



We have had a fairly busy month in terms of training and courses. Claire and Maarten ran a full and refresher AI course. This is something that can be valuable for many, given how important it is to your fertility performance, so do ask if you are interested in training or a refresher. The Dairying for Profit group held a heifer rearing meeting which I understand was very well attended. There should be a Christmas social coming up so please look out for this to get the date in your diary. Sarah has run two heifer rearing meetings as well, sponsored by Dairy Co and Elanco. 15 of our farms came along to hear some of the latest nutritional research presented by Stephan Whelan. We have also been doing some training ourselves! We all attended a first aid refresher training course for use in the work place. As you are aware farms can be fairly hazardous work places, and we take both your and our safety seriously. Don't be surprised if you find your vet asking you where your first aid kits are kept and if you know

where the nearest defibrillator is located! We are sad to be saying goodbye to Sarah this month but am sure she'll have a great time travelling to the warm, sunny Southern hemisphere whilst we dip into winter. We are however looking forward to welcoming a new vet in January. As the colder days set in I wish you all the best for the festive season. **Amy**



Tuberculosis (Maarten)

In 2014 Defra has divided the country in three different risk zones for TB: High risk, low risk (West Sussex, Surrey) and "edge area" (Hampshire). A recent survey examined farmers' practices and attitudes towards TB in the high risk and the so called edge area. The results showed that farmers do not believe that they can do anything to reduce the risk of their animals becoming infected and that government intervention should control TB. However 62% of farms with no history of TB and 74% of farms with a history of TB had purchased animals within the last 12 months with very few keeping these animals isolated for 60 days. In both areas farmers were more likely to see badgers as the main risk than other cattle. This is very interesting particularly in the light of the recent TB breakdowns in West Sussex that were all caused by animal movements. There are a number of things people can do to reduce the direct and indirect contact between cattle and badgers (www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/video-guides/) however I think reducing the risk of catching TB from other cattle is more relevant in our area. This can be done by taking a number of different measures.

First of all **Risk Based Trading**. Try to obtain a full TB history of herds from which you purchase cattle so that you can assess the level of risk and take action to manage it. As a minimum, you should ask for:

- Date of the animal's pre-movement TB test
- Date of the seller's last routine herd test: If the last test was some time ago or you are uncertain about the testing history you should consider isolating the animal and ask your vet to conduct a post-movement test.
- Date the herd achieved Official TB Free (OTF) status: The longer a herd has been free of TB restrictions the lower the risk and conversely a herd that has recently come off restrictions is likely to be a higher risk.

It is worthwhile carrying out **Post-Movement Testing** even if the animals have passed a pre-movement test as it gives another opportunity to pick up any animals missed in the pre-movement test and detect any animals that were developing the infection when the pre-movement test was carried out or were infected with TB in the period following the test, for example during transit. It is recommended that this test is carried out 60 to 120 days after the animals arrive on the holding to avoid the desensitisation effect that could lead to infected animals being missed. If possible animals should be isolated until the test results are known.

This information is derived from the following website: www.tbhub.co.uk. Next month I will look at some other measures that can be taken to keep TB off your farm.

New member of support team (Ben)

You may have noticed a new voice on the phone when you call in the office. We are really pleased to announce that Tessa has joined the team to help out with the dispensing of meds and sorting out calls as they come in. The paper work associated with TB testing has been taking up more and more of Debbie's time and we felt that she needed some extra help to keep the office running smoothly. Tessa lives in Petworth and has worked in a vet practice before so she is familiar with handling calls about visits and trying to get vets to the right places. She has settled in really well and is quickly getting up to speed with all the names of all the different medicines that go out but please bear in mind that when you are ordering meds that Tessa may need clarification on exact pack sizes etc.

Outside work Tessa spends a fair bit of her time playing about with horses. For this, we have forgiven her and despite this obvious personality flaw we look forward to her being an integral part of the team for the years to come!

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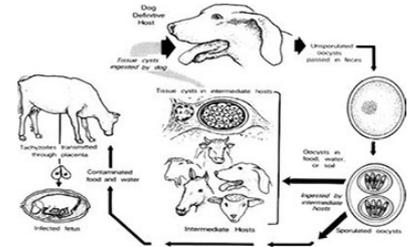
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Goodbye (Sarah)

I've been putting off writing this until the last minute, I think because writing this means that I really am leaving! I will keep my goodbyes short...I have absolutely loved my time at The Live-stock Partnership and am genuinely very sad to be leaving. I have learnt a lot over the three and a half years, met lots of really lovely people and had some great experiences. The only thing that I won't miss, when I'm busy enjoying the sunny weather in the Southern Hemisphere, is TB testing! Thank you to everyone at the practice and to each and every client, I wish all of you lots of luck in the future. Sarah x

Neospora in Cattle (Sally)

Neospora is a very complicated disease of cattle but recently I have had a few farmers ask me about it so I have tried to summarise the main points for the newsletter. Neospora is a single celled organism that is the most commonly diagnosed cause of abortion in cattle. A number of animals can be infected with Neospora but Dogs are the only "definitive host" ie the only animal that can spread infection via eggs (oocysts) to another species. Cattle can become infected in two ways:



Vertical transmission – from infected dam to calf through the uterus

Horizontal transmission - from eating feed/pasture contaminated with dog faeces containing neospora eggs

The first (from cow to calf) is the most important route of infection with over 90% of infected dams passing neospora to their calves. Once a cow is infected she will remain so and although more likely to abort she can give birth to a full term calf but this will have a 90% chance of being infected and therefore maintaining the disease within the herd. Abortions occur if a cow becomes infected during pregnancy (through dog faeces) or if the cow is already infected with the disease (from placental spread for her mother). Diagnosis is difficult as the abortion may not be obvious (reabsorption) and antibody levels in the dam can fluctuate. Blood tests at the time of calving or abortion, if positive, are highly suggestive of infection. Samples taken from the aborted foetus if found give the best chance of a definitive diagnosis. There is no treatment for neospora and no vaccination available so prevention is the key, with good hygiene at calving and control of dogs, and biosecurity for incoming stock.

Neospora Best Management Practice:

•Minimise Horizontal transmission (between dog and cow):

Dogs will only shed oocysts for 2-3 weeks from 3-9 days after infection. If a farm dog is positive for Neospora antibodies, it is likely to be no longer shedding. If it is negative, it is important to prevent them from contracting the infection in the first place.

Keeping cattle food and water covered and away from dogs, foxes and other vermin.

High hygiene standards at calving. Dispose of placental membranes and aborted or dead calves before dogs can eat them.

No dogs should be allowed near cattle at or around calving time or in the calving area.

Manage public rights of way appropriately with clear signs of the risks to cattle and dogs and that prudent removal of dog faeces is appropriate.

Minimise cattle usage of fields with public right of ways. Pre and peri-parturient animals should not be placed in at risk pastures.

Any abortion material should be promptly identified and removed and your vet informed.

Screen any bought-in animals that may be carriers.

•Minimise Vertical transmission (between dam and calf):

Identifying infected animals (using blood antibody tests). Once identified, screen related animals (i.e. dams, sisters, and other related progeny on farm) to halt any further transmission in family groups.

All animals that are positive are a considerable risk factor in spreading infection on farm. Culling should be considered.

If this is not possible finishing the animal for slaughter may be an appropriate option.

Antibody positive animals should not be used for rebreeding and/or replacement production on farm.

Some dairy farms will keep antibody positive animals and use beef semen on these animals. This should be done with caution as it carries considerable risk of allowing horizontal transmission and further infection to dogs, allowing the disease to establish on farm.

New office phone number

Following Ofcom's recent policy review on non-geographic phone numbers we have decided to phase out our 0845 number. From now on, in addition to our 0845 number, we will be using the geographic number 01798 343 538. Please put this number into your phones for the future. The same number can be used for emergencies out of hours.