THE LIVESTOCK PARTNERSHIP
SUCCESS THROUGH HEALTH

NEWSLETTER May 2019

Most of you had turned stock by the Easter weekend. The temperatures have been great but hopefully we will get some rain as some parts are very dry. On my travels for bull testing I have come across some worried farmers. Particular in Kent and Essex they are desperate for some rain.

Pretty much most bulls in the practice have had their annual "MOT" done in the last 2 months. As I keep finding sub- and infertile bulls I cannot stress enough the importance of pre breeding soundness examinations. Please do not risk becoming material for a future newsletter article on poor fertility and book your bull in for its MOT.

After last year's disastrous weather conditions more of our sheep clients have chosen to lamb later and outdoors. My impression is that, so far, it has been quite a good lambing season. Once lambing is truly finished and all animals are out it might be a good time to take stock and review what went well this year but also where losses have occurred and how these can be reduced. The same applies for our suckler herds as well. ***(Maarten)***

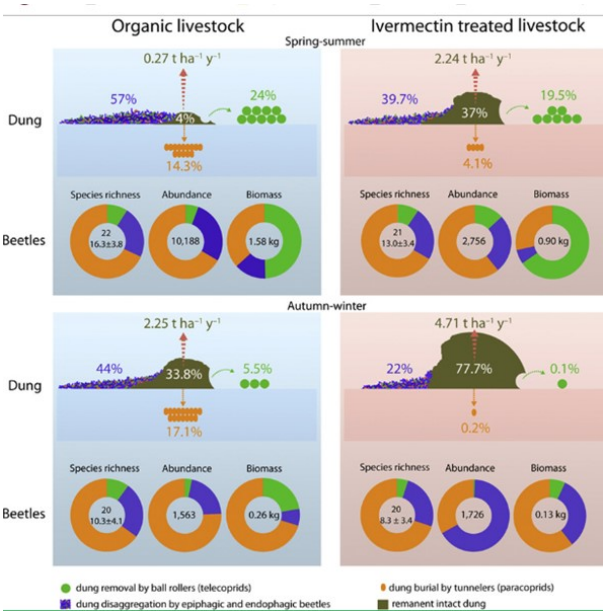
Don't get stuck with poor fertility

Withdrawal period changes *(Megan)*

Betamox LA
Meat 28 days
Closamectin pour-on
Meat 58 days

Part 2 of what about the little guys…..A thought on wormers for the season ahead *(Sarah)*

As we all look to turning cattle out full time and nearly all the lamb crop have finally dropped it won't be long before we all start the annual worry about parasite control! I have been updating some health plans and planning for the year ahead with some and I realised just how much ivermectin may be being used across our industry. This might just be the next thing we should all think about using responsibly. You may have seen Megan's note back in February, 'what about the little guys?' and this has struck a chord with me and some of you. When I worked on the New Forest you were not allowed to treat cattle going out to graze with ivermectins due to their effect on dungbeetles and other important soil organisms. Some of the wormers, in particular the pour ons that some of us throw on a little haphazardly can be pretty dangerous. *Closamectin* (which contains ivermectin) for instance actually has a narrow safety margin and if overdosed cattle can go permanently blind, and if accidently splashed in people's faces we too can go blind; permenantly. It is also designed to be used on a dry hair coat, NOT onto clipped backs like most people think and currently do. I heard some interesting tales about its use on some vet CPD which is why I am trying to spread the message about its use. It light of our increased responsible use of antibiotics, perhaps we all need to try and be more responsible in how and when we use our wormers. They are pretty potent drugs after all. So give us one of us a call to come up with a plan for your grazing season ahead.



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CEVA Welfare awards 2019 *(Megan)*

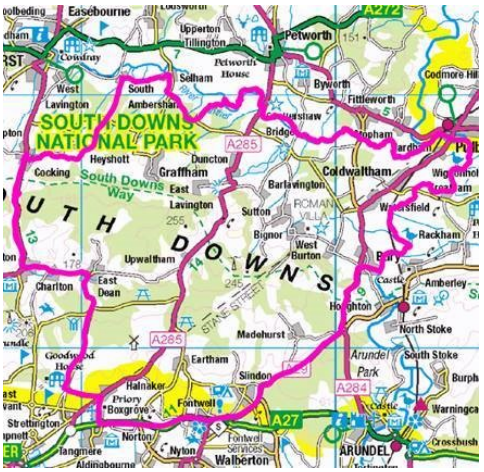
Congratulations to Marshalls Farm who were one of three finalists out of hundreds of nominations for Farmer of the Year at this years welfare awards. I nominated the team at Marshalls for their continued effort, commitment and proactive approach to animal welfare and dairy farming as a whole. We were treated to an all expenses paid trip to Birmingham Conference Centre where we were put up in a fancy hotel and treated to a three course meal, wine and entertainment. Initially we didn't recognise each other without our wellies and overalls on! I find these events under estimate how much farmers and farm vets eat so we were a little hungry but the drinks flowed and it was a fantastic evening. We enjoyed chatting to people in farming and other industries to find out what public perceptions of farming are as a whole and to gain an insight into what other industries related to our own are up to. A huge well done to the whole team once again and I shall keep an eye out for more awards in the future to nominate our farms for.

Kate and Jeremy with their fluffy cows at the awards

TB hotspot *(Maarten)*

Many of you are aware of the continuing TB problems in an area south of Petworth. Some had skin reactors that had no visible lesions, others had visible lesions but with a negative culture and of course the ever frustrating double IRs. As the picture is very confusing and APHA vets have not been able to make out the source of all this "the powers that be" have decided to grant a TB hotspot in the area. Apart from the frequent testing that is already in place, a local wildlife survey of found dead and road-kill badgers and wild deer within the potential hotspot area is also included. We would urge everyone to report suitable road-kill to APHA. What do you need to do if you find a dead badger or wild deer carcase?
Please contact APHA on **03000 200301** to report your findings. They will need the following details:

- the location of the carcase to assess whether it falls within the hotspot and in order to find it if suitable for collection. This could be an OS grid reference, longitude-latitude co-ordinates, a postcode or enough detail to precisely locate the carcase



- Please note that wildlife carcases located on or beside motorways or dual carriageways cannot be collected by APHA. Whenever possible an assessment of the condition of the carcase is needed as decomposing or extensively damaged carcases are not suitable

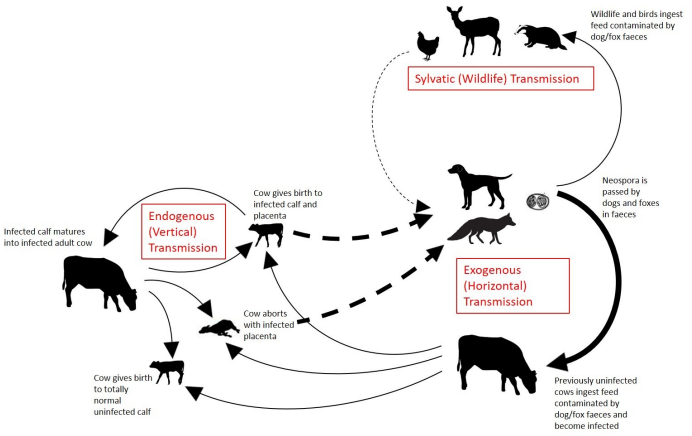
Further advice regarding carcase suitability and hazards to consider:
Suitability to submit - the wildlife carcase needs to be assessed as to whether it is suitable for post mortem examination. A carcase is not suitable if it is/has:

- significantly flattened
- grossly distended with gas (bloated)
- major wounds to the throat or chest or any open body cavities
- large numbers of maggots in or on it
- in an advanced state of putrefaction (decomposing and greenish with hair or skin falling off).

E. coli study on UK dairy farms *(Laura)*

APHA are inviting farmers to help investigate the presence and persistence of non-O157 VTEC strains of E. coli bacteria on cattle farms.
Findings of the project will help inform effective control strategies by identifying key transmission routes and sources of environmental contamination.
Initially you would be asked to take part in a screen which would involve an APHA representative testing fresh cowpat samples for the bacteria. If the *E. coli* strains are found to be present, a more involved longitudinal study would then take place. This study will provide you with an idea of which *E. coli* strains are present on your farm as well as providing advice on how to reduce the risks and transmission.

Neoaspora *(Ben)*



In March I went to an excellent AHDB Dairy meeting on Neospora at the Autumn calving strategic dairy with a couple of clients who are experiencing problems with this disease. We listened to an excellent speaker from Nottingham University who explained the latest thinking on the disease. Neospora is the most common cause of abortion on UK farms with a very high number of farms having at least one animal infected. Neospora causes infected cows to abort at between 5-7 months of gestation by causing infections in the placenta and unborn calf. Weak and premature calves can also be born. Pictured is the life cycle of the parasite and whilst it appears complicated, what is clear is the role of dogs and foxes (and other wildlife) in the disease. Essentially, cows become infected by eating feed contaminated with the faeces of an infected dog/fox. Dogs and foxes become infected by eating infected material (placenta, abortions and any uncooked meat from an infected animal). Other wildlife (e.g. birds, badgers, deer) act like cows, i.e. they become infected by eating feed contaminated by infected dogs/foxes and then pass the infection on when consumed by dogs/foxes. In addition, infected cows won't always abort and will pass on infection most of the time to any offspring. So what to do about it?
Firstly, check any aborted cows for Neospora with a simple blood test – see if you have it floating about and then adopt strategies to counteract the vertical (cow to calf) and horizontal (dog/fox to cow) spread.
More details are available from us for specific control measures but one of the interesting points was how do we spread the message to the dog-owning public, including hunts, who can gain access to grazing pastures on your farms? The general consensus was education is key and using opportunities like Open Farm Sunday to explain to the public the importance of Neopsora. In addition, good advice signs are available from NFU to encourage owners to pick up after their dog.