



THE
WOOD
VETERINARY
GROUP



FARM NEWSLETTER JUNE 2016

Teen Pregnancies - what is the youth of today up to?

Pregnant heifers that are not meant to be in calf are becoming a serious problem recently. The Wood Vet Group team has induced or aborted 45 heifers since January already.

At what cost?

Markets impose heavy fines for animals that are sold as beef stores and are found to be pregnant but it is just as costly when it is a homebred replacement or fat animal. These animals often have to be delivered by caesarean section due to the poor development of their pelvic canal and the calf is often not viable or is a fairly poor specimen. The heifer's growth is nearly always stunted by conceiving a pregnancy and they never seem to have much milk for their calf either so if it's alive then you waste hours bottle feeding it.

What age is it happening at?

There are definitely two sides to every story and in this case both the adult stock bull and young uncastrated bull calves can be to blame. Heifers can, depending a little upon breed and weight, happily **conceive a pregnancy as young as 6-7 months old**. Trust us, we've done the caesareans!



So what can we do now?

We can abort pregnancies early on and also induce heifers to calve early to keep the foetus size to a minimum – this reduces the viability of the calf but is much better than damaging the heifer. In the last few weeks pre-calving the injections have less impact so the earlier the better.

1. Heifers can be injected with a prostaglandin (PG) if pregnant less than 100 days
2. Heifers in calf more than 100 days need a course of corticosteroid injections – most animals respond in 36 hours to the first injection

How can we prevent this?

Bulls

- Tight removal of the stock bull after breeding the cows is essential. Most of you are achieving tight 8-10 week calving blocks - leaving the bull in after calves are 4 months old is just asking for trouble

Bull calves

- Bull calves become sexually mature very early and so need to be castrated before 6 months of age to prevent them serving and also to minimise the risks of castrating them
- A February 2016 study strongly support that **there is no difference in the age that castration is done on weight at weaning or final kill weight but...**

- The 'check' that occurs at castrating is far less if done by rubber ring under 7 days old (trained staff and with good clean technique – make sure there are two testicles)
- The next best option is castrating by vet open castration under 3 months of age
- The abattoirs are pushing most customers for castrated males now and there is definitely no premium to be had for bull beef anymore



Heifers

- If bull calves have been missed or your stock bull is Houdini then the early we sort the situation the better
- We can inject heifers 14 days after removal from the bull if you know about an 'escape' but not before. They will come on bulling again so need to be separated
- If there is any chance of later pregnancies, heifers need to be Pregnancy Diagnosed and then the appropriate treatment selected depending upon the age of the pregnancy

European Conference – Anti-Inflammatory Use

Back in November last year we discussed the use of Non Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAID's) at the time of difficult or assisted calvings. The latest trial work from the European cattle conference was highlighting how cows recovered better from the stress impacts and as a result yielded significantly better in the lactation. Stress and pain levels around calving can have long term effects on performance in the entire lactation.

Mastitis has now also been evaluated, this time by Ghent University. The findings state that we largely underestimate the pain associated with acute mastitis. Pain messengers reduce:

- Udder recovery
- Hormone levels
- Dry matter intake
- Return to cycling

The effect of pain signals goes beyond the affected quarter to influence wider cow/herd performance. Due to all of the above this increase farm culling rate and cow longevity.

This new study found that cows given a non steroidal anti-inflammatory treatment had lower levels of inflammatory messengers, faster clinical cure of the mastitis and shorter intervals to conception.

FARM LEVEL IMPACT: Use a NSAID treatment course in cows with acute mastitis alongside intra-mammary antibiotic tubes to improve udder recovery and speed of return to reproductive performance

BUT....When using intra-mammary tubes to treat mastitis in the parlour, injecting an NSAID adds an extra job to the milking routine.

Fortunately a new product has become available for both acute mastitis treatment and respiratory diseases.

Finadyne™ Transdermal is a red pour on solution that works within 4

hours of administration. It is ideally suited to use when no other product such as an antibiotic are being injected and due to the red colour the animal is clearly identified as under treatment. It lasts for 48 hours and so is designed for a one off treatment at 1ml/15kg

bodyweight – 50ml/750kg cow. Milk withdrawal is 36 hours; meat withdrawal is 7 days and once opened lasts for 6 months. We hope this product will be a useful addition to the battle against mastitis.



Meetings

Fertility Success on an expanding progressive unit

WVG, AHDB Dairy and guest speaker Chris Hudson from University of Nottingham

Hosted by Richard & Ed Newton, Millers Court
WR13 6AP

Thursday 30th June 2016

10.30am Registration – 2pm with lunch
Pre booking essential at 01452 543 999