

February 2009



DAMORY VETERINARY CLINIC

Cattle Newsletter

NEWSLETTER TOPICS

Bluetongue

Leptospirosis/BVD

Liver Fluke

Lungworm

Calf pneumonia/Scours

Bull Fertility Testing

Bluetongue Vaccination

Bluetongue still remains a huge threat to UK livestock, and vaccination needs to be continued this year. We had an excellent uptake on the vaccine last year, this needs to be maintained to help keep Bluetongue from becoming established in the UK.

Currently we are still only vaccinating for strain 8 of the bluetongue virus (although other strains are moving through Europe and could soon become a threat).

Cattle – any stock that received a primary course of 2 doses last year will only require a single booster dose this year. Any cattle not vaccinated last year will require 2 doses 3 weeks apart.

Sheep – all stock will require a single dose whether vaccinated last year or not.

Goats – for previously unvaccinated animals a primary course of 2 doses is required (as cattle), and 6 monthly boosters are recommended.

Work is still being done on the significance of transfer of immunity via colostrum, but the current advice is that all youngstock (calves/lambs/kids) should be vaccinated from 4 weeks of age, irrespective of when their mothers were vaccinated.

The risk period will begin in mid March again, so aim to get the vaccinations completed well before then. Please contact the surgery to order your vaccine ASAP.

Leptospirosis / BVD

Many of you are also due to continue with your leptospirosis and/or BVD vaccination programmes at this time of year, and boosters/primary doses for Leptospirosis are best given in the spring prior to turnout. Please phone the surgery with your vaccine requirements, or if you wish to discuss the timing of vaccinations in conjunction with Bluetongue etc.

Liver Fluke

Subsidised dung and bulk milk sampling

We may be repeating ourselves, but this is the worst year for liver fluke we have ever seen. We've been seeing clinical signs (weight loss, diarrhoea), but even without sick animals, liver fluke causes reduced growth rates in youngstock and reduced fertility and milk yields in adult cattle.

For dairy herds a subsidised bulk milk test is available to assess the status of the herd. Beef herds and youngstock can be tested via a pooled dung sample – the best time of the year to do this is NOW (late winter). With treatment costs of only £2 for an adult cow it's really worth knowing the status and do something about it if necessary. We try to remember mentioning it at our visits, but please feel free to bring in a dung or milk sample.

Calf pneumonia – Vaccination and Treatment

We have seen many outbreaks of calf pneumonia on farms in the last four weeks. Several drugs are available to treat pneumonia, all with differing characteristics, please ring for advice.

Micotil - still available and v effective, has to be given by a Veterinary Surgeon.

Draxxin— Similar in action to Micotil, but effective for a longer time, (but more expensive!)

Nuflor minidose – same as Nuflor, but with a lower volume and better syringability

Resflor – a combination product of Nuflor and Finadyne with synergistic effect.

Prevention is always better than cure, and apart from correcting stocking rates and ventilation, vaccination is an important and effective tool in preventing disease. There are many vaccines available, and we would be happy to advise on which vaccine would suit your system. We can also carry out a subsidised blood test on 5 calves/youngstock two weeks after disease to assess which viruses are present on farm to help ascertain which vaccine is likely to work best. Remember, the treatment costs are only the tip of the iceberg – the real costs of pneumonia is in reduced growth rates and poor feed conversion.

We also now have some rapid test kits for diagnosing the cause of calf scour. These can give us a rapid result for E.coli K99, Rotavirus, Coronavirus and Cryptosporidia. At a cost of only £10.00 per test these should be very helpful in diagnosing the causes of scour.

Bull fertility testing

Our bull fertility service is now up and running. Whether in suckler herds or on dairy heifers, subfertile or infertile bulls can cost £££s, and many problems can be spotted by physical examination and microscopic examination of semen before it's too late. Please contact us to discuss this further if you are interested.



We do need a secure but accessible race/crush in order to be able to carry out this procedure safely, and access to a power supply nearby. A nearby building in which to set up the microscope is ideal but the back of the car can be used. This procedure cannot be done in the rain!

