



TB

As we head towards the year's end, it is time to take stock. One of the areas we are most asked about is, of course, TB and how the current breakdown situation is. Whilst the government and farmer led cull has been rolled out into further areas cases are at best stable within the area. A report by Sir Charles Godfray assessing the 25 year TB strategy has determined that we need a "new drive, and a concerted and concentrated effort, by all sectors involved." But in what direction? Those of you who attended various TB hub meetings in the area will know that whilst the badger population is very much still at the centre of distributing disease between farms, we understand that TB is more like the equally familiar Johne's (Paratuberculosis) than previously thought. Calves are most likely infected very early in life from their dam and other adults that are shedding in their faeces and respiratory secretions and the infection sits dormant for years before resulting in a positive on a skin or blood test. It also survives well in slurry and the environment but is killed off relatively promptly by composting of muck heaps. We need to look at every aspect of calving yards as well as slurry use on grazing paddocks, contamination of calf pens and general farm hygiene as this perpetuates the re-infection of badger sets and youngstock within the unit. A big ask indeed, but farm hygiene and bio security is a great place to focus effort into the new year.

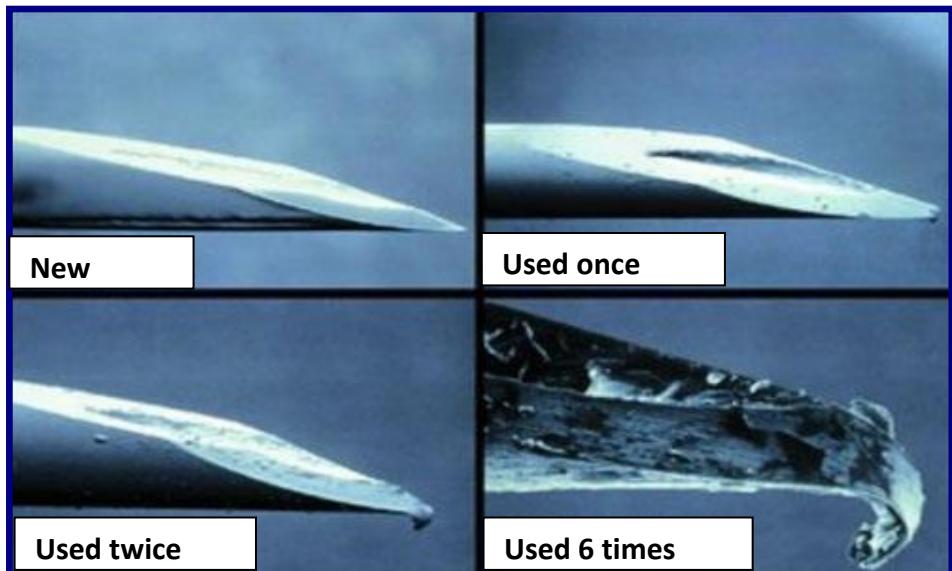
Medicine Storage

A study by Bristol University found that storage of medicines on farm and in transit is a large factor affecting production and health status of livestock. This also extended to the use of old syringes and needles. Not only is multiple use of a needle very painful and increases the risk of needles breaking off but dirt can easily stick to these needles meaning needle site infection/abscesses are very likely.

This is especially detrimental for fat stock. As seen in this electron microscope picture, even one use of a needle causes damage to the needle and bacteria can stick to these rough edges.

Storage was also a major issue.

Vaccines must be kept between 2°C and 8°C and away from direct sunlight at all times including transport to the farm. This is especially important in the summer months but medicines should also



never be frozen as this will also inactivate the product. Bring a cool bag and freezer block with you to collect vaccines from the practice. Test your fridge to check it doesn't have freezing and warming cycles throughout the day – this is more likely in cheaper fridges. Once broached, vaccines also do not work after 8 to 12 hours so throw away any part used bottles. Make sure medicines are administered with new, clean needles and syringes and contamination is kept to a minimum especially with vaccines. Using multiple dose guns is efficient but needles still need to be changed frequently and calibrated to ensure the right dose is being given. Use your sharps bin to dispose of any used needles and the large bottle bin for empty or part used bottles and also any out of date products including NSAID and antibiotics.

Ringworm

Most farms will have had ringworm in calves at some point in the recent years. It is a fungal infection of the skin and hair that is also transmissible to people. Not only does it look unsightly especially to prospective buyers or inspectors but it often leads to secondary skin infections, markedly lower growth rates and scarring that leads to hide defects for slaughtered cattle. Sometimes badly affected calves need euthanasing for welfare. The lesions start as a circular lesion of hair loss with a grey plaque but can spread to large areas primarily on the head and neck.



How is it spread?:

- Young calves are very susceptible and it is commonly manifested by about 2 months old. This is perpetuated by poor colostrums transfer at birth
- Fungal spores survive for many months in the environment and can be transferred from wood, straw, metal, clothing and of course get transferred from infected lesion to the next animal. As such daily activities of feeding and drinking cause high risk of transfer. This means that group reared calves are amongst the highest risk group to catch the infection. Spores survive in dark sheds for over a year.
- Other diseases such as BVD and underfeeding calves also increases likelihood of disease through immune suppression.

Whilst UV light does a good job at killing it off it is often too late and we cannot rely on an English winter having much in the way of sunshine. In most cases the lesions are self limiting but it can take 1 to 4 weeks between infection and the appearance of the first lesion, hence the unknown spread of infection.

How to avoid Ringworm outbreaks?

- All equipment and buildings need to be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected with effective chemicals between batches of calves – 4% Chlorine in the disinfectant has shown efficacy.
- Gloves should be worn to handle calves that have lesions and changed between calves not only to stop you spreading it but also to stop you catching it yourself.
- Keep infected calves separate until lesions have healed to stop whole groups becoming infected.

Treatment

Imaverol fungicidal wash can be used to treat clinical cases but requires application in a 1 to 50 parts dilution in warm water every 3 days for at least 3 to 4 times to soak the lesion and penetrate to kill the fungus. This reduces the spread of infection and should speed up the resolution of the lesion.

Bovilis Ringvac is a fantastic vaccine that can be used to both prevent cases and speed up recovery of already infected animals. We have several clients using the vaccine in young calves where certain sheds were repeatedly infecting calves and these cohorts have overtaken older animals in growth performance. The vaccine regime is:

- 2 injections 10-14 days apart – Can start from 2 weeks old
- 2ml dose in calves that are unaffected and a 4ml dose if they already have signs of ringworm
- Older animals (over 4 months) starting the course have a 4ml dose and 8ml if they are already affected
- This higher dose for affected animals boosts their immune response to speed up healing



Speak to us about implementing this vaccination regime in your calves



**It's only just December but...
CHRISTMAS MEDICINE
ORDERS**

Please ring ALL medicines
orders in by

Wednesday 19th December
for collection/delivery on visits
before Christmas!