



Congratulations!!

To client **James Waight and the team at Enford Farm, Pewsey** for being awarded **Farmers Weekly Beef Farmer of the Year 2020!** Very well deserved and a fantastic achievement!

March 2021

- Making the most of internal teat sealants
- Clostridial Disease in Cattle - Blackleg, Tetanus & friends!
- Vaccination Service for the Commercial Sheep Flock
- News from our Rounds
- Dispensary Offers and Updates
- Synergy Training Courses
- Synergy Tweets

Making the most of internal teat sealants

The internal teat sealant Orbeseal has been around for 20 years and has become the mainstay of preventing new dry period origin mastitis infections on dairies around the world.

Mastitis is still the most common reason for treatment with antibiotics in dairy cows. The UK government has set out a number of national targets for reducing antibiotic use in the UK which includes reducing lactation and dry cow antibiotic tube use year on year between now and 2024.



This will be helped by increased use of teat sealants, backed up by much independent research including a summary of numerous

studies which showed a 33% reduction in overall mastitis rates.

We know that 60% of mastitis cases in the first 100 days of lactation originate from the dry period. The highest risk periods for new infections entering the udder being just after dry off and just before calving.

We also know that milking cows, especially if dried off at higher yields (>20 litres), fail to form a natural keratin seal or "plug" in the teat end of 50% of quarters.

Orbeseal works primarily by creating an internal seal that mimics the effect of a natural plug and blocks out new infections during the dry period. More recent work shows the benefits using Orbeseal alone in uninfected udders at dry off. This resulted in reduced risks of coliform (E coli) mastitis in early lactation compared to the same uninfected cows given a combination of dry cow antibiotic and Orbeseal. This

might be due to the natural biome of low level "good bacteria" in the uninfected udder not being disrupted by antibiotics and conferring a protective effect on the udder in the next lactation.

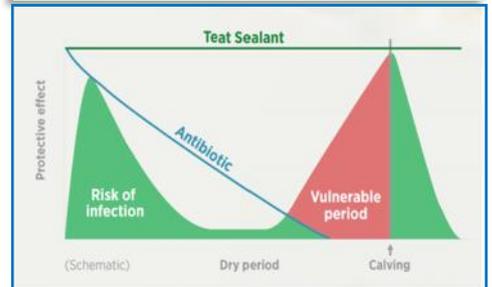
Over the last 60 years the dry period advice from vets certainly has changed as the research and products available have allowed us to adapt the protocols. Whereas whole herd dry cow antibiotic therapy used to be the norm, we now aim to use antibiotics only in those cows with sub-clinical infections at dry off. In most herds this would be a minority of cows, whilst Orbeseal is used to protect all cows from new infections across the dry period. This has been a huge success story in reducing antibiotic use and improving outcomes, but it has led to greater emphasis on hygiene at drying off as well as the quality of dry cow housing such as stocking rates, bedding and ventilation.

Use in heifers

Using Orbeseal in heifers 4-6 weeks before calving can also reduce infections in fresh calved heifers by up to 70%. We have a number of farms successfully using Orbeseal in maiden heifers. You must discuss with your vet before embarking on this protocol as it requires some extra training and planning. We also offer a vet tech service where trained techs come and assist with and/or take over the insertion into heifers.

Reducing the risks of post dry off infections

The importance of hygiene at drying off cannot be stressed enough. The risks of getting it wrong are very sick or even dead cows. We regularly run practical work shops on farm to both review current techniques and also train up new members of staff when using Orbeseal as part



of a drying off protocol. All personnel on farm who are administering Orbeseal should receive extra training as it is a skilled job that needs attention to detail and a very high level of hygiene.

Selective dry cow therapy – deciding on the right cows

The concept is ONLY treating infected cows with dry cow antibiotics (raised SCC and/or mastitis history) and giving ALL cows Orbeseal. It is critical to work with your vet to decide upon the right threshold for your farm, based on knowing the type of bacteria present and the herd's history. Making the wrong decisions about who to treat with antibiotics can lead to persistent infections and needs an organised decision protocol to be put together with your routine vet.

On Farm Training

If you would like to know more about "drying off" training sessions with your farm team then please leave a message for Emma on 01935 83682, or speak to myself, Rachel Hayton or your regular vet.

Tom Clarke
Veterinary Surgeon



Clostridial Disease in Cattle - Blackleg, Tetanus & friends!

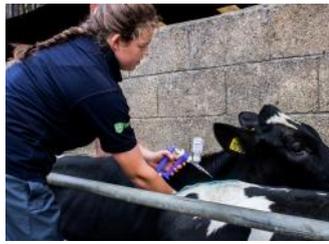
Clostridial diseases are caused by a number of different bacteria, which can be found in the soil or within the gut of healthy livestock. These bacteria thrive and grow in conditions where oxygen is lacking. The bacteria can survive for many years in the soil and can live within healthy livestock, causing no overt disease, and can be passed through the faeces to re-contaminate the soil. There is no way of telling if these bacteria are present within your soil or animals and if they are, when or where they might suddenly start to cause problems.



Diseases that you may have heard of which are caused by Clostridial disease include black leg, tetanus, malignant oedema, botulism, gas gangrene, pulpy kidney etc.

With many diseases we get warning signs, alerting us to the danger that a disease might be present – a calf starting to cough, a few animals with diarrhoea, an abortion or two – at this stage we can jump in with diagnostics and treatments and even put preventative measures in place to protect other animals in the group. With clostridial diseases there is no such option – animals infected by the various different clostridial bacteria often present as a sudden death, without any premonitory signs of illness. There is often

no opportunity to treat (or treatment is futile), and there is no way of knowing if or when other animals may also become infected. The only way to prevent these diseases is through vaccination and, as we are acutely aware of in these strange times, vaccines take time to stimulate the immune system and establish a protective effect in a vaccinated individual. Immunity can take up to 2 weeks after the primary vaccination course (which usually involves 2 doses 4-6 weeks apart) to become fully established. Even if a vaccination protocol is started immediately, it will still be many weeks before other in the group are protected.



If you are a cattle farmer with sheep it is likely that you are familiar with clostridial disease vaccines and annually vaccinate your sheep in the weeks before lambing. It has been my experience however that cattle farmers are much less likely to include a clostridial disease vaccine in their vaccination protocols. Why is this?

At a farmer meeting last year one individual told a rather chilling tale of his recent loss of 6 heifers within the space of a week. After a number of post-mortem examinations by his vets, a diagnosis of clostridial disease was made. 'Apparently you can vaccinate against this..' he said... 'I hadn't really thought it was a thing in cattle as we don't get many that just die – not like with sheep!' '....I vaccinate them now...'

So cost wise what are we talking about?
The cost to vaccinate a cow against clostridial disease is around £1.20 for the primary course and 60p per head for each annual booster. For a breeding female – assuming a 9 year average lifetime within the herd, the lifetime cost of clostridial vaccination per animal is £6.60 (just for reference the cost to vaccinate the same single cow against BVD is £41 over her breeding lifetime).

For Vaccination against Clostridial Disease, our team recommends...

BRAVOXIN
50 ML £17.50
100 ML £29

Please consult your Vet or our RAMA (SQP) Team to discuss your needs.

For a 70 animal beef herd (as this particular farm was) the total cost per year to vaccinate the whole breeding herd was £84 in the first year and £42 for annual boosters. Of course labour to carry out the vaccination must be taken into account, but this task can often be tied in with other handling events, minimising any extra labour costs.

Given that one breeding suckler cow has a replacement cost of perhaps £900 and removal of deadstock is around £140 per head, the cost of one dead animal could pay for vaccination of this entire breeding herd (including replacements) for more than 13 years! Show me a farmer who has not experienced at least one 'sudden death' (not attributable to poisoning, staggers or lightning strike) in 13 years....

Louise Silk
Veterinary Surgeon



Enhanced surveillance for Schmallenberg Virus

Schmallenberg virus (SBV) was first identified in 2011 and the disease subsequently spread widely throughout Europe. During the 2012 and 2013 UK lambing and calving seasons, there were numerous cases of congenital defects in lambs and calves due to in-utero exposure to SBV. Numerous cases were identified all over our practice area.

In the summer of 2016, SBV re-emerged, resulting in the birth of



typically affected lambs and calves the following year.

There is a recognised pattern of 3-5 year cycles with viral diseases of this sort. This pattern suggests the possibility of another wave of infection, which would present itself this lambing and calving season. SBV has already been detected this winter in lambs and a calf at four post-mortem centres across the country.

APHA have announced enhanced surveillance for SBV in sheep, goats and cattle, testing samples free of charge. A fresh brain sample from the deformed calf/lamb

will be tested free of charge to look for the virus. Blood samples from other adult

females in the herd/flock (upto 6 per herd) will be funded to screen for evidence of infection.

Please discuss any deformed calves or lambs with your vet, who may wish to perform appropriate sampling to investigate further, as well as to investigate other potential causes of abortion or defect.

Ed Powell-Jackson
Veterinary Surgeon



Vaccination Service for the Commercial Sheep Flock

Vaccinating... a word we seem to hear daily now! Yet something farmers have been doing year in year out without really giving it a second thought. However, it is forming an increasing part of the Vet Tech Service we offering to our commercial sheep farmers.

So why would someone pay to use our service when you can do it yourself? Good question! There are several reasons why clients are starting to see real added value in this service.



Firstly, our "Team Sheep" techs offer the "Gold Standard" in terms of storage, transport, administration & equipment. We have a robust cold chain in place, ensuring vaccines are always stored and transported while being kept at the optimum temperature, once on farm vaccines are mixed & injected in the correct manner (as per manufacturer's instructions and best practice) using clean, accurate

equipment. This all ensures the vaccine has been given the best possible chance of success.

Another reason this service is gaining favour is labour (or the lack of!). Vaccinations are often due at times of year when labour is reduced, possibly due to seasonal staff having not yet started or simply because other operations such as harvest have taken priority. This can lead to required dosing dates being missed or adding unnecessary pressure onto an already busy workload. Once the sheep are gathered, depending on the handling facilities we can generally be left to complete the vaccinating quickly & efficiently, leaving others free to carry out other tasks with the sheep.

Vaccination has the potential to play a huge roll on the success of any profitable sheep flock, after all that is why we do it! Unmanaged abortion costs can exceed £60 per ewe, clostridial disease outbreaks can rapidly escalate in costs (especially at current lamb prices) and lameness can be a long term drain on health and profitability. If we have decided to invest in vaccination to combat these diseases, the incentive to vaccinate correctly is high!

Ineffective vaccine use could result in disease failing to be controlled and medicine costs rising. Correct handling & administration is vital to maximise vaccine efficacy & in turn maximise flock efficiency.

Seasonal Sheep Vaccination Offers

 HEPTAVAC-P PLUS 25 Doses £22 50 Doses £41 125 Doses £88 250 Doses £165	 OVIVAC-P PLUS 50 Doses £32 250 Doses £129
 FOOTVAX 20ml £29 50ml £59.50 250ml £232	

The assurance that your investment in a vaccine has been given the best possible chance of success combined with the peace of mind that the jobs been done, on time and correctly makes a lot of sense.

If you feel this service may be of use to you in the future, please get in touch with your vet or call the practice on 01935 83682.

Andrew Cooke
Vet Tech



Meet the Team

Meg Falkner

Meg joined the Synergy Dispensary team in May 2019 after gaining a BSc Hons Degree in Animal Biology and travelling around New Zealand. She comes from an agricultural background with family members running a beef farm in Cornwall. She has recently started her RAMA (SQP) training and hopes to qualify soon.



News from our Rounds

North Alastair Hayton

In the midst of a very dull and repetitive lockdown, I find myself able to buck that trend and report excellent and happy news - Charlotte Moulard has given birth to a baby girl, Annie, whilst Tom Warboys' wife Laura has given birth to a son Wilfred. All are doing well - congratulations to the Moulard and Warboys families!



Fortunately, it would seem the vast majority of our farms have so far managed to avoid the Covid scourge, and with the number of cases in the area on the decline and with vaccination rolling out, hopefully that situation will remain the case. For the next few weeks, we will need to remain careful and continue to take the necessary precautions to keep all of ourselves safe.

There will no doubt though be a lot of very smiley faces on show when we can finally take those masks off!

West Clare Eames

A glimpse down memory lane – 20 years ago we were contending with another highly contagious virus - Foot and Mouth Disease. As a final year vet student at Bristol I was sent to North Devon with the majority of my peers to spend most of March and April employed by MAFF as Animal Health Officers instead of attending final year teaching. This experience, working with the farming community during such a terrible time, has been hugely influential on my career, and the life lessons I learnt were invaluable.



Later in 2001 I joined Kingfisher Vets in Chard - and here I still am, via a few breaks for injuries and babies! I consider myself blessed and privileged to continue to work alongside such a supportive group of farmers and all the people in the Synergy team.

Stay safe and look after yourselves, in body and mind - Spring is on its way!

News from our Rounds

East

Tom Shardlow

I as write in mid-February we have just had a few days of bitterly cold weather with very low temperatures that feel like -8c in the cold wind. That seems to have passed for now and has been replaced with warmer, wetter weather.

Many of our clients find that this variation unfortunately creates perfect conditions for calf respiratory disease, and this is certainly true. However, it is important to remember that if all the other risk factors are minimised (e.g. housing, colostrum, group sizes, nutrition etc.) then the extra risk factor that you can't change (the weather) will not affect calves. It is often human nature to blame things that we cannot control, but often these elements serve to expose otherwise hidden problems. Don't forget we have a team of experts to help you out with everything respiratory related including building design. Just give us a call if you would like any help.

We are extremely proud that our Salisbury practice is now flourishing, 2020 was a somewhat tricky year to launch a new venture! At the time of writing we have eight dairies being serviced from our Lower Woodford branch along with many fantastic beef and sheep enterprises of varying sizes.



Central Josie Burridge

Spring is on the horizon! Lambing and calving will be in full swing before we know it, so make sure you are ready for the onslaught! If you have any niggling doubts or questions please let us know and we can try to nip any issues in the bud, and who knows, maybe on the other side of it we will be able to celebrate with a pint in the pub....

As many of you may have noticed with my ever-increasing challenge to reach my boots, I will be going on maternity leave at the start of March, so I'd like to wish you all a happy and healthy 2021 and I'll see you again in 2022!



Synergy Training Courses

If you are interested in joining our online courses or would like to know more, please get in touch: 01935 83682 / courses@synergyfarmhealth.com

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicine - Sheep
Online 15th April 10am – 1pm

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicine - General
Online 20th April 10am – 1pm

Seasonal Dispensary Offers



**AUTOWORM
FIRST GRAZER**
24 Pack £375



**AUTOWORM
FINISHER**
24 Pack £339



DYCOXAN
1 L £104
2.5 L £209
5 L £353



ENOVEX PO
2.5 L £29

All prices EX VAT.
For a full list of promotions
please call Dispensary on
01935 83682

Vaccine Orders:

Given current supply problems, we are aiming to provide a constant supply of vaccines to our clients. We would request you place all vaccine orders as early as possible - **Leptospirosis, BVD, IBR, Bravoxin, Huskvac** and other key cattle and sheep vaccines.

Please consult your Vet to discuss any specific queries. For further information please call our Dispensary Team on **01935 83682**.

#synergytweets!

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#timetotalkday



#backbritishfarming