



## Have your animals been grazing this summer?

Whilst there has been masses of grass around this summer and it has definitely been growing weather, unfortunately it has also been a great season for parasites. Warm and wet weather is perfect for parasite survival and so we need to be vigilant of this as we come to the end of grazing and prior to housing.

### 1) Gut Worms in Cows

Whilst we expect young calves to pick up worms in their first grazing season, especially if calves are put onto the same pastures year after year, there is another group of cattle that are possibly vulnerable. Adult cattle can experience high levels of a gut worm called *Ostertagia* or brown gut worm if they were not exposed in previous grazing seasons. This can result in gut wall damage lowering dry matter



intake (DMI) and therefore lowering milk yields. In herds where it has been identified as a problem through testing, a thorough treatment

regime has significantly increased milk yields and fertility performance.

**We can test dairy herds for *Ostertagia* levels with a simple milk bulk tank test called a MOO test (Milk *Ostertagia ostertagi*).** Once we have the results we can advise how best to treat herds using zero milk withdrawal products.

### 2) Young stock - Coccidiosis

With lots of young calves on the ground at the moment we almost certainly see a rise in the number of scour outbreaks. Cocci is the second most common cause of diarrhoea after Rotavirus:

- **What?:** Coccidia are single-celled parasites (not bacteria) – not all species cause a problem
- **Age:** Under 2 years old (common window is 3 weeks to 6 months) in animals housed and grazing
- **How?:** Spread between calves via the environment - eggs (oocysts) shed in faeces that survive for long periods despite heat, cold and many disinfectants
- **Why?:** Damage the wall of the large intestine creating watery diarrhoea, resulting in straining with mucus and blood seen in the diarrhoea – long term damage done
- Severe cases show depression, loss of appetite, weight loss and dehydration
- **95% of cases are not diagnosed and so the key loss with cocci is poor weight gains**
- **Diagnosis:** Collect individual or pooled muck samples and submit them to the lab – if samples get warm en route the eggs can hatch giving false readings
- **Treat:** Separate animals with diarrhoea and treat according to diagnosis including fluid therapy. The group may also need a coccidiosis treatment – speak to us about timing and type of product – remember the parasite has already done damage to the gut tissue when you see signs – stunts performance long term
- **Prevention of cases requires excellent hygiene and management:**
  1. Reduce stocking density
  2. Regularly moving feed and water troughs
  3. Reduce faecal contamination of feed and water troughs - raise or cover, clean out
  4. Increasing bedding to reduce contamination/frequently rotate animals in paddocks
  5. Avoid mixing different ages of calves
  6. Clean and disinfect all buildings between groups of calves. It is important to use a disinfectant that claims effectiveness against coccidial oocysts
  7. Mass preventative medication can be used but is not a fix for poor management



### 3) Young stock - Blackleg

Clostridial diseases occur when livestock are at pasture ingesting soil contaminated grass. Blackleg is the most common disease for cattle and there is no warning and no particular scenario that we can advise about. Losses are inevitable so **just vaccinate cattle and sheep!** Initial vaccination course of 2 doses (given 4-6 weeks apart) will cover the whole grazing season

if given 2 weeks before turnout. Booster every 6 - 12 months to give continued immunity.

Cattle can be vaccinated from as early as 2 weeks old. If the dam has her booster 8 to 2 weeks prior to calving then the calf will be covered until 12 weeks old.



### Housing – Failing to Prepare is Preparing to Fail!

A bit dramatic I know but we can significantly alter the performance through the winter months if we do not eradicate parasites and minimise the potential risks that housing brings:

#### Vaccinations

Most of you will be completing a combination of IBR and BVD vaccinations. Housing is not only an ideal time to handle cattle without causing extra stress and maximising man power but it is also a brilliant time of year to boost immunity ready for the high risk period. All vaccines have a lag phase between the injection of the vaccine and the full immunity being established. There are different vaccines available with a range of properties and so it is important to decide which regime is best for your farm.

#### IBR Vaccine

Bovilis IBR marker Live – Single vaccination intranasally or intramuscularly.

- The vaccine has a 6 month cover. (It now has a licence to be given 12 monthly once a cow has had the first two doses given 6 months apart)
- Use the vaccine in the autumn period before housing and before weather conditions are more likely to produce disease.

#### BVD

1) Bovella – Single dose course

This vaccine contains two strains of BVD one of which is European – very useful if you import cattle.

- 12 months cover from a single injection
- Heifers must be vaccinated three weeks before full cover is required i.e the start of service.

2) Bovilis BVD – It should ideally be given before the start of breeding to ensure the pregnancy is protected. Given that most herds calve all year round the best advice is: -

- Boost the adult dairy herd with a single injection at the same time – one year maximum after their starter course
- Youngstock should be fully vaccinated 4 weeks before being bred. Two injections 4-6 weeks apart as the full starter course followed by a 6 month booster – 12 month boosters from then on.

**Speak to us at the practice about protocols, prices and the best approach for your herd!**

#### Calf Vaccines

Housing is also the perfect time to review calf vaccination protocols and to check that we are targeting the right pathogens.

#### Did you stop vaccinating calves in summer months?

- Take this opportunity to blood test unvaccinated animals
- Test calves that are 12 weeks or older

**Next month we will look at what calf vaccines are available and parasite control at housing!**

