

May 2010



DAMORY VETERINARY CLINIC

Cattle Newsletter

NEWSLETTER TOPICS

Feeding and Monitoring at turnout

Look out for staggers and Bloat

Bull Fertility Testing - IT PAYS!

A new disease in calves

Feeding and monitoring at turnout

The unusual weather pattern this spring has resulted in variable grass quality and quantity, putting a lot of guesswork into feeding at turnout. First observations show that while yields were holding, some farms had reduced butterfat levels. The energy and protein status is difficult to assess and when fertility drops or PD results are unsatisfactory, a lot of damage has been done.

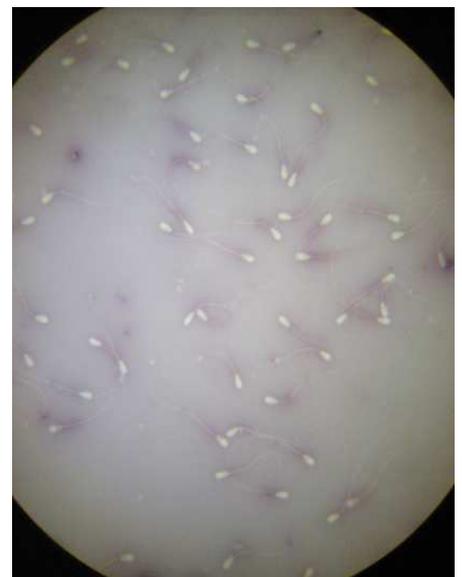
Blood profiles from 2 weeks after turnout can reduce the guesswork, giving early indications of energy and protein status. Results are usually back within 2-3 days and adjustments can then be made. Please speak to us to tailor a profile according to your circumstances and needs. Also, please see the enclosed information sheet on the condition of displaced abomasum.

Look out for staggers and bloat

Any significant rainfall now may cause a sudden flush of grass growth, resulting in increased risk of hypomagnesaemia (grass staggers). Magnesium chloride either in the water or at about 100g / cow in the feed is an excellent way to prevent it, and this should be kept up throughout May. Please make sure you have one or a few bottles of straight magnesium sulphate in stock for emergency treatment under the skin. Bloat can be caused by lush grass/clover, but can also be an indication of sodium deficiency or sodium/potassium imbalance. Soil samples and sodium application should be considered for prevention. When turning out on risky pasture, providing a buffer feed of hay/straw/ big bale silage can help to prevent bloat.

Bull Fertility Testing-It Pays!

We are testing more and more bulls for fertility and are finding the results very interesting, showing a variety of outcomes from completely infertile to excellent. One in every 3-4 bulls has been shown to be subfertile, getting less cows in calf within a given time, with the resulting problems of reduced weaning weight for suckler calves, shift in calving pattern for beef and dairy herds etc. A subfertile bull can cost £1000's! The method we are using (physical examination, followed by electro-ejaculation for semen collection and microscopic examination of semen) is well established and will provide an instant / same day result. We can also provide a written certificate. Please call us for more details.

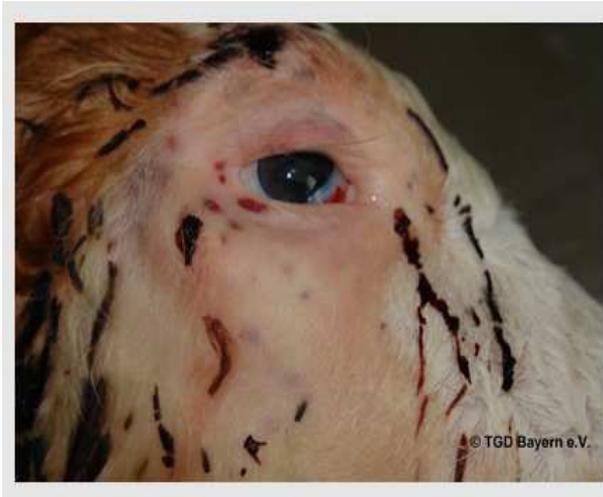


A New Disease in Calves

Please look out for “Blood sweating” (Bovine Neonatal Pancytopenia)

This apparently new condition has been observed since 2008 in about 2000 calves across Europe, mostly in Germany, with cases occurring more recently in Scotland and England, including the south west. It affects calves (beef and dairy) under 4 weeks of age, and presents clinically as bleeding through the skin and from injection and tagging sites, nose, mouth and rectum. Most affected calves die. The cause for this is a massive bone marrow destruction occurring some time around birth. Why this occurs we don't know yet.

The Veterinary Investigation Centres are undertaking work to try and determine the cause of this condition. For this reason it is very important to call us if you see these symptoms in any of your calves. It is NOT a notifiable disease (so please ring us, not the Ministry), and NO link has been established or is suspected with any human disease.



As you may have read in the press, there is a suspicion that one of the three BVD vaccines on the market may be a risk factor. The BVD vaccine we routinely dispense (Bovilis BVD) has not been associated with the disease and we have not seen any cases within our practice. We strongly advise you continue BVD vaccination where BVD is present or where there is a risk of introduction.