which results in destruction of red blood cells

Bloat and rumen acidosis. Due to their lack of fibre and high levels of rapidly degraded carbohydrates, animals may be at risk of rumen acidosis. Introduce stock to brassicas gradually over a 1-2 week period.

Nitrate poisoning. Nitrate levels in the crop can accumulate after a period of rainfall following drought. They are then converted into toxic nitrites in the rumen,

Photosensitization. Some brassicas may produce photosensitive agents, than cause damage in white areas of skin exposed to sunlight.

Orchard Vets Glastonbury

Tel: 01458 832972

www.ovg.co.uk

Lungworm warning

APHA have alerted us to several extreme cases of lungworm they have identified through it's post mortem service over the past few weeks. Unusually these have been in adult cattle as well as the usual growing animals. Reasons for this may include lack of previous exposure, or over-frequent worming during the first couple of grazing seasons therefore not allowing immunity to develop.

Early clinical signs of lungworm in growing cattle (and dry dairy cows) include an increased respiratory rate at rest, but more noticeably frequent coughing after short periods of exercise. Severely affected cattle may be reluctant to move, stand with their head down, neck extended, and cough frequently.



In the dairy herd, a reduction in bulk tank volume is noted along with frequent coughing when cows are walking to and from the milking parlour. With very large larval numbers on pasture, disease can occur in adult cattle vaccinated as calves but not subsequently challenged for several years. Lost milk production could reach £1.50 to £3 per head per day with recovery taking 10 to 20 days after treatment.

Diagnosis of patent lungworm infestation is based upon the demonstration of lungworm larvae in the faeces, but can be suspected based on the clinical signs and history, There is also a blood test available to demonstrate exposure

Lungworm prevention is based upon development of immunity and is best achieved by vaccination. Periods of natural exposure to lungworm (and other parasites) during the grazing season to allow for immunity to develop, then infection controlled by strategic anthelmintic treatments, is a risky strategy for lungworm prevention but would control parasitic gastroenteritis (PGE) in most situations. Therefore, PGE is often a secondary consideration to the more important lungworm disease.

Where vaccination of cattle for lungworm is undertaken, planned worming during late summer (July to September) can work to control PGE, but mistakes can happen and failure to treat at the scheduled time may result in disease and costly weight loss in the cattle. No real challenge during their first grazing season at pasture, and failure to develop immunity, renders cattle susceptible to lungworm during their second season at pasture especially if weaned beef calves graze the same fields every year (for example rented ground away from the main farm etc). Nematode control strategies aimed at suppressive management of gut worms, in particular those using persistent acting wormers, prevent exposure of naïve cattle to lungworm and disease is often seen in older animals during their second, third or subsequent grazing seasons.