



TB – Can I Do Anything About It?

Bovine TB is one of the biggest issues facing British cattle farmers today. For many, the implications of a TB breakdown are devastating. In contrast to most other diseases commonly encountered on farm, TB surveillance is stipulated by APHA, often leaving producers feeling their hands are tied, and the situation is out of their control, particularly given the frustrating wildlife situation.



To this end TB herd accreditation has been recently refreshed. Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHECS) is the regulatory body that quality controls and certifies licensed cattle health schemes in the UK, ensuring the schemes operate to the same set of technical standards. Whilst herds have been able to achieve CHECS TB herd accreditation since 2016, **a new TB entry level membership programme** has been recently launched as an easily achievable first step for cattle farmers to better manage TB risk by improving biosecurity. It recognises full TB herd accreditation may not be suitable for all businesses and so bridges the gap and allows every holding to take steps in controlling the risk of TB to their herd. The scheme focuses on 6 main areas:

- ◆ Minimising TB risk from purchased cattle
- ◆ Minimising TB risk from cattle in other herds
- ◆ Minimising TB risk from your own animals (inconclusive reactors)
- ◆ Minimising the spread of TB through muck or slurry
- ◆ Reducing TB risk from badgers
- ◆ Having a TB test failure contingency plan

The scheme requires commitment to implementing one biosecurity option from each of these risk factors. The idea is that farmers can adopt a 'no regrets' policy of biosecurity and improved farm management with their vet, as a tool in tackling bovine TB without vast financial investment.

Entry level membership can be a stepping-stone to full TB herd accreditation, which has additional testing and biosecurity requirements, or farmers can choose to remain solely on entry level membership. From the 1st August 2021, herds must complete entry level membership before becoming herd accredited.

Though some biosecurity measures involved in the schemes are specifically aimed at TB, others are applicable for other infectious diseases as well, thus improving herd health at a wider level.

To get involved, farmers need to apply through a participating CHECS cattle health scheme and the application form signed off by a vet who has undergone the training to become a BCVA Accredited TB Adviser (BATVA). Several Synergy vets have already undergone this training.

Will TB herd accreditation exempt me from 6 monthly TB testing?

As many will already be aware, default 6 monthly TB testing was implemented across the whole of the High Risk Area (which includes Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire) from September 2021. Whilst entry level membership will not exempt a farm from 6 monthly testing, once completed farms can apply for TB herd accreditation. Herds in the High Risk Area that are accredited with a CHECS recognised scheme with a score of 1 or

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above can remain on annual testing. Herds that have been in existence for at least six years and have not had a TB breakdown in that six year period are also eligible to remain on annual testing.

Sounds good, but I'd like to know more...

We will be running several Synergy TB 'roadshows' around our area in the near future. We will be discussing in depth entry level membership and herd accreditation and hosting a TB question and answer session. Details for these will be posted shortly.

The CHECS website www.cheecs.co.uk provides information on all licensed cattle health schemes and is the first port of call for farmers wishing to sign up to a scheme. As always, please speak to your routine vet and we will be happy to guide you through the process.

We are continuing to work with government in utilising our new diagnostic test **Enferplex**. For more details please visit: www.surefarm.co.uk.

Claire Rudd
Veterinary Surgeon



Six Monthly TB Testing - Can I avoid it?

The first of our Regional TB Roadshow Meetings is on 11th October at 11am, other dates to follow. Covering: Why is my six monthly TB testing happening? Am I eligible for TB CHECS accreditation and what is involved? What can I do on farm to reduce the chance of TB?

Mon 11th October 11am. By kind permission of Mr A Bristol, Greenland Farm, Wincanton BA9 8EZ

To RSVP please
call reception on
01935 83682
LUNCH PROVIDED

Housing in Good Health

At the point of writing this article the weather has just started to turn and farmers have been gathering in Maize over the last few days which means for many, housing will be fast approaching. **Are you ready?** My colleagues have been suggesting winter preparations for a few months now but now it is time to get serious.



Many infectious diseases are more effectively transmitted within your herd during housing and the stress of housing often allows these to circulate ferociously on some units.

Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR).

It is best to boost vaccination prior to housing to give the greatest protection for this high-risk period. It is too easy to put the mild coughing with temperatures down to lungworm. I would encourage all dairy farmers to be taking a bulk milk coming into housing to check for IBR and determine whether vaccination will prevent possible disease in the winter. Even if vaccination is employed on farm (Marker only) bulk milks can identify if there is continued disease circulating

which may warrant booster vaccinations. For the Beef enterprises taking blood samples from youngstock will provide enough information as to whether to vaccinate. Youngstock blood screens will also help you make the right decisions on the other common respiratory diseases regardless of the enterprise.

Mycoplasma has gained relevance to many of our herds particularly those buying in replacements, it can often be a silent killer particularly in youngstock. Mycoplasma can cause disease in adults such as pneumonia, Mastitis and lameness and poor hygiene procedures around colostrum and milk feeding can lead to significant pneumonia and ear infections in calves. Knowing whether to vaccinate can save significant disease throughout the winter periods.

Lungworm. The soft cough after housing can be assumed to be IBR or bacterial pneumonias and treated with antibiotics. Occasionally symptoms will improve by clearing secondary infections but appear to be chronic. Do not assume that because you have never had lungworm that you don't have it because as climate changes so do the reach of parasite ecosystems. All dairy farmers should be doing a bulk milk for lungworm even better a pooled heifer milk as the best sentinels to decide whether treatment is necessary at housing. Beef enterprises and youngstock cohorts can be screened by pooled faeces again to suggest treatment requirement.

If Lungworm treatment is required in lactating animals the use of Eprinomectin (Eprizero) would be the favoured choice with nil milk withhold, please see back page for prices or call our RAMAs in dispensary for details.



Fluke. Infections can be acquired right up until the point of housing. Again, all dairies should be screening by milk for the presence of fluke on their farm particularly in the run up to housing It may take two weeks for antibodies to be present, taking a sample after two weeks would be a suitable final check. In all categories of stock you could test cohorts by faecal sampling using the Copri antigen test reliably from eight weeks post housing for a definitive presence of fluke. If treatment is required, I would urge discussion with your vet as treatments can be complex and not without risks. The lack of nil milk hold products makes treating dairy cows difficult and a combination of products may be required for the various scenarios.

Other winter discussions or screening could include winter scours, winter feeding, bedding and bunk management. All are best had now to be prepared prior to problems arising.

**Gareth Foden
Veterinary Surgeon**



#synergytweets!

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The Benefits of Foot Trimming

Autumn has always been my favourite season - with its cool, fresh misty mornings and changing colours.



Some maize I walk past once a fortnight is now higher than an elephant's eye with 4 cobs on 1 stalk. I'm told this is quite unusual. The succession of

frosts in April and May left rows of brown fading shoots that looked as if they would never recover.

Earlier in the year I trimmed a group of in-calf heifers for a client. They are calving in now and early indications would suggest it has been beneficial to the health of the feet. It will now become part of the farms Trimming Protocol. Studies in America prove it will decrease lameness in heifers as they calve in.

The heavy deluges caused different problems for everyone. The Synergy Trimmers always see an increase in stone damage and punctures after heavy rains. This year seemed particularly bad; I could have gravelled my garden path with stones stuck in the soles of feet.



As always, time is of the essence and any lame feet should be picked up as soon as possible. Removing a stone on day 1 is much simpler and more cost effective than leaving it to puncture the corium or quick and invite infection.

I am always impressed with the foot's ability to rapidly heal itself given the right conditions, ie a block and removal of any sole separation. Calling out a trimmer when your cow's foot is as big as a football and tight as a drum is a waste of time and money.

Synergy has been gripped by Wedding fever throughout the Summer, and it was great to be able to celebrate the marriage of Vet Tech Co-Ordinator Rhi recently. It felt slightly strange to be amongst a large crowd again, but it was wonderful to see so many smiles that weren't covered by a mask. I am pleased to report that Lockdown has not, in any way, diminished my ability on the dancefloor.

Matt Board
Vet Tech



Meet the Team

Kate Downton

Kate is Head of Reception at our Headquarters in Evershot. She has worked for Synergy since it began in 2009 and even before that at Southfield, Dorchester - one of the original two founder practices. Kate is just one of the many friendly reception voices you may hear on calling Synergy! Kate has a variety of duties but her main role is working out the logistics of vets covering farm visits. When not at work Kate enjoys reading, knitting and walking with her Bedlington Whippet pup named Willow.



MORE SYNERGY WEDDINGS!

Many congratulations to our latest married couple as **Vikki Painter** our Dispenser married **Mark Hillier** on 18th September.



News from our Rounds

North Jon Reader

As we go to print, we have been blessed by several week of warm dry weather leading in to the Autumn. Hopefully this will extend the grazing period and everyday makes the winter a little bit shorter. However we need to make sure we do not overlook parasite control if we have an extended grazing period.



If the weather suddenly turns wet there is an increased risk of lungworm so please look out for youngstock that might start coughing. Hopefully fluke forecast will be lower than normal due to the dry weather but this could suddenly change. We have seen several cases of Coccidia, both at pasture and at housing. Diagnosis is not always straight forward and we would advise speciation (finding out exactly which type is present) before treatment.

We hope to have seen many of you at the Dairy Show and COVID-19 did not scupper our plans to welcome clients to our stand.

West Imogen Rogers

One common cause of calving difficulty (dystocia) is small pelvic size of the dam in comparison to the calf. In mature cattle, this is seldom an issue, but it is something we see in heifers, particularly when they have been bred for the desired calving age of approximately 24 months.



There are simple ways to establish whether a heifer is big enough to be bred for the first time (in both dairy and beef cattle). An easy to apply rule is she should be 65% of her adult bodyweight at the point of breeding. Another is to use pelvimetry. We measure her internal pelvic diameter and calculate her ability to calve on her own. It can be done from 13 months of age and it can allow you to select which of your beef heifers could calve at 2 years or help to identify any problem individuals which require intervention or shouldn't be bred from. Please speak to our team if you would like to know more.

News from our Rounds

Central

Peter Siviter

Clamps and barns are filling up, and talking to folks I think we're all feeling a bit better prepared for winter than last year after a reasonable growing season – fingers crossed for the maize.

My rounds have been fairly unremarkable this summer apart from the usual problems (new forest eye, summer mastitis, intermittent heat stress and so on), but it's reached that changeable time of year again where the weather may be against us. I'm thinking particularly of coughing calves which I guarantee we will see an increase in over the next month or two – remember to prioritise ventilation, low stocking and prompt treatment of sick animals in your calf housing.

Here's hoping for a return to relative normality with some skittles being played over the next few months, I'll look forward to seeing many of you on the alley!



East

Louise Silk

With harvest coming to an end for most in the East, it feels like attention is starting to switch back towards livestock on many of our mixed farms. Now is a good time to get various important autumn jobs booked in – PDs, forage analysis, as well as foot trimming cows and worm egg counting in youngstock, in preparation for housing. Abortion vaccines are going into the sheep and autumn calving is in full swing on Salisbury Plain.



We are certainly seeing an increase in issues associated with flies in our region – remember fly strike can hit cattle as well as sheep so keep your eye on any open wounds including on the feet of cattle and sheep and ensure preventative products' duration of action are not coming to an end.

We are delighted to continue to welcome new clients in our region on a weekly basis. We are extremely proud of our ability to provide sample collection services and medicine deliveries to your farm through our regular van service, as well as for more urgent requirements.

Please contact the practice to find out when the lovely Rachel is routinely in your area and discuss your individual needs.

NEW SERVICE

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Neil Fell on 07967 596134 or
Synergy Farm Health on 01935 83682

Dispensary Seasonal Offers



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EPRIZERO POUR ON
1L £74 2.5L £135
5L £186

**** NEW PRODUCT LAUNCH ****

SOLANTEL POUR ON FOR CATTLE
A Closantel based Flukicide treatment, treating life stages from 7 weeks to adult fluke.
Available in 1L at £105, 2.5L at £195 and 5L at £365.
Meat withhold – 63 days.



*Prices correct on printing 05/10/21. Offers end 31/10/21.
All prices ex VAT. For a full list of promotions, please call
Dispensary on 01935 83682.

Synergy Training Courses

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

Safe Use Of Veterinary Medicines (General) Evershot 18 th October 10am – 2pm
Safe Use Of Veterinary Medicines (Sheep) Evershot 28 th October 10am – 2pm
Practical Calving Workshop Evershot 9 th November 10am – 2pm
Safe Use Of Veterinary Medicines (General) Evershot 25 th November 10am – 2pm