



Hopefully all of you had an enjoyable Christmas and managed to enjoy it for a little bit despite probably being out in the cold tending to stock and defrosting water pipes. With 2017 now truly upon us it is time to look at New Year's Resolutions and how we can rejuvenate enthusiasm within farm teams when tackling the day to day jobs. Whilst most of us are a little lack lustre when it comes to sticking to our New Year manifestos it has to be worth giving it a go. With this in mind I wanted to begin by touching on the "last but my no means least" topic from the November KPI meeting:

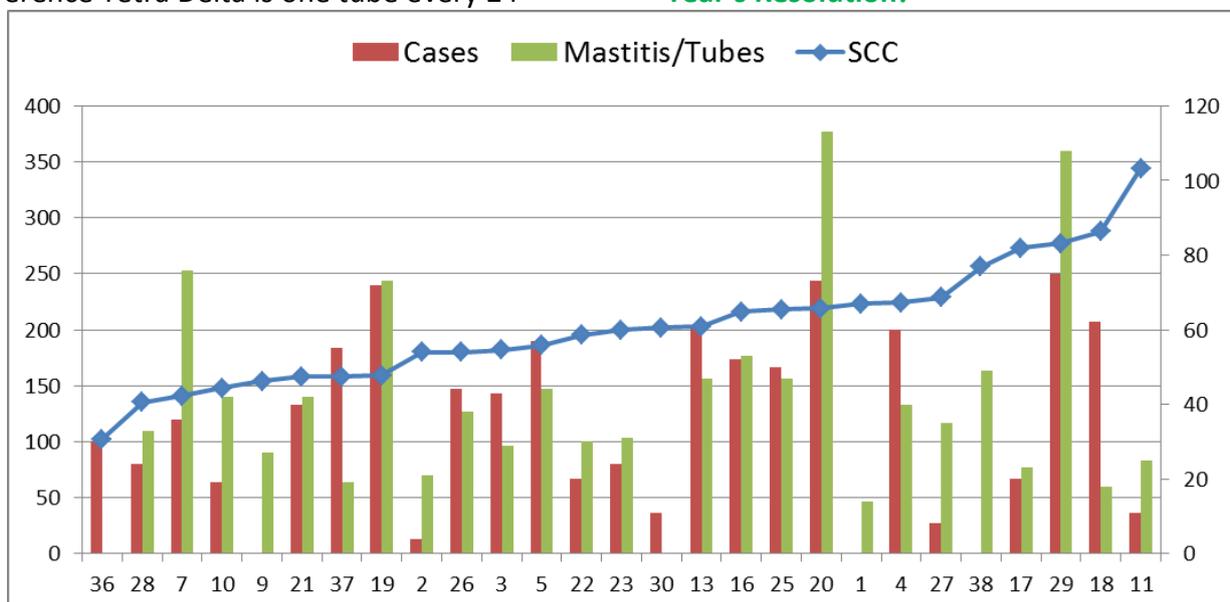
November Dairy Key Performance Indicator Meeting

At these meetings we review all of the data being recorded on dairy farms across the practice and analyse the trends to target better and more efficient production.

Across all farms we assessed the treatment of clinical mastitis cases – we compared each farms recorded cases to their intra-mammary antibiotic tube purchases. As in the graph, you can see that some farms are very accurate with both case identification and treatment whilst others have a significant area to focus on: whilst some farms are using these products correctly; many farms are not recording all cases and many are over treating cases. Without accurate records for cases of mastitis it can be very difficult to establish the main cause of mastitis and therefore our ability to advise changes is limited. When it comes to treatment regimes, it has been proven in many large studies that the speed and recovery of a case is not assisted by using extra tubes. This is especially true for E. coli mastitis where antibiotic tubes have limited effect on the causal pathogen. For reference Tetra Delta is one tube every 24

hours up to a maximum of 3 tubes and Cobactan MC is one tube every 12 hours up to a maximum of 3 tubes. Correct use of antibiotics has to be a focus for all farms especially when the room of farmers at the meeting worked out **a case of mastitis costs them around £400** once you factor in treatment costs, lost production, labour costs of treatment, damaging effects on fertility and increased replacement heifer costs. Those farms using tubes correctly are great proof that sticking to instructions really works. Farms that are often using an NSAID such as Findayne or Ketofen for mild cases and then alongside their intra-mammary antibiotic for grade 2 and 3 reportedly use less tubes and often avoid using tubes all together. The use of an NSAID is proven to speed up both the cure rate of the current infection but also reduce future relapses.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE – Mastitis records need to be accurate and easily accessible and treatment protocols should be reviewed with one of the farm vet team. An achievable New Year's Resolution!



Imrestor

We also touched on the Transition period for cows and how we have to include the 60 days pre-calving and the 30 days after calving to establish the **VITAL 90™ Days**. This time period should be seen as the beginning of the lactation rather than the end of one and the start of the next. This period has been looked at by many different groups to establish the correct management for a cow and also how it impacts upon the rest of the animal's performance. Here is why:

- Dairy cows can suffer a dip in their natural immunity in the run up to calving, leading onto diseases such as mastitis, metritis, and retained placenta – these are costly to performance in the lactation and farm medicine use.
- Cortisol, the stress hormone blocks the immune systems messengers (cytokines) allowing infections to establish because fewer white blood cells (Neutrophils) are present for first line defence against bacteria. This is especially important in the Transition window.
- Small changes made to management of cows during this period can have dramatic impacts on performance through reduction of Cortisol – speak to us about a Vital 90™ Day checklist visit to see if there are simple, cheap but effective changes to be made.
- Where daily management has already been addressed, there is a new product available from Elanco Animal Health in the form of a **synthetic messenger (cytokine called pegbovigrastim) to restore cows natural immunity**.
- It increases the number of white blood cells (Neutrophils) and also their functional ability to defend against bacteria
- Imrestor is a brand new product to the veterinary industry but has been around in human chemotherapy uses for many years. It is aimed as a preventative measure to reduce transition disease and consequently reduces the use of antibiotics in fresh cows and maximising productivity.
- Available through the practice, Imrestor is administered with two injections – one approximately seven days prior to the anticipated date of calving and the other within 24 hours after calving – with no withdrawal period.



We appreciate that this is a very complicated topic and needs to be tackled head on by the whole team so please speak to us about assessing your transition success and identifying if Imrestor might be economically viable for your herd.

TB – Farm Risk Assessment

Most, if not all of you will have been adversely affected many times with TB over the years. The apparent lack of progress in tackling this disease is understandably frustrating. However, we need to be open to any new initiatives that are available. I think we can all agree that bovine TB will not be defeated with a single strategy – we need to use ‘all the tools in the box’.

We have highlighted resources such as the TB hub, iTB and the TB advisory service when these became available. Now available, with immediate effect, is the new **Farm Level bTB Report**. Any new farm breakdowns in our area will be provided with a detailed farm pack. It will include data on the present incident, your TB history from the previous 10 years and your cattle movement history over the past 5 years.

It is hoped that this detailed information may allow for some specific targeted improvements in farm bio-security to reduce the risk of TB.

The information will arrive in the post with you but won't be sent to us. We hope you will share it with us and we can help to interpret the data to give an independent assessment and advice.

Meetings

Fertility Success

Wood Vets, AHDB Dairy and Chris Hudson from University of Nottingham

Hosted by Nick & Ed Spencer, Middlehall Farm

GL10 3BD

WEDNESDAY 11th JANUARY 2017

10.45am – 2pm with lunch