



Grass Staggers/Hypomagnesaemia

With the rainfall we didn't get earlier this year now fully caught up and set to continue and paired with fairly cold temperatures it poses some significant risks to grazing animals especially freshly calved dairy and beef cows. Spring grass is always very low in Magnesium and lower in fibre and has a high moisture content causing it to pass through the gut quickly. This speed of gut transit means that the animal absorbs very little of what Magnesium is present. Cattle require a daily dietary intake of Magnesium and use up a constant amount especially for milk production and oestrus activity.

Clinical Signs:

- Cows will twitch and be unsteady at walk. Affected animals can often be hyper excitable/hypersensitive to stimulation which can make them dangerous to handle
- Frothing around the mouth, excessive blinking and teeth grinding can also be seen
- Clinical signs in acute cases can progress quickly and often animals will just be found as a 'sudden death' – acute cases can be linked time wise to just after milking or bulling activity



Management:

- Ruminants cannot store magnesium and rely on daily dietary intake:
 - o 60g/cow/day of calcined magnesite or Cal Mag needs to be given orally somewhere in the diet either in a concentrate feed, in a TMR or in water
 - o Magnesium is very bitter and so it is vital to dose correctly and mix well into rations
- When adding Magnesium to water sources:
 - o No other water source must be available
 - o If the grazing is very wet, uptake of water from troughs may be low so increase the dose
 - o Do not let Magnesium chloride accumulate in the bottom of troughs as it will stop cows drinking completely. Clean troughs more often when treated with Magnesium
- Start using Magnesium well before grazing. Cows do not store Magnesium well, so a "run-up" access period is required to ensure no cases straight after turnout
- Try and buffer feed animals with more fibrous foods at pasture to slow down gut passage and increase Magnesium intake (i.e. Silage or Hay)
- Avoid relying on mineral blocks as there can be a huge variation in how much individual cows use them, especially with dominant behaviours and bullying. This leaves cows still at risk of staggers
- Avoid Potash application onto grazing pastures in the spring as this depresses the level of Magnesium found in grass (NB Slurry contains high levels of Potash so acts the same way) – graze pastures much later in the year that have had slurry or potash added

Magnesium deficiency is usually a combination of low magnesium levels and a stress event that triggers the disease. For most stock this will be adverse weather whilst out grazing but could also be events such as weaning calves for beef animals, bulling for spring block calving herds or water restriction for any stock. Try and minimise stressors at the most dangerous times of year for low Magnesium – spring and autumn.

Treating cows for hypomagnesaemia is often very unsuccessful so take preventative actions now

Farming Investment Fund

The next round of the Farming Investment Fund is now open. **The Farming Equipment and Technology Fund – Animal Health and Welfare** is available for grants between £1000 and £25,000 towards equipment and technology to improve animal health and welfare. There is a huge variety of items available including calving gates, handling systems, EID technology, automated footbaths, calf jackets, feeders, brushes and housing. This closes on 15th June 2023 but is a competitive grant so get applications in early to be in with the best chance.

Visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/farming-investment-fund#farming-equipment-and-technology-fund-2023> to find out more information on what is eligible and how to apply to make the most of this funding.



FARMING EQUIPMENT & TECHNOLOGY FUND
ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

£1,000 - £25,000

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:
MIDDAY 15TH JUNE

Foot Trimming Course

We have just 2 spaces left on our Foot Trimming course this April – it is a 2 day course made up of a theory afternoon and a practical morning on farm. Having established a set trimming protocol and treatment approaches for the common lameness lesions, we will then use the practical session to trim cadaver feet with one of our vets and live cows with our NACFT Foot Trimmer. This course is ideally suited to those already trimming on farm and treating lame cows or interested in starting and provides a full set of notes to take away with laminated cheat sheets.

Friday 14th April 1pm to 4pm at the Practice

Monday 17th April 9am to 1pm at Boseley Mill Farm, Westbury on Severn, GL14 1LS

Please contact the office for more information or to book in your place



Two New Faces

We are delighted that we have two new Approved TB Testers starting with us this month. Sarah Trenchard starts in early April and Hannah Coles starts towards the end of April. They are both very experienced with farm life and TB testing so are looking forward to meeting you all. They will both be out training with our vets over the coming months on TB tests so please give them a warm welcome.

Fluid Pump Service Day

Don't forget it is nearly time for our pump service day. Have a hunt around the farm and find all your Selekt pumps, tubes and guards and either give them to someone the next time they are on farm or drop them off at the practice by 10am on Thursday 13th April.

They will be ready to collect from later that afternoon having been cleaned and serviced or delivered at your next visit.



Come along to have your SELEKT Pump serviced **free of charge**.

SELEKT®

Date Thursday 13th April 2023
Time 10am-12pm
Venue Wood Veterinary Group, 125 Bristol Road, Quedgeley, Gloucester, GL2 4NB

Free
SELEKT Pump
Servicing Clinic



Wood Vets Farm Team



@woodvetsfarmteam