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In this issue: Milksure training, Maedi-Visna Screening, Coccidiosis & Gut Worms, Anthrax & Brucella testing, Welcome to some new staff members

MilkSure Training for Dairy Farmers

Milk buyers are starting to request that milking staff on their supply farms complete 'MilkSure' training.

MilkSure is a 3 hour course on preventing antibiotic residues in milk, which is followed by an online exam. Our national bulk milk antibiotic failure rate has been stuck around 0.2 – 0.25% for the past 20 years, and although the rate appears low we are now starting to fall behind many European countries and the USA whose failure rates are now a fraction of ours.

The MilkSure course gives a background of how antibiotic failures commonly occur, helps you to identify potential ways that antibiotic failures could occur on your farm, and then helps you to draw up a farm plan to remove those risks (however small they may be).

The course must be delivered by your vet. It costs £65 per farm to register for the course with MilkSure, plus vets fees for delivering the course. Once registered MilkSure send us the teaching materials and course notes and you then have 3 months to complete the training and online exam with us. Multiple staff members from a farm can complete the course under the same fee. Completion of the course earns 7 dairy pro points.

Four of our dairy farms have already successfully completed the course with us; we arranged a shared training session at the surgery so the fees could be split four ways and that worked very well. We already have another two farms wanting to complete the MilkSure course, so if anybody else is interested please contact us at the surgery and once we have 3-4 farms we can run another shared training session.

Please visit www.milksure.co.uk for more information and registration details.



Flock screening for Maedi-Visna

Maedi-visna (MV) is a viral disease of sheep that can cause loss of condition, pneumonia, mastitis and arthritis. The disease may exist in a flock for several years before clinical signs are seen, which means it can cause significant loss of production and become widespread in a flock before it is diagnosed. Affected sheep are usually found in thin body condition, may have reduced fertility, give birth to small weak lambs and produce less milk. The infection is not curable and there is no vaccine. We can control MV by:

- Good flock biosecurity – avoid contact with other flocks.
- Purchase new stock from MV accredited flocks if possible, otherwise blood test on arrival.
- **Screen your flock** to identify whether MV is present – if it is, then we can make a plan to eradicate it or at least to reduce its effects.

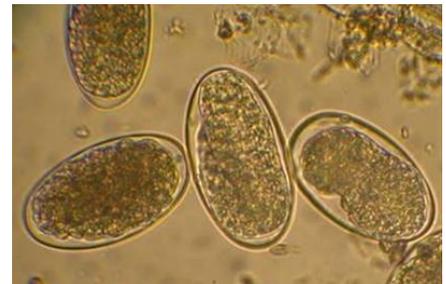


An eradication programme is available through the Premium Sheep and Goat Health Schemes with reduced testing costs.

We offer a low cost screening package which involves blood sampling 12 thinner or older sheep (these are the most likely to be infected with MV). The cost of this is £47 + VAT for the lab fees plus the vet fee for the time on farm. Johnes disease can present similarly to MV and can also be tested from the same samples if desired. Please get in touch with us if you are interested in a Maedi-visna and/or Johnes disease flock screen.

Keep your grazing lambs and calves healthy with regular faecal egg count testing

Following such a long wet spring we are already seeing cases of coccidiosis and gut worm challenge in growing lambs and calves. These diseases cause signs including diarrhoea, weight loss, poor growth and anaemia. Alongside good grazing management to reduce the risk of parasitic disease, we also advise regular faecal egg counts to determine the need for treatment with anthelmintics and anticoccidial drugs:



- Gather stock into the corner of a field and collect freshly dropped samples of faeces – 10 samples pooled together should give a good representation of the whole group.
- If there are multiple groups grazing, then collect samples as above for each separate group.
- Bring the fresh samples in to our farm office for examination. The cost is £8.33 + VAT per sample.
- We will contact you with your results on the same or next day. We will advise you whether treatment is necessary at this time, and what product would be appropriate.

Anthrax and Brucellosis Testing

We (the farm vets at Damory) have all recently completed our revalidation training with APHA which enables us to continue to provide anthrax and brucellosis testing for our clients on behalf of the government when authorised to do so.

Here is a reminder about these diseases and your responsibilities as a livestock owner:

1. **Anthrax** is a notifiable disease of livestock that also causes disease in humans. It is common in some parts of the world but is fortunately rare in the UK. However, cases do occur sporadically (most recently in Wiltshire in 2015) so we all need to be vigilant. It is important to **report all cases of sudden death, where there is no reasonable alternative diagnosis or explanation**, to us or directly to the APHA regional office. If the APHA vet agrees that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting anthrax then they will authorise a veterinary investigation, and one of us will come out to take samples. The animal must not be moved until anthrax can be ruled out.
2. **Brucellosis**, like anthrax, is a livestock disease of worldwide importance and also affects humans. In cattle the disease causes severe economic loss, due to causing late abortions. It used to be common in Great Britain but we have been Officially Brucellosis Free for over 30 years. However, there is still a risk of disease from imported stock and occasionally brucellosis is diagnosed (most recently in 2004). There is a statutory requirement for a farmer to **report all abortions or premature calvings to APHA within 24 hours of their occurrence**. An abortion or premature calving is one which has taken place less than 271 days after the cow was served by the bull or inseminated. The APHA vet will decide whether an abortion enquiry is necessary. Frequently, in dairy herds where there is regular bulk milk testing then no further samples will be required, but the abortion must still be reported. In beef herds the investigation will usually be authorised. The cow should be isolated and the foetus and placenta retained. One of us will then come out to the farm and take the necessary samples for brucellosis. This is a great opportunity for us to take additional samples so that we can investigate other possible causes of the abortion e.g. Neospora, BVD, IBR, Leptospirosis, etc so that control measures can be implemented to prevent future abortions.

Welcome to our New Vets & Farm Secretary

We are delighted to have two new permanent additions to introduce to you:

Imogen Deacon has joined the staff in the farm office and is taking on the mantra of juggling phone calls, organising farm visits, ensuring that the TB tests are set up and being sent off on time, taking drug orders & organising the vets! We know that you will all be supportive of Imogen as she gets to grips with all that is involved in the farm side of the practice.

Laura Sage will be joining our farm vet team from 20th August. She will be graduating from Bristol Vet School this July and with a family background in dairy farming she is very keen to get out and about and enjoy the rigors that farm practice has to offer. We wish her well in her finals and look forward to her joining the team.

Andy Eve is an experienced farm locum who has already started with us on 14th May and will be with us for the summer. Andy has recently returned to the UK after a period living and working in New Zealand. He has previously worked in farm practice in West Dorset.