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Summer Mastitis

With the recent warm weather we have already seen cases of summer mastitis this year. This acute form of bacterial mastitis typically affects dry cows and heifers in the summer months, and is spread by flies landing on the udder.

Affected animals will be in a lot of pain, dull, lame, and off their feed with a high body temperature. The udder will become swollen and hard. Stripping out the affected quarter will produce a thick yellow secretion. Severe cases can lead to abortion and death.

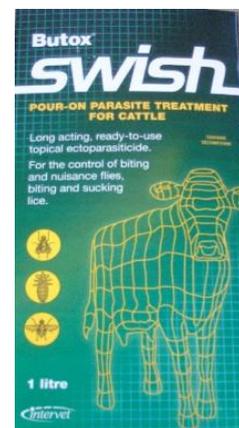


The main culprit for spreading the disease is the fly *Hydrotaea irritans* (the sheep head fly). These flies are mostly found in wooded, damp areas with stagnant water. On a dry, still day they will come out from the bushes and feed on cows' legs and udders. Teat lesions will also increase the risk of disease.

Summer mastitis prevention consists of:

- Reducing exposure by keeping susceptible animals off high-risk pastures
- Fly control products such as Swish, Spot-on and Flypor
- Dry cow management – antibiotic tubes can be used in high risk situations

Good fly control will also have the benefit of reducing cases of new forest eye (Electron ear tags are particularly useful for this). Please contact us at the practice for advice on managing summer mastitis and fly control on your farm.



Redwater

Redwater is a severe life-threatening disease of cattle that requires immediate Veterinary treatment.

Cause: It is caused by a parasite "*Babesia divergens*" that is transmitted by ticks. As long as ticks are active this disease is a potential risk and should be considered. We have already seen cases this year and often remain a problem until October. Cases occur throughout the year if conditions are suitable.

The parasite invades and destroys red blood cells. With the loss of red blood cells cattle quickly become anaemic. Due to low oxygen levels in the blood animals may behave unpredictably due to impaired brain function. When the cells rupture the red pigment – haemoglobin is released into the blood stream. Haemoglobin is excreted by the kidneys into the urine – which causes "red wine" discolouration of the urine, as well as causing toxic damage to the kidneys.



Clinical signs: These vary depending on the extent of the disease. They can include; high temperatures, red/ brown/ black coloured urine, diarrhoea, generalised weakness and incoordination.



Treatment: Injection with **Imizol**, given under the skin. Be aware of the 213 days meat and 21 days milk withdrawal period. A blood transfusion and other supportive treatment may be required for severely anaemic animals.

Control and prevention: Ideally control tick areas – clear scrub and avoid grazing areas that are densely vegetated or under-grazed and rough. Well managed and closely grazed swards will hold fewer ticks.

When animals are grazing tick areas take precautions to control against ticks with topical treatments – but be aware once the drug effect wears off, cattle will become susceptible again. If infected ticks are present Imizol can be given at a preventative dose which will stop the parasite for approx. 4 weeks. If the animals are infected by ticks when protected by the Imizol they will develop a natural immunity to the disease.

Immunity: Calves aged up to 6 months old appear to have a natural resistance to this disease and if exposed in early life develop long-term immunity. It can therefore be a good idea to graze young replacement calves on redwater fields in the hope that they become infected and immune for later life.



Consider that brought-in animals which haven't previously been exposed will have no natural immunity and therefore will be susceptible if introduced to a tick infested area. The use of prophylactic Imizol treatment before naïve animals are introduced to high-risk pastures is therefore highly recommended.

Wormer Resistance Testing in Sheep

Nationally around 40% of flocks have a level of resistance to white drenches, 15% to yellow drenches and 5% to clear drenches.

It is rare for “total resistance” to exist towards a class of wormer. White drenches, for example, can still have a marked deworming effect despite a level of resistance being present. As such they should still be used in certain situations to help reduce the usage of other classes of wormer, which helps to delay resistance forming against these other classes.

Knowledge of your flock’s resistance status is important as it helps guide worming product choices. It also enables an effective flock worming plan to be drawn up, which should aim to slow the progression of further resistance and guide the most efficient/economic use of worming products.



Once your lamb crop has achieved a high worm egg count and requires worming we can test their wormer resistance status. We do this by;

- Spray marking three groups of 10 lambs.
- Collecting pre-treatment faecal egg count samples from each group.
- Treating group 1 with a white drench, group 2 with a yellow drench & group 3 with a clear drench (a 4th cydectin group can also be tested if desired).
- Collecting post-treatment faecal egg count samples from each group 10-14 days later.
- We can then assess the percentage reduction in egg counts pre & post treatment to calculate if any level of resistance exists in each group.

For further details and costs of doing a Wormer Resistance Test please contact Matthew Burge at the surgery.

Dog Microchipping Laws – Advanced Warning

All dogs will legally need to be microchipped from 6th April 2016. It will be the owner’s responsibility to ensure that all dogs are microchipped, registered, and that the contact details are kept up to date on the database. Please contact us at Damory if you need to arrange to have your dog(s) microchipped.