



THE
WOOD
VETERINARY
GROUP



Autumn Practice Meeting

We were delighted by the turnout at Lydney Park Estate to explore how the unit has achieved their transition to a block calving 1000 cow grazing herd milking once a day whilst controlling Johne's and ensuring the herd calves in a tight block.

Johne's – over the last 4 years the herd has implemented controls to reduce the herd prevalence of the disease. As infection transmits to calves primarily within the first month of life it highlights specific areas to control the disease transmission. We know from masses of data from NML that there are 3 major factors that affect whether a calf becomes infected or not:

1. Disease Status of the Dam – cows start shedding prior to going positive on a test. This means that positive cows or cows that become positive in the future have the highest chance of having positive calves
2. Time in the Calving Yard - calves are high risk from infection due to bacterial load i.e. adult faeces in the environment in which they are born and the longer they spend in this environment the higher the chance is that they become positive
3. Cleanliness of the Calving Yard – dirty yards have increased bacterial load and therefore increased chance of infection. Clean out dry cows every 2 weeks.

Use these points to guide your Johne's control around the dry period and calving to protect your replacement heifers.



Fertility – The herd block calves using AI guided by Estrotect stickers and observation. Cows are often served two days in a row if the sticker that is applied at first service is reactivated. Whilst this increases semen use, it is imperative that cows conceive in the target window. For this reason, the herd also does not operate a specific voluntary wait period so as soon as a cow demonstrates a heat, she is served. We know that follicles used after peak lactation have a lower chance of pregnancy and so this early service supports higher conception rates.

Grazing – Keith gave us an insight into the vital grazing management techniques used for the herd. The Kg of dry matter per pasture is measured using a plate metre to decide where to graze the cows and for how long. They also use frequent moves and smaller paddocks to ensure that cows have a consistent ration. Grazing a pasture for longer results in the grazing after day

1 being poor quality grazing as cows selectively graze better lays initially. If paddocks are smaller and used short term, then the entire paddock is grazed evenly. Using the plate metre also allows targeted use of reseeded or specific fertiliser rather than blanket use.

Dairy Key Performance Indicator Meeting

Each quarter we analyse data trends across the practice and the NMR 500 UK recording herds. This is aimed at improving herd health and sharing success stories. In the late November meeting we discussed herd SCC and how a herd with 10% or more chronic cows, will never get the herd count below 200. So how do we avoid chronic cows? From the data it is apparent that likely recovery from chronic varies depending on:

1. Stage in lactation – high cell count cows later in the lactation have a significantly reduced chance of return to low cell count
2. Level of SCC – cows that are raised slightly over 200 have a better chance of curing than if it is raised higher i.e. 400 and above

Each time a herd milk records, a list of chronic high cell count cows is produced. Knowing that lactation stage and severity of raised count has an impact on likely cure, we can now make better decisions as what

to do on an individual cow basis. Money and time can be better targeted at cows that have a substantial chance of improving.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE – take your list of chronic cows and assess each cow on severity, lactation stage and length of time on the list – then decide whether to treat, cull or dry off etc.

We also use milk recording data to assess dry period success - mastitis in the first 30 days of the lactation only shows success in relation to clinical infection. However, we know that udder health is also affected by subclinical infection. The dry period offers the best opportunity to cure high cell count infections – a significant number of herds are not effectively reducing cell counts in this period. The environment in which cows are put in immediately after dry off right through to calving can cause new cell count infections in cows that successfully got through the lactation without an issue.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE – ensure dry cow yards are clean and not over stocked to reduce risk of new infection. If dry period cure rate is not >80% then talk to us about how best to tackle these cows.

Pain Relief in Calf Procedures

Many of you will have heard me speak before about the use of Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAID's) as a method of pain relief. Large numbers of clients are seeing the benefit of using these products for Mastitis and Lameness already. Now is the time to turn our attention to calves.

There are several husbandry procedures that we cannot remove from routine practice in the interest of animal welfare, human safety and farm business viability. The British Cattle Vets Association are recommending the following approach to ensure we are following best practice guidelines:

1. Replace – selecting polled sires to negate disbudding
2. Reduce – use of more sexed semen to reduce the volume of castration required
3. Refine – perform these procedures to the best of our ability to improve welfare and production

The industry has already moved to resolve the first two areas merely through logically targeting reduced labour and cost and so it is this third 'R' that I would like to elaborate further on.

Disbudding: This is often being done on farm by competent stock keepers and we already use local anaesthetic as a legal part of this procedure. We would also like to see the use of NSAIDs. As calves are often disbudded in groups, we have a relatively new product available that is dissolvable in water. This can easily be given to the desired group from the day before the procedure for a 3-day course.

Castration: Whether a calf is rung at birth or castrated by a vet again using local anaesthetic as a basic legal requirement, the addition of a NSAID would greatly reduce the impact of the procedure. Here we can target use through either an injectable or pour on product or if calves are already grouped for castration then the above dissolvable product can be used too.

Both above procedures will cause pain and stress responses in calves, ultimately reducing feed intake at a time when efficiency is of great importance. The use of NSAIDs, whether targeted or as a group will greatly benefit the calf's welfare and production.

Speak to us about how to approach NSAID use and expect to hear us offering it as a service.



**THE FARM TEAM WISHES
YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

A Snazzy Face Lift

The reception and the farm office at Quedgeley are undergoing a refurb and so for the next few weeks the farm team is moving upstairs to the meeting room. Services and calls will run as normal, but the office staff will need more time to process medicine orders – we will process orders twice a day so please avoid just turning up. We are excited for the new layout in 2018!

It's only just December but...

Christmas Drugs Orders

Please ring ALL medicines orders in by

Wednesday 20th December

for collection/delivery on visits before Christmas!