

PRACTICE NEWS

We had to endure another month of foul weather. That blimbling jet stream must have it in for us. I am not alone in saying that I can't wait for the spring to arrive. We have had a busy month with not only the usual fertility work and pre turn out TB testing but we have also seen a flurry of displaced abomasums. The pre breeding examination season of the bulls has started so I have been travelling around the South East testing the odd bull here and there. In addition we have been busy carrying out herd and flock health plan reviews. To ensure high standards of animal health and welfare are achieved on its farms the Red Tractor farm assurance scheme has made a few changes. Rather than vets just signing a never used document they want farmers to engage with their vets. It is incredibly valuable to sit down and review key performance indicators regularly. On several beef and sheep farms I have had very constructive

discussions following the review of last season's performance figures.

And just to finish off a reminder for people to order their pre turn out vaccines like Huskvac, Leptavoid and BVD in time as I sincerely hope that this weather won't last forever.

Maarten



RDPE FUNDING ROUND 3 (04/02/14-04/04/14) Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme (FFIS) (Sally)

FFIS is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and is a scheme of support, developed to help farmers and horticultural businesses in England to become more efficient at using resources. This scheme aims to help make your business more profitable and resilient whilst reducing the impact of farming on the environment. To be eligible for funding under FFIS the project must fall within one of the following 5 themes and farmers, foresters, contractors, woodland owners and horticulturalists across England are eligible to apply.

Animal Health and Welfare

Projects which bring about significant improvements in farm animal health and welfare. Only items included in the handbook's eligible list can be applied for (NB There is a whole list of items that are not eligible for grant funding in the handbook) and – for example sheep and cattle mobile handling systems, turning crates for sheep, sheep weigh crates linked to electronic segregation and EID systems (see handbook for more details) etc and for the dairy industry: upgrade to a cattle crush, automatic foot baths, EID and shedding systems, weigh cells, cow mattresses, cow brushes, cluster flush systems, heat detection systems, milk pasteurisers, rubber matting, concrete grooving etc

You can only apply for items in the animal health and welfare section if they are identified as a priority in your current Farm or Animal Health Plan, which is not more than 12 months old and has been supported by your vet. You must submit with your application a copy of the summary/action page from your Health Plan which has your vet's practice name, your signature and signature of your vet. If the item(s) are not listed in the summary/action page from your Health Plan, you will need to submit a letter from your vet explaining how the item(s) are a priority for the farm.

Water Resource Management

Rainwater harvesting, recycling & reuse systems to reduce reliance on mains water eg water storage and filtering systems along with intercept & diversion systems to aid rainwater harvesting and recycling.

Energy Efficiency

Projects to reduce or recover energy on farm resulting in a reduction of farm energy bills & carbon footprint eg heat exchangers, solar screens for glasshouses and voltage optimisers.

Nutrient Management

Improvements in use of farm manures and slurries so as to improve soil quality and reduce reliance on artificial fertiliser eg slurry injectors, mechanical slurry separation systems & Global Positioning Systems.

Forestry

More details are available on the website <http://rdpenetwork.defra.gov.uk/funding-sources/farm-and-forestry-improvement-scheme> The FFIS handbooks is also available here - [Round 3 Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme Handbook](#)

Note that some of the conditions, eligible items, etc have changed since the previous round – including the maximum application level of £35k. And there is approximately £10m available, and once again, the process will be competitive. This round will be open for 2 months, and Defra are advising applicants to apply as soon as possible.

If you require any further information or assistance please contact us at the practice.

NOTICE BOARD



the
liVEsTock partnership Ltd
Market Square, Petworth
West Sussex, GU28 0AH

Tel: 0845 3138434
info@livestockvets.co.uk

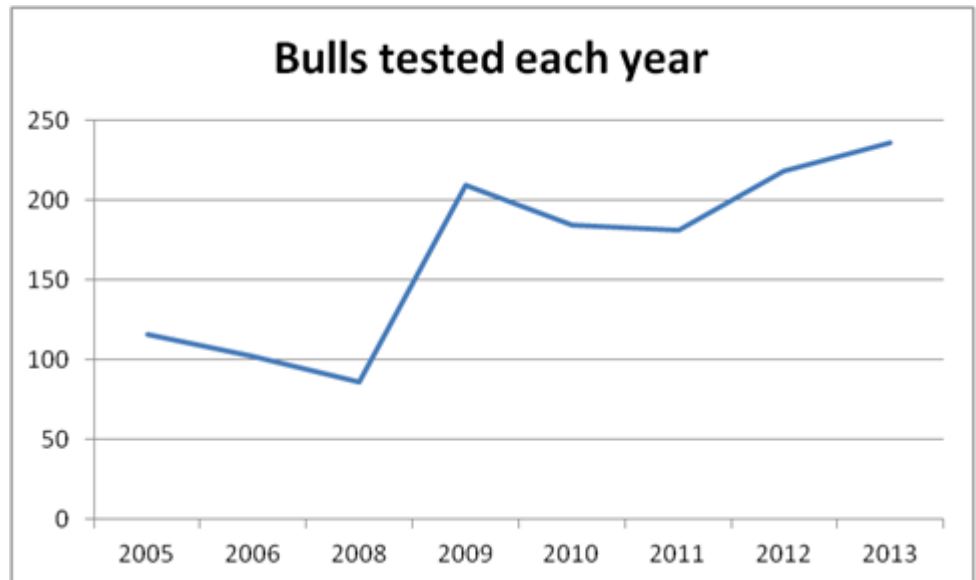
Meetings (Ben)

Both Surrey and West Sussex grassland societies had some great talks this month. Surrey had Frans DeBoer talking about his experiences with maize over the last 10 years or so. It was great to hear not only about the successes and advantages of forage or grain maize but also about the common pitfalls and also what Frans has learned from his mistakes. Some general warnings are now particularly centred around achieving a well consolidated clamp, especially in light of the particularly quick harvesting gear now available and the difficulty presented by the crop coming in far too fast for most machines on the clamp. From looking at clamps during silage judging this year, the impact of clamp consolidation on forage temperatures and therefore energy losses was considerable so bear this in mind for this year's harvest.

West Sussex had an interesting talk from Keith Davis, a Gloucestershire dairy farmer who made the most of losing his herd after Foot and Mouth to reassess his farming business in terms of profitability and work-life balance. He now is involved with 2 very different businesses – a dairy farm at home that milks 125 high PLI cows giving 10,500 litres on a 12 week calving block and managing a large spring block-calving herd on a nearby estate. His experience of having an enforced period of time off and reflection have clearly made a big benefit to the long-term successes of the family's business.

Bull MOT (Maarten)

It is that time of the year that I analyse the bull testing data of the previous year. With more than 1300 bulls tested over the years I have seen many weird and wonderful things: bulls with a single testicle (these seem to be more common than I imagined!), strange penis deviations (shaped like a corkscrew), tiny testicles (yes, size does matter), poor semen quality (for example mixed with pus) and not to forget many different types of lameness. All these affecting bull fertility and left undetected could have disastrous effect on herd fertility and profitability. There has definitely been a trend away from testing bulls once a problem is suspected to avoiding problems from happening by regular pre breeding soundness examinations. This process of regular testing is definitely proving effective. Due to the fact that people are taking a proactive rather than reactive approach fewer herds suffer from the ill effect of in- or sub fertile bulls. Having said that the figure still stands on 1 in 7 bulls being unfit for purpose (1332 bulls tested). Many of the bulls condemned last year had been found to be fertile in previous years. This proves the point that sub-fertility/sterility often happens in later years. It is essential that these bulls are identified before losses have occurred. Good fertility in one season does not guarantee good fertility for the following season. Bulls only represent 2-5% of your breeding stock but are responsible for 50% of the herds' fertility.



It is heartening to know that people are more aware of the importance of bulls. Frequently we get contacted before bulls are purchased to discuss health status and to arrange pre sale fertility testing.

It is heartening to know that people are more aware of the importance of bulls. Frequently we get contacted before bulls are purchased to discuss health status and to arrange pre sale fertility testing.

The importance of better recording of lambing losses (Sally)

Almost a third of lamb losses are 'invisible', occurring between scanning and lambing. The majority of lamb deaths happen within 48 hours of birth, with lower numbers lost in the weeks immediately after. But do you know accurately what losses occur within your flock and when they occur? Data suggests losses of around 10–25% between scanning the ewes and the sale of their lambs.

The first step is to look at and analyse farm records to understand what is happening now. Recording 5 key measures (Ewes tupped, Lambs scanned, Lambing percentage, Lambs turned out, Rearing percentage) will highlight where problems occur and indicate where action is needed. Also recording lamb losses may be depressing, but can provide useful information about health status and management, especially if the reasons for the deaths are noted. And this information can help us identify problems and weaknesses helping us to reduce losses in future years. Good lambing recording sheets are available; please contact us if you would like more information and start recording today!