



THE  
WOOD  
VETERINARY  
GROUP

# FARM NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2020



## Leptospirosis

Despite some decline in prevalence, Lepto is still a common source of ABORTION, POOR FERTILITY and MILK DROP, with those that graze at the highest risk. However, year-round housing is not a guaranteed safeguard due to the infection route. Housing of cattle is a good time to test bulk tanks to see if the herd have been exposed during grazing. The bacteria are shed in milk and from the kidneys into urine and can cause:

- **Reduced conception rate to as low as 15% in clinical outbreaks**
- **Decreased milk yield by 800 litres per lactation**
- **Higher abortion rates – especially late stage abortion**
- **It is also zoonotic (transfers to people) and can also cause 'flu like' symptoms in humans – we don't need any more nasty bugs in 2020!**



Lepto is shed in cow urine and is spread via:

- Contaminated water sources which can include all non-mains water sources including bore holes
- **Water flooding over grazing pastures from contaminated rivers and ponds – very pertinent in some areas of Gloucestershire!**
- Persistently infected cows that shed despite vaccination (the vaccine prevents clinical disease but only reduces shedding)
- Rat activity contaminating water and feed stores with urine
- Very poor forages with soil contamination (Lepto can survive for six months in wet soil)
- Indirect contact with the bacteria from bought in animals
- Co-grazing animals increases likely infection e.g.: Buying in animals/ Bull hiring/ Sheep grazing

Due to the spread of the bacteria, a certain amount can be done to eliminate the risks through farm management, but vaccination will be a vital part of any plan where Leptospirosis has been identified as a problem. Due to an issue with availability of Leptospirosis vaccine in 2018 some farms have lapsed their herd protection leaving them at risk of new infection outbreaks and potentially devastating impacts on fertility, yield, and calving performance. **Now is a brilliant time to test your herd and then if a positive result comes back there is plenty of time to vaccinate all breeding stock ahead of spring turnout and serving.**

When vaccinating with **Lepto Vaccine:**

- Primary course of 2 injections given 4 weeks apart
- 2nd dose given 2 or more weeks before turnout/service
- Annual booster again no less than 2 weeks before turnout
- Vaccinate all breeding animals – i.e. heifers prior to first service and bulls too

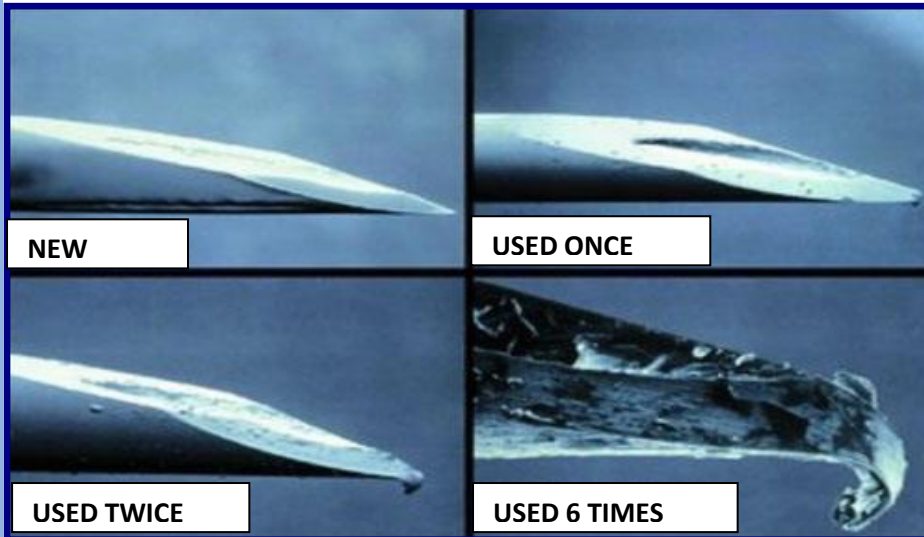
**Is it a problem on your farm?**

Do a BULK MILK TEST or BEEF BLOODS – 1 bulk milk or 10 bloods are free on a scheme if you don't know your status. You can use the same bulk tank sample to look for Ostertagia (Lungworm) too and get ahead of both jobs!

**Speak to us to get this booked in this winter so you can make changes ahead of spring turnout**

## 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 included 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 microscopic dirt can easily stick to these needles meaning needle site infection/abscesses are very likely. This is especially detrimental for stock destined for the food chain. 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. Using an old needle is also more likely to result in injury to the injector as it is more painful and does not penetrate the skin smoothly – something to consider!



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. You will have seen our new cool bags to transport medicines to farm – keep bringing these back to collect your next order.



Test your fridge to check it does not have freezing and warming cycles throughout the day – this is more likely in cheaper fridges. Once broached, vaccines must be used within 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.

## TELEPHONES

We are having a brand-new phone system installed in early December to improve how many calls we can take across the building. Please avoid non urgent calls e.g placing medicine orders and booking in TB tests on **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December** while we swap our computer and phone systems over. You can use [largeanimal@woodvet.co.uk](mailto:largeanimal@woodvet.co.uk) to place medicine orders and ring the Vet Tech mobile on 07513 127475. As always, please use the vet's mobiles as another point of contact if you are struggling to get through. Once the new system is installed the capacity will be much better and you will be able to get straight through to the right department.



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

Please ring ALL medicines orders in  
by  
**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December** for  
collection/delivery on visits over  
Christmas and New Year!

