

This last month has seen three fantastic LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) Open Farm Sundays take place on our clients' farms; Ben and his two boys attended the open day at Felcourt Farm and Megan spoke at Hampton Estate Farm and also did a calf weighing and heifer scanning demonstration at Marshalls Farm (hopefully dispelling the mystery as to why we spend so much time with our arms up cow's bottoms, every Joe Bloggs' favourite question for farm vets). These open days present a great opportunity for the public to dip into the world of farming and learn more about where our food comes from and the processes involved. Hopefully they also serve to play a part in bridging the current dichotomy between the agriculture sector and militant vegan-types. All three days were very well attended and we congratulate the farms involved on all their hard work which made the events such great successes. Showing season is now in full swing and it seems a good time to remind you all about maintaining optimal biosecurity on your farms. The main things to consider for

animals going away to shows are isolation protocols and sanitation of equipment upon return. All returning animals should be isolated and monitored for signs of disease for 30 days somewhere where they have no contact with the remainder of the herd/flock i.e. no common grazing or sharing of fence lines or feed and water troughs. A separate building with no shared airspace is ideal but a separate paddock will suffice otherwise. Also make sure that trailers and other equipment are cleaned and disinfected properly upon return and also any equipment and handling facilities if separate ones can't be used. More information about biosecurity can be found on the NADIS website <https://www.nadis.org.uk/disease-a-z/cattle/biosecurity-in-dairy-and-beef-cattle/>. **Laura**



Hampton Estate

First Aid Course

Last month we organised two First Aid Courses for vets and farm staff. Although I had been on a similar course before, it was a very useful refresher of what to do when faced by an accident on farm.

We first covered **DR ABC**

Danger: Make sure casualty and bystanders are safe

Response: Is casualty able to respond?

Airways: Should be clear

Breathing: Look for chest movements, Listen for breathing sounds and Feel for air on your cheek

Circulation: Check and treat for life-threatening circulation problems like bleeding and heart attack

The key message was to take action rather than waiting for someone else to step in. Doing something, even if it isn't perfect, is always better than doing nothing.

After lunch we had some fun applying some basic bandages of which I was the victim...

Although you hope you will never have to use what you've learned I can recommend everyone to attend a First Aid course. **Maarten**



Parasites

Sheep: A wet June makes this July high risk for parasite as they will live longer on cooler wetter pasture. Watch out for Fly strike, gut worms and liver fluke this month especially strike as the temperatures are now on the rise. Early signs of strike: Irritation, Nibbling at tail head, Increased swishing of tails, Rubbing.

Cattle: Where animals are set stocked on "safe" pastures (previously arable fields or those grazed by sheep the previous year), it is unlikely worming will be required until later into the grazing season since there will be no overwintered larvae present, otherwise: Use appropriate strategic dosing in the form of bolus wormers at turnout or repeated administration of shorter duration group 3-ML products at 6-8 week intervals until mid- to late summer.

Keep animals on the same pasture for the entire season, or plan moving to safe grazing such as hay or silage aftermaths towards the end of the season as these become available.

Remember: Regular weighing of animals over the grazing season enables targeted selected treatment (TST) for animals and accurate dosing by weight

Megan

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Well done to our most recent AI graduates who have learnt to safely and efficiently AI cows. Do it yourself AI when done well can be a convenient option allowing AI at any time of day so optimum time of service can be achieved. Cows already know you and therefore it may be less stressful to them which all aids conception rates. If you are interested in attending an AI course and gaining this great skill please make enquiries to

info@livestockvets.co.uk Megan

Neospora – Part 3, Preventing Vertical Transmission

In this last part of this series of articles about Neospora I wanted to talk a bit about vertical transmission. This means that the infection within the cow spreads to the calf, which is a fundamental reason why Neospora is maintained in a herd even if you do manage to stop any new infections coming in from dogs/foxes. As discussed previously the parasite is most active when an animal's immune system is not working so well. The parasite takes advantage of this situation and is able to activate from a dormant state and then transfer across the placenta to the calf.

From personal experience with infected herds the transmission rate (proportion of calves born to infected mothers that turn out to be positive) is pretty high, certainly over 50%, but the quoted likelihood from the literature is 30-100% depending on immune status of the cow. This would mean that the healthier your cows are (positive energy balance, absence of BVD/IBR/Lepto) the better. In most circumstances, though, it is generally safe to assume that an infected cow should no longer be used for breeding replacement heifers. In several herds we adopt a policy of identifying infected cows with an ear tag so that dairy semen is less likely to be used by mistake when serving a cow.

Whilst it might not be for everyone, there may also be a place for technologies such as embryo harvesting for high value animals that have become infected. The embryo will not be infected at the point of flushing and you could still maintain certain lines if you so wish.

One thing is for sure, Neospora is common, it isn't going away, there is no vaccine/treatment on the horizon so you have to look at your herd, know your enemy and tackle it sooner rather than later or else you can end up with a situation with a lot of infected animals. **Ben**



Picture from: AHDB

Making Sense of Minerals Meeting



A big thank you to the Andreozzi family for hosting the Livestock Partnership Flock Health Club meeting on 'Making sense of Minerals' earlier this month. We welcomed Pete Bone, from Livestock and Grassland Mineral Consultancy, to lead us through a discussion about what key mineral and trace elements we should be focusing on within our flocks and how we can go about assessing their management. The take home messages were that even across one geographical area, the soil and crop macro and micro mineral content can vary considerably and soil analysis is not that useful on its own. Mineral and trace element analysis on either your grass crop or cut silage crops is most likely to be the most economical and efficient way to make a preliminary assessment of what the animals are getting from the farm and ration. This should be done regularly to monitor and check that management is still correct

year on year. Forage analysis can then help guide us as to whether further sampling could be worthwhile. This can take the form of bloods, but also urinalysis and liver samples taken at slaughter or on any post mortems. All of these investigations are almost certain to cost a fraction of the price that is already being spent on farm on either licks, boluses or injections. We also learnt about the increasing problem of mineral toxicity, due to blanket boluses when combined with heavy periods of concentrate feeding or where pastures are top dressed with increasingly 'fancy' fertilisers. For instance, *Selenium* actually has one of the narrowest safety margins of the minerals, and an excess can cause increased lameness and even bone fractures (however it is still relatively rare). Excess *Iodine* given to ewes in late pregnancy can also have a detrimental effect on the lambs ability to absorb the vital colostral antibodies. It was horrifying to think that blindly bolusing and feeding ewes in the hope of increasing lamb health could in fact have a negative effect. If you are interested in doing some forage analysis on grass or silage this season please get in touch with me and I can discuss the best way of doing this with you. **Sarah**

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