

I hope you all had a very Merry Christmas, and were not caught out by our rather extreme weather? The week running up to Christmas saw a leap in temperatures from -2 degrees to +12, causing havoc with us vets wearing the wrong amount of layers and for some a bubble up of respiratory disease in youngstock. Then out of nowhere appeared a scattering of the white stuff and back to minus temperatures! I hope it hasn't caused too much extra work for you all, at least the colder temperatures helps to justify our extra calorie consumption at this time of year!

So it is that time of year for reflection, and it seems for me to draw the short straw to start the newsletter. Yet again what a funny old year it has been. When I asked a friend for the highlights of 2017 we got stuck on Brexit, Brexit Brexit...the North Korean fears, Trumps twittering and Prince Harry exiting the singles market! Brexit has obviously dominated the headlines and we are still paddling in the murky waters since. I hope we get more direction, clarity

and assurances for what will mean for all of us involved in the farming industry. However I think the best message we can all take home would be to 'prepare for the unexpected'. We need to make sure that we are all running the most efficient and sustainable enterprises that we can. It is the only way we can all stand a chance of staying in the industry that we are in and coping with the challenges that we know are ahead. So here is to a planned, prosperous and successful 2018!

Kick starting a year of meetings is the **Ewe Nutrition Workshop on 10th January**, with David Hendy by kind permission of Richard and Lucie Payton at Slindon, 10am – 1pm. We then have our **Beef Cow Nutrition Workshop on the 16th January**, also with David Hendy and by kind permission of Angus Stovold at Shackleford, 10am – 1pm. Please contact the office ASAP to confirm a place!

Sarah

Kexxtone Boluses & Dogs

Please be aware when using Kexxtone boluses strategically on your dairy farms that ingestion or oral exposure (licking) by dogs, horses, donkeys or guinea fowl can be fatal. Due to the risk of bolus regurgitation it is advised that these animals should not be allowed in areas where treated cattle are kept and care should be used when storing them.

Claire



Kexxtone

TB in West Sussex and Surrey

This month saw the NFU host a meeting regarding the TB situation in Surrey and West Sussex. A packed room listened to representatives from APHA about the recent increase in TB 'outbreaks' in the counties.

Over the last 2 years there has been a significant increase in the number of holding that are designated OTFW (a TB outbreak has been confirmed by a number of post-mortem tests) or OTFS (Tb is suspected by an animals testing positive but has not been confirmed by post-mortem testing). This has resulted in a significant increase in the numbers of animals that have required testing and has resulted in a substantial cost to many herd keepers in the counties, so many welcomed the involvement of the NFU in organising the meeting.

The key facts presented during the meeting were that, at present:

- The OTFW herds appear to have been strongly linked with either the direct movement of infected animals (bovine and non-bovine) or equipment

- There appears to have been no 'clusters' of breakdowns found associated with OTFW premises, suggesting that wildlife is not playing a significant role locally

Whilst an increase in the incidence of TB can never be welcomed, it is encouraging to hear that there does not appear to be a problem in terms of endemic infection in wildlife.....yet. So given that, in these parts anyway, wildlife does not appear to be a major factor, it was slightly odd that the second part of the talk focussed on the role of various wildlife species in the persistence of TB. Whilst this was both informative and entertaining it somewhat distract from the essential point of the meeting; How do we protect the TB status of our area?

As the post-movement test is not that reliable, many farmers present at the meeting would like to see tighter controls on the movement of animals from high-risk areas to low risk areas. The NFU are sympathetic to this view but in their role as representative of all members from across the country, they will not back any restrictions on trade between high and low-risk areas. APHA are suggesting that they could change the testing schedules for farms that carry out high-risk movements to both i) act as a deterrent and ii) increase the chance of picking up infected animals at subsequent tests. Time will tell if they implement it.

Ben

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Ltd
Market Square, Petworth
Tel: 01798 343538
info@livestockvets.co.uk

Local bank closures

Both Lloyds and RBS group have announced closures of local branches. This is having a significant effect on us as it seems that our local Lloyds branch will now be miles away. It would be a great help to us if more of you could pay by BACS or internet banking as many of you already do. Not only would that save us the laborious job of processing cheques (and the cost of paying them in) but it would also save our clients writing and posting envelopes and the cost of stamps. Your help is much appreciated!

Maarten and Emily

Farm Biosecurity: part 1

BVD, IBR, Leptospirosis, Johne's disease, Digital dermatitis and Bovine Tuberculosis are only some of the diseases that cattle could be carrying around. Have you considered the risk for your farm while buying an animal from an unknown health status farm or while visiting other farms without following the cleansing and disinfection procedures, for example? If not yet, it's time to think and do something about it!

Farm Biosecurity is a set of measures designed to reduce the risk of disease entering your farm and spreading once on your farm. Farm biosecurity is your responsibility, and that of every person visiting or working on your property, vets included! Take the time to consider your biosecurity management plan with our help and avoid the risks of introducing new diseases which could have serious and long-term financial effects on your farms profitability.

Follow the Cleansing and Disinfection procedures using the right Disinfectant at the effective concentration and for sufficient time (see APHA website), plus following the 5 POINT PLAN (MR and MRS) as part of your biosecurity measures:

- Manage cattle feed and water
- Reduce risk disease from neighbouring herds
- Minimise infection from cattle manure
- Restrict contact between wildlife/other domestic animals and cattle
- Stop infected cattle entering the herd

STOP INFECTED CATTLE ENTERING THE HERD

As the infected cattle are a possible source of infection for our herd, it's better purchase new animals knowing better what you're buying=health status of the farm, remember that you want buy animals not diseases! For example, half of the bovine TB outbreaks in Low Risk Area are due to purchase of infected cattle! Ideally, wherever your farm is located, you should buy from a higher health status farm than yours. Golden rule is: ASK à CHECK à ISOLATE

You can buy from accredited free farms which have joined a monitoring scheme for a particular disease or diseases (BVD, IBR, Leptospirosis, Johne's and Neospora) and are undergoing repeated and regular tests in order to achieve and maintain their disease-free status, to find out more visit www.checs.co.uk

Elena

Misalliance

Last month I had the unfortunate opportunity of being involved in 2 misalliance cases. Firstly, a farm had bought in a batch of beef calves which, unbeknown to the farmer, had a rig running with the young heifers. This resulted in a young hence small beef heifer calving a very large calf which unfortunately tore her uterus irreparably. When I arrived on farm there was nothing more we could do. The second case, involved a young beef cow calving out of pattern which meant she must have been in with a Bull at a time she shouldn't have been. This lead to an emergency out of hours caesarean where we sadly lost a very large overdue calf and later the cow too. Please please know and trust who you buy from and know when your Bulls are running with your fertile animals. If you are not sure then contact us to see if we can do a PD session on your young heifers and ensure that you tell us exactly when the bulls went in if you know this. Never castrate a rig as the undescended testicle can still work. Remember that heifers can get in calf and bulls can serve from as young as 4 months old.

Megan

