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In this issue: Fever Tags, Anthrax, New Advice on Treating Fluke, Our Next Meeting

Fever Tags

Two of our farms have been trialling “Temp Verified Fever Tags” on their calves with impressive results.

The fever tag mounts onto a simple button tag (supplied) and a flexible temperature probe is passed down the calf’s ear canal.



The tag will flash brightly if the calf’s temperature continuously exceeds 39.7°C for 6 hours (settings are adjustable).

This early warning signal has allowed much earlier identification and treatment of pneumonia. The result has been dramatically lower mortality rates due to pneumonia on our two farms which have been using the tags.



The tags cost £15 each but have a 2 year battery life and are re-usable, so one tag could help several calves.

Please speak to Matt at the practice for more information. We have a few tags available to “try before you buy” if you are interested.

Anthrax – positive case found, first in nine years.



Some of you may be aware that in late October two cows were confirmed to have died suddenly from Anthrax in the Westbury area of Wiltshire.

Movement restrictions were immediately imposed and the carcasses were incinerated, no other animals have since been affected and the public health risk is low (Public Health England, 27/10/2015).

What is Anthrax?

Anthrax is disease caused by the spore-forming bacteria *Bacillus anthracis*. It causes acute death in ruminants and can be transmitted to humans. *Bacillus* spores are incredibly resistant in the environment and can survive for many years, unusual weather patterns or disruption to the ground can lead to the exposure of these spores allowing ingestion and infection of grazing ruminants.

In ruminants (cows, sheep, goats) it causes sudden acute death without prior indication of illness. In horses and pigs you may see some clinical signs such as fever, colic or blood leaking from orifices before death.

What should I do if I suspect Anthrax?

- Call Exeter AHPA immediately on **01392 266373** if you discover a sudden unexplained death on your farm, they will then instruct us to attend your farm to take samples from the animal.
- Also call us at the vets as soon as possible so that we can arrange to attend the carcass as soon as possible. The anthrax visit/enquiry is free of charge.
- **DO NOT MOVE THE CARCASS**
- Isolate other animals away from the carcass.
- We will come out and take relevant samples for investigation....

> If **negative** – then you can move the carcass and dispose of it.

> If **positive** – we will inform the APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency) and they will come and test and incinerate the carcass. **DO NOT MOVE THE CARCASS!**

Movement restrictions will be put in place, but only temporarily until the APHA have finished their testing.

Further information on Anthrax, or any other notifiable diseases can be found on the APHA website –

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/anthrax-how-to-spot-and-report-the-disease>

New advice on treating animals for fluke at housing

Treatment for fluke is something that we need to approach with a degree of caution. There are major worries in the farming and pharmaceutical industry that the resistance to Triclabendazole is reaching dangerous levels which will have a major health effects, especially in the sheep industry.

With this in mind we are encouraged to use other types of flukicides at housing and there are thoughts that rather than leaving treatment for several weeks after housing to suit the product, it is much more economic to use the fluke treatment at the time of housing as most of the fluke will be mature at this time. I have attached a letter that we have received from **Merial**, regarding work done in this area:

Don't wait to treat fluke at housing!

Harlow, UK – September 2015

Treating cattle for liver fluke disease immediately at housing is the best strategy to increase feed conversion rates and improve productivity over winter, according to Sioned Timothy, Veterinary Advisor for Merial Animal Health.

Ms. Timothy says: "The adult stages of the liver fluke parasite have the greatest effect on productivity, reducing feed intake by up to 15%¹ even where infestations are low, so it's vitally important that farmers move to treat cattle as soon as possible after housing."

Previous advice has centred on postponing treatment for several weeks after cattle have been housed, to allow immature fluke to mature into adults. However, recent research has demonstrated that the majority (97%) of fluke in the livers of cattle at housing are already at the late immature/adult stage².

"Delaying treatment can leave cattle exposed to the parasite for longer than necessary and lead to increased production costs," says Ms. Timothy.

Treatment options include a straight fluke product, such as TRODAX®, or a combination endectocide, such as IVOMECS® Super, which as well as treating fluke is also effective against worms and external parasites.

Our next meeting.....



CALF HEALTH

A good start in life - The key to improved productivity

7.30pm Wednesday 2nd December 2015

THE LANGTON ARMS, TARRANT MONKTON

Refreshments provided. Kindly RSVP by 30th November