



Image sourced from Wikipedia

Bluetongue Update...

In the first half of September a flurry of new cases were detected in France. June saw 1 case; a one day old calf that had been infected trans-placentally. July saw 4 cases; one

was clinical and the remaining were detected through surveillance. In August 8 animals were detected positive through surveillance. Unfortunately in the first half of September 20 cases were detected by pre movement testing. None of these were clinical however several were virus positive rather than antibody positive. This indicates that the virus is still circulating in some areas of central France. The extent of the restriction zone in France has not changed as a result of these cases and has been the same since April 2016.

As a practice we keep monitoring the situation and will keep you informed.

Maarten

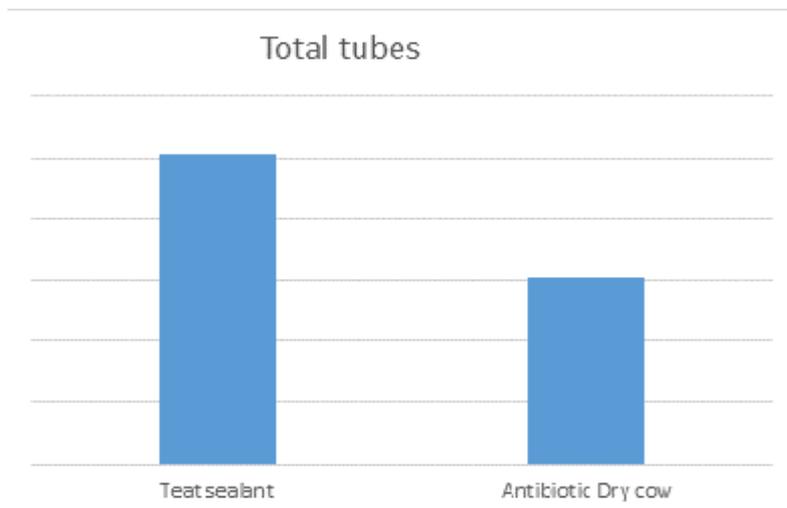
Antimicrobial resistance hits the headline again (Ben)

Those of you that enjoy listening to radio 4 as much as I do can't have missed that the threat of antimicrobial resistance is in the headlines again. The UN conducted a high-level meeting (whatever that is) this week on the subject and then various commentators have indicated how high it is on the national agenda. Earlier this year the UK government published a review chaired by Jim O'Neill on tackling drug resistant infections. Phrases such as "Routine surgeries and minor infections will become life-threatening once again" and "Drug resistant infections are already on the rise with numbers suggesting that up to 50,000 lives are lost each year to antibiotic-resistant infections in Europe and the US alone." indicate how seriously the UK government are taking it. There is a lot of discussion concerning the over-prescribing in human medicine – a theme touched on with a new BBC documentary but there are also key recommendations regarding the use of antimicrobials in agriculture.

Now, is this just another stick to beat you with? Perhaps, but there many of you have seen that reducing antibiotics at worst has no negative effect and has the potential to improve health and reduce cost. Many of you have already successfully started the process of reducing use of antibiotics with selective dry cow therapy. Some have been doing it successfully for years and others have started dipping their toes in the water this year following their milk buyers requirements. So far the results have been good. There are some reports of increased mastitis and cell counts but none have been serious and it can be hard to eliminate seasonal variation from being the cause. Dry cow antibiotic accounts for a large part of cattle antibiotic use followed by treatments for metritis, pneumonia, lameness and others. So can we go further? In time hopefully we can but it will need us to work together to think about disease prevention and have in the back of our minds every time that we do use antibiotics (which are crucial for maintaining health and welfare in some circumstances) as to whether this problem could have been prevented. We are always encouraged by the improvements seen by our clients when they have targeted health management. For example, 2 clients that switched to hutch-housing of calves have seen their antibiotic use in their calves drop off a cliff to the point where injecting calves has become a thing of the past. So don't be surprised if over the coming years we look to question antibiotic use in an effort to improve health and production efficiency. You may as well, because the pressure to reduce them will not go away.

Dry cow antibiotic usage (Ben)

In continuation from the previous article, a little analysis on our stock sales comparing the number of antibiotic dry cow tubes vs the number of teat sealant tubes sold shows that the message is definitely being spread among our dairy clients with regards to selective dry cow therapy. This is a crude calculation but this shows that approximately 40% of cows are being treated with teat sealant alone. This is a great achievement for the industry.



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Interesting facts.... (Claire)

Not necessarily of any use apart from at the local pub quiz, but did you know that cows are red green colour blind? They don't bite grass but curl it around their tongue and apparently one dairy cow creates 4 jobs in the local community.

Sheep on the other hand have very good memories and can remember people and up to 50 other sheep for years. Egyptians believed that sheep were sacred and mummified them along with people. They have a similar IQ level to cattle, but neither cattle or sheep are as clever as pigs! Hope you feel fulfilled!

Sweeper Bulls (Amy)

Sweeper bulls are often used to aid management of reproduction and hopefully make things a little easier at the end of the breeding season, however without efficient bull management they will end up costing you more and result in reduced fertility. It's important to think about how many cows a bull is expected to serve within a 3 week period. An adult bull can cope with around 30 cows but for a younger, 2 year old bull 20 cows is probably more realistic. If you are a seasonal dairy herd and are only using one bull you may be hugely overworking him and have unrealistic expectations. Even if you are all year round there are often times where more cows are eligible for service than others. A 200 cow dairy that has got 60% of the herd in calf already will still have 80 cows to get in calf and so need 3 bulls to sweep up. If those bulls are then also working on concrete it is a good idea to rest them regularly whilst they are out. You could take them out for 3-4 days while you AI any cows that come on in that time.

You also need to know these bulls are going out in top condition. I would recommend annually have these bulls checked properly with both a physical and semen exam as a single insult in between mating seasons can be catastrophic for their performance. Their feet should also be checked and trimmed before use.



Once bulls are in the herd they need to be managed well to keep them in good form to be able to carry out the task required of them. This means keeping them at condition score 2.5-3, not allowing them access to cow concentrate in the parlour and slowly introducing them to the cow ration before you use them as this diet is not ideal for bulls. Bulls should also be wormed before coming on farm.

If you are buying in bulls then biosecurity is paramount and it is probably best to consult with us about what you need to test/treat for before you purchase.

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Fluke treatment (Megan)

It's the right time of year to be thinking about how to tackle the fluke risk on your farm.

Clinical signs: sub fertility, poor productivity, weight loss, blood loss, swelling below the jaw, changes to the immune system.

In sheep acute cases can be seen. This is much less common in cattle.

Control: Avoid co-grazing cattle and sheep. Avoid wet boggy land.

Monitor: via abattoir reports.

Treatment: a lot of treatments cannot be used in lactating cattle or cattle in the latter stages of pregnancy. **Pour ons** such as Cydectin TrichlamoX kill adult and immature flukes down to **6-8 weeks** old. **Drenches** such as Fasinex kill adult and immature flukes down to **2 weeks** old. (Always refer to the data sheets before using any treatments). Treating animals also helps to lower egg contamination of pasture.

More detailed treatment plans for cattle and sheep to follow next month.

