



Spotlight on Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Virus (BVDv)

The Bovine Viral Diarrhoea virus is a clever little virus that is very well adapted to its bovine host. Despite its name it is not directly the cause of outbreaks of diarrhoea. In fact, with the exception of Mucosal Disease (MD) affecting Persistently Infected (PI) animals, it does not cause any single, easily identifiable disease syndrome and yet it continues to cause significant welfare issues and financial loss in our herds.

BVD infection causes a reduction in white blood cell numbers leading to a significant weakening of the immune system. When BVD is active other bugs that are circulating on the farm cause more severe disease than under normal circumstances. In youngstock this is often scouring or pneumonia. Amongst adults the consequences of this are potentially endless; more mastitis, more lameness, more TB even!



BVD affects all aspects of bovine reproduction. It has a negative effect on sperm function, on ovarian function, and also on the survival of the early embryo. Together

er this reduces conception and pregnancy rates. Where a pregnancy is already established it can cause abortion, although this is not inevitable. If the developing foetus is infected during the middle third of pregnancy BVD can cause developmental abnormalities in the calf's brain (causing difficulties with balance in calves) and eye abnormalities including cataracts/small eyes.



Infection of the foetus during the first third of pregnancy can result in the birth of a PI calf. These animals may appear normal or be 'poor doers'. They are born infected with the BVD virus and remain so for their entire life. Eventually they will develop a profuse and irreversible scour called Mucosal Disease which is fatal. Until this happens they act as a virus factory, excreting massive amounts of BVD to infect any animal they come into contact with. **It is these PI animals that provide reservoirs of infection within our herds; they must be identified and culled at the earliest opportunity.**

PIs can be identified at birth using 'tag-and-test' technology which is simple and convenient (and required by several milk contracts). To get a complete picture of herd status "Check testing" of at least six home-bred, unvaccinated, weaned calves

May 2021

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between nine and twelve months of age for exposure to BVD must be undertaken. The cost of this is minimal (about £30) and the necessary blood samples can be collected in seconds when animals are being handled for TB testing.

Adding animals to the herd risks introducing the virus and so biosecurity, as well as testing new born calves and herd-level surveillance, is vital. All purchased animals should either be sourced from known BVD-free herds or quarantined until their BVD status can be confirmed.

Consult your vet to discuss herd specific surveillance and control programmes.

Keith Cutler
Veterinary Surgeon



Medicines Update:

Adrenacaine 100ml

Due to a nationwide manufacturing problem with **Adrenacaine**, we will now be supplying **Pronestestic** as an alternative local anaesthetic.



Bovilis Ringvac

Due to the long term unavailability of **Bovilis Ringvac**, we will now be supplying **Trichoben** as an alternative vaccine for prevention and treatment of Ringworm in cattle.

Trodax

Due to the long term global unavailability of **Trodax** we are looking at an imported replacement **Fascionix**- watch this space for further details.

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

Working 9 til 5

You can set your watch by the milking and feeding schedule on most dairies but what about the daily schedule of the cow?

A typical milking cow will spend 3-5 hours eating (spread over 9-14 meals), 7-10 hours ruminating, 30 min drinking, 2-3 hours socialising and 12-14 hours resting/lying. Looks like a tight schedule! With some multi-tasking there are 3 hours/day available for "other" activity i.e. milking. If cows are spending longer than about 1.5 or 1 hour (2x and 3 x milking respectively) waiting in collecting yards and being milked, then they are being cheated out of their own time – something must suffer.

Cows demonstrate a preference for resting, even over other important activities such as feeding. Increased resting is associated with increased milk yield, on average 0.9-1.5kg of milk for each additional hour. Research shows that within a herd those highest yielding cows spend more time lying down and less time standing. The reasons for this are possibly due to greater blood flow through the udder and more effective rumination but probably more importantly due to less lameness and fatigue.



So, how can we inspire cows to maximise their lying time?

Minimise waiting times – excessive milking times will reduce time available for lying and feeding. Milking order is not random and so it is likely that it is the same cows that are forced to stand excessively everyday. If parlour throughput is limiting consider splitting the herd into smaller milking groups.

Don't Overstock – overstocking by definition means there is not a bed for every cow. In overstocked situations cows returning from milking will lie down instead of feeding. When all beds are occupied cows increase standing times waiting for one to become available. In mixed groups heifers suffer more than mature cows. It is not uncommon for overstocked herds to cull cows and see an increase in the amount of milk sold!

Reduce Heat Stress – During times of heat stress cows spend more time standing and less time lying, particularly during the day. Cows lie for the same number of "sessions" but accumulate heat faster when exposed to high environmental temperatures and humidity; the cow must then stand to cool down, reducing overall lying times. Heat stress has been the topic of previous newsletter articles but the bottom line is heat abatement is important – even in the south west.

Bedding type – When housed, well managed, deep bedded yards are arguably the best with regards to cow comfort. DEEP sand cubicles are superior to all other cubicle types. Similarly where organic bedding is used lying times increase as the bedding depth increases. Lying times also increase when bedding is kept DRY. Concrete with a little dusting of substrate is unacceptable.



Cubicle Design – Cows should be able to lie down comfortably without being hindered by neighbouring animals. Specifications will depend on the average size of the animal in the herd but "asking the cows" what they think is a good starting point.

If you require any guidance on housing design speak to your vet.

Sam Cottam
Veterinary Surgeon



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 27th May 10am – 1pm

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicine - General
Online 14th June 10am – 1pm

Meet the Team Becky Cox

Becky joined the Synergy Accounts team in January 2020 after originally working in the Dispensary when Synergy first formed. Prior to starting back at Synergy Becky worked for the Dorset County Show Society. Outside of work Becky is busy on the family's dairy farm near Dorchester which she farms in partnership with her brother.



Synergy Staff lead the way at Veterinary Woman in Leadership Conference



Vets Emily Gascoigne, Rachel Hayton, Dispensary Manager Jade Ellis and myself were lucky to be involved in a Veterinary Woman in Leadership virtual conference a few weeks ago. On attending and talking to others working in practice, I realised just how privileged we are to work in a business such as Synergy where gender is not an issue, where you can have a fulfilled career and get to the top. So with a nod to all the absolutely fantastic men who work at Synergy – *Vive la femme!*

Jo Masters
Operations Director



Abortion and Calving Enquiries – Changes to Reporting

From May 2021, APHA now require cattle owners to notify them **directly** of all abortions and premature calvings within 24 hours. Cattle owners must also isolate the aborting cow as far as practicable and retain the products of abortion or premature calving. Tel: 0300 200 301. Once APHA have confirmed a visit is necessary, please call us on 01935 83682 to arrange a visit.

Reducing Solar Ulcers in Dairy Heifers

With a targeting breeding programme heifers are genetically the most advanced group of livestock in our herds.

However, a heifer calving into a dairy herd faces many challenges. Alongside our high expectations, we want her to;

- Milk well
- Maintain body condition
- Get back in calf
- Grow into a good mature cow

So what can we do to help her achieve all of the above goals?

Is the first time she sees a cubicle the day after she calves? Some pre-calving cubicle training, in an exclusively heifer only group to reduce bullying from older, established herd members, with surplus cubicle space to reduce competition, can be invaluable. This reduces cubicle anxiety post calving and excess time spent standing on concrete, benefiting foot health.

One of the first things that often goes wrong for a heifer is her feet, with bruising typically at the sole ulcer site or white line. So how can we help? I strongly recommend trimming heifers feet routinely at 60-80 days post calving. Generally this is routine trim with modelling of hooves where bruising occurs.

There is a high likelihood of an animal developing a recurrent sole ulcer after the first incidence of bruising, with this susceptibility remaining for the remainder of her herd life, therefore the value of prevention cannot be overstated!



In consultation with the herd's routine vet, we have implemented this protocol on several farms with a high degree of success in reducing the incidence of sole ulcers. This has a positive impact on the heifer, instantly improving her mobility and providing a strong foundation for her milking career.

Please discuss with your vet and vet tech how this regime could be implemented in your herd.

Gary Harding
Vet Tech



CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

“We have seen a reduced number of lameness cases with solar lesions, combined with improved longevity of our heifers, since we started trimming at day 50 – 60 of lactation .”

Jonathan Turner, Manor Farm

“Our vet tech trims all the freshly calved heifers feet. We have found the benefits hugely outweigh the cost. Even a small deterioration in mobility can very quickly reduce a heifer's ability to maintain BCS, deal with pecking order within the herd and ultimately may lead to the individual animal failing to conceive. Culling first lactation heifers impacts both our morale and financial results in equal measure. Longevity is really important to us; anything we can implement to help support our heifers to reach their full potential and lead long, productive lives we value.”

Richard and Helen Baker, Eastfield Farm

News from our Rounds

North Paula Hunt

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for observing the extra social distancing requirements we have had to request throughout the last year, especially during your TB tests, where we have often requested extra handling facilities and the wearing of masks. We appreciate that wearing a mask for long periods of the day takes some getting used to! It has all been just another lesson in biosecurity, and as farmers you will already be aware of the value of this in its many guises.

Sadly this spring has been another challenging one for new TB outbreaks in the area. www.ibtb.co.uk will show you where they're happening. Keep raising those mineral licks and water troughs and please contact us or see the TB Hub for biosecurity advice. And lets keep looking forward to that bovine TB vaccine – field trials are underway so it should only be a couple of years away now!



West Alasdair Moffett

I am loathe to always start by discussing the weather, but given it dictates so much of what we do and with feed costs representing 50% of overall costs of dairy enterprises, it is easy to see why we end up talking so much about the weather. Over the next few years there is also likely to be more and more emphasis placed on carbon footprinting of our on farm feed and increased governance over just where the food that we feed our cows comes from.

Grass growth is slow with night time temperatures still below zero in early May. Grass shortage and lack of grazing has forced people to consider turning out stock and feeding bought-in ensiled feed to make up the shortfall. It was pleasing to see a multi-cut grass system occurring close to the highest point in West Dorset. If we all farmed the same way, life would be boring!!

Hopefully those that supply the catering industry with dairy products will begin to see a rise in demand as lockdown eases, with the hospitality sector having been largely non-existent for over a year. I look forward to our first meal out in a long time soon; if anyone wants to babysit let me know!!



News from our Rounds

Central Tom Clarke

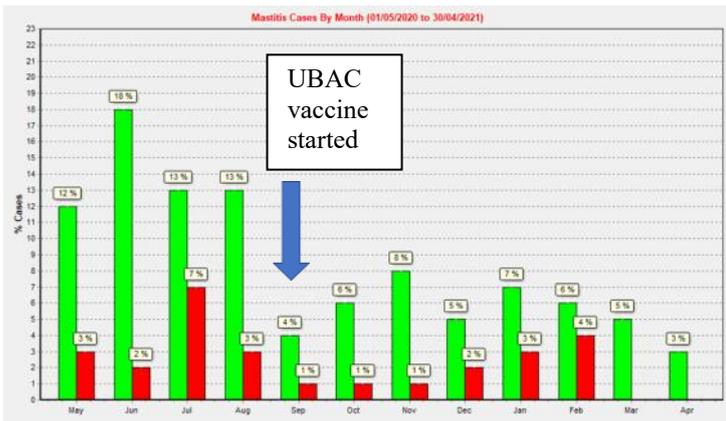


The rain dances have started on the chalky downs of south Dorset. Grass is looking worryingly sparse. On a brighter note the lack of moisture will hopefully reduce pasture worm burdens early on but still be aware of coccidiosis in turned out calves. Flies are just starting to appear now the nights stopped getting so cold so its time to start your fly prevention planning on animals and the environment - **see our Dispensary Offers on fly treatments.**



There have been some cracking fertility results in dairy herds this winter and farms that have worked hard on heifer quality, size and health seeing conception rates of >50% to sexed semen in high yielding milking heifers.

We have been using the new Strep uberis mastitis vaccine (UBAC) on a number of farms now with some excellent results. Herds that have struggled with strep uberis mastitis despite multiple management improvements have seen some dramatic improvements in clinical mastitis rates and herd cell counts.



East Mike Kerby



“Hope springs eternal”.....a phrase that is much used but quite old-fashioned but Spring is upon us and certainly gives hope – not only for easing of lockdown but also for the growing, flowering and harvesting seasons ahead.

Rain is much needed and warmer nights too - my own pastures are looking bare and hay is going back out to my store cattle. For those of you cutting silage early, check the grass for sugars and especially nitrites/nitrates as the uptake of fertiliser may have been suboptimal.

It has always been a tricky time balancing energy requirements for milking cows especially in early lactation so it is a good idea to monitor ketones via cowside tests on fresh calvers (around 7 days calved).

The same is true for ewes with lambs at foot and it is advisable to monitor liveweight gains in lambs regularly to ensure grass quality and supply is not limiting milk yield and thus growth. And ditto suckler cows with calves!

NSA's #leadon social media campaign

The National Sheep Association are running #leadon - a social media campaign to promote dogs on leads for the safety of ewes. Don't forget to support #leadon on Twitter!



Seasonal Dispensary Offers



ECTOFLY
2.5L £36
5L £60



CLIK EXTRA
2.2L £105
5L £192



SPOTINOR
1L £61
2.5L £108



TAURADOR
1L £68 2.5L £105 5L £185



ENOVEX PO
2.5L £29

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

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#leadon
#everylamb
counts



Did you know...ewes and lambs have very strong bonding instincts, but disruption can lead to separation leaving new born lambs at risk of cold and starvation. Remember to keep your #leadon #everylambcounts @natsheep



#teambeef

