



New Forest Eye Disease (NFD)

Due to the very hot and humid weather with bouts of rain, we have seen a significant rise in the amount of nuisance flies on farm and the resulting issues. A major cattle disease caused by flies that affects all age groups is New Forest Eye Disease. Also known as Infectious Bovine Keratoconjunctivitis, it is a bacterial infection of the outer layer of the cornea caused by *Moraxella bovis*. This bacteria is spread by flies but also from direct contact between animals. It produces a painful and aggressive ulcer on the surface of the eye. This is first seen as small crater on the cornea surface but can easily go undetected. The more obvious clinical signs are:

- Excessive tear production staining the side of the face that attracts yet more flies
- Partial or full closing of the eye due to pain and seeking out shade to get out of the bright sunlight which exacerbates the pain
- A white/cloudy spot on the surface of the eye or in severe cases holes on the eye surface
- Apparent blindness or unwillingness to move unless in a group of cattle
- If left untreated, ulcers can rupture which causes complete loss of sight and ultimately surgical removal of the eye is required

Treatment is straightforward and very effective if done in the early stages of the disease:

- Topical ophthalmic ointments
 - o Usually 2 treatments 48 hours apart are needed (Orbenin eye ointment)
- NSAID injection (anti-inflammatory product such as Metacam or Ketofen dependent on milk withdrawal requirement) to reduce pain and tear production
- Injecting antibiotics into the eyelid margin space is very effective but it requires one of the farm veterinary team to do it
- Vet only injections are also an option for cases at grazing

The most important aspect of all eye diseases is that the healing process looks a lot worse before it looks better. A normal cornea is clear and has no blood vessels in it, so for healing to occur blood capillaries must grow in from the edge of the cornea and this makes the surface of the eye look angry and bright red. It can be seen as a red ring around the eye (see picture).

Eventually these vessels start to regress and form a ring around a central white scar. The following signs indicate the eye is healing:

- Tear production reduces or ceases
- The eye opens fully
- You can see the healing process

If treatment is delayed, then the eye may never fully heal and leave the animal with varying degrees of visual impairment or complete blindness. If the surface of the eye ruptures then it will need the eye to be removed as it can lead to fatal meningitis due to the short connection between the eye and the brain. Any rapid swelling/craters also need to be assessed as they can be from injuries or cancerous growths not just NFD.



Another disease that peaks during fly season, is mastitis. Flies not only help to spread bugs, but often in the very hot weather, cows will crowd under the shade resulting in heavily contaminated ground that causes udder infections. This can be seen as both clinical mastitis and high somatic cell counts.

Where possible strip grazing should be practiced ensuring pastures are not heavily soiled but also consider the better times of day for grazing and consider housing in the hottest part of the day instead.

With the significant increase in cases of NFE and mastitis we have seen over the past few weeks, it is apparent that some farms are not getting fly prevention quite right. Speak to us if you have concerns about the number of cases you are seeing – often adjustments in dosing regime, product choice and environmental management can make significant changes to fly levels around the cows. There are also novel ways of reducing the farm fly burden using parasitic wasps that we have implemented with great success over the last two seasons.

On Farm Medicine Disposal – Dairy, Beef and Sheep Units

With farm assurance inspections often falling in the summer months, it is a good time to make sure you get your medicine cupboards and disposal records up to date. Under Red Tractor and crucially DEFRA guidelines **ALL LIVESTOCK PREMISES MUST HAVE A YELLOW SHARPS BIN AND GRIFF BIN** to dispose of used needles and the bin for medicine bottles. These containers are also for the disposal of medicines that are out of date, contaminated or have been broached for over 28 days and recorded as wastage on your medicine records. These are always available from the practice and the cost includes returning the container to us for licensed disposal. Our summer offer is running for another year:



JULY AND AUGUST

Buy a 27 Kg Bottle Bin and a 2 Litre sharps bin for just £60 +VAT

Ring the Office today to order your summer deal!

New Faces

As well as a full pharmacy refurbishment completed in July to make better use of the space and Nat, one of our nurses moving into a full-time pharmacy position, we have two brand new faces joining the farm team.

Beth Williams-Roberts

We are delighted to welcome our new graduate vet, Beth to the farm team.

Beth qualified from the University of Liverpool this summer and joins us at the start of August. Beth is already very familiar with the practice and has met many of you already, having seen lots of experience with us during vet school. Beth grew up on a beef and sheep farm in South Wales and her favourite time of year on the farm is spring when she enjoys assisting with a tricky calving or lambing. She now farms in Gloucestershire with her partner so knows her way around lots of the local area already.



Kate Elford

We also welcomed Kate at the end of July, to the farm office team. Kate will be working full time in the office alongside Wendy and Julie covering all aspects of farm office work and co-ordinating the vets out on farm. As Kate completes her training to take over from her in the office, Flick will then be stepping out of the office team to increase her Vet Tech role to full time and start her on farm TB training as another Approved TB tester at Woods.

Please give both our new team members a very warm Wood's welcome!