



THE
WOOD
VETERINARY
GROUP

FARM NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2021



After a rather disappointing summer weather wise for holiday makers, the long periods of warm and wet weather have actually supported good grass growth later into the year. This has allowed frequent but quality cuts of forage and hopefully maize foraging will be successful in the coming weeks. Stock will hopefully have a long grazing period ahead of them well into autumn. With the combination of hot weather and downpours over these last few months, parasite burdens have remained fairly constant on pastures causing reduced performance and in some cases outbreaks of disease. As the grass available reduces and animals are grazing harder the incidence of issues may increase.

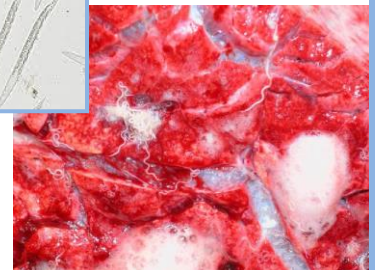
Being vigilant for signs and knowing parasite levels prior to housing will mean we can preventatively manage stock during late grazing and at housing:

Husk/Lungworm

Warm weather followed by spells of wet weather allows Lungworm larvae already shed earlier in the summer to be spread around on pastures. These then develop into infective larvae ready to be ingested by naive cattle that are grazing into the autumn. "Husk" is most common between June and October and leads to significant production losses.

Be vigilant for:

- Widespread coughing in groups especially after exercise
- Increased respiratory rate and difficulty breathing – "Lungworm stance" with head down and tongue out
- Rapid weight loss
- Poor growth performance in fattening groups
- Milk drop in dairy cows – up to 4kg per day in severe cases
- Deaths in heavy infestations



Farms that have a history of lungworm (*Dictyocaulus viviparus*) that are not vaccinating need to be extra vigilant, especially when grazing permanent pastures in late summer.

If cases are suspected, then removal to 'safer' pastures e.g. aftermath or housing in well ventilated sheds is advisable until diagnosis can be confirmed.

Parasitic bronchitis can be confirmed by post-mortem (as seen in the picture of the lung with white larvae seen). Detection of larvae in saliva or faecal samples can also be done to establish exposure or a milk ELISA test can be done in dairy cows to establish the cause. IBR can look similar at initial onset so investigation is vital to ensure the correct treatment course.

A wormer treatment should be administered to kill off residual larvae and adults (most are effective but check it covers *D. viviparus*) but in severe cases anti-inflammatory therapy may be required alongside.

Speak to us if you are concerned about your farm risk and how to prevent cases

Coccidiosis – Youngstock

Coccidiosis is the second most common cause of diarrhoea in calves after Rotavirus and outbreaks often spike in frequency at this time of year. We are already seeing peak levels of cocci across the area:

What?: Coccidia are single-celled parasites (not bacteria) – not all species cause a problem

Age: Less than 2 years old (primarily 3 weeks to 6 months old) in **both housed and grazing** animals

How?: Spread between calves via the environment - eggs (oocysts) shed in faeces and survive for long periods despite heat, cold and most disinfectants

Why?: Damage the wall of the large intestine by replicating in the gut cells and then erupting out, damaging the cell. This creates a watery diarrhoea, resulting in straining with mucus and blood seen in the diarrhoea – long term gut damage.

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 – keep samples cool en route to stop eggs hatching and giving false negative result. There is no type, smell or colour of calf faeces that is diagnostic of cocci so samples are needed to confirm.

Treat: Completely separate animals with diarrhoea and treat according to diagnosis including fluid therapy. The rest of the group may also need a coccidiosis treatment depending on the prevalence – speak to us about timing and type of product – remember the parasite has already damaged the gut tissue when you see signs – this stunts performance long term.

Prevention of cases requires excellent hygiene and management:

- Reduce stocking density
- Regularly move feed and water troughs
- Reduce faecal contamination of feed and water troughs - raise or cover and clean out frequently
- Increasing bedding to reduce contamination/frequently rotate animals in paddocks
- Avoid mixing different ages of calves
- Clean and disinfect all buildings between groups of calves. It is important to use a disinfectant that claims effectiveness against coccidial oocysts. Steam cleaning can also be effective. Pastures remain infected for years after so don't put young calves in the same place year on year
- In feed preventative medication can be used but is not a fix for poor management

Young stock - Blackleg

Clostridial diseases occur when livestock are at pasture ingesting soil contaminated grass. Blackleg is a very common disease for cattle and there is no warning and no particular scenario that we can advise about although the wet weather with poor grass coverage will be a major risk factor. Animals are often just found dead or seen as dull, depressed and with a very high temperature.

Post mortem findings show dark muscles especially in legs and lumbar muscles where the muscle tissue is dead/dying. This is why animals often present with sudden onset lameness. Treatment is rarely successful unless started incredibly early. 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.



Future Farming Resilience Fund

There is free help available to assist with the transition from Basic Payment Scheme to the new environmental land management scheme. Register today to access this help with one of the 19 providers at <https://defrafarming.blog.gov.uk/2021/07/13/the-future-farming-resilience-fund-providers-named/>