

HOOK NORTON VETERINARY SURGEONS



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DECEMBER 2009 FARM NEWSLETTER

DAIRY & BEEF

UPDATE ON TB

We will be seeing some changes to our current TB eradication plan from January 2010. The parish system for organising testing intervals will remain, but a more logical approach will be taken on which interval your farm will be in. Parishes surrounding recent breakdowns will become yearly or two yearly testing intervals as a 'buffer zone' to try to contain TB, so your interval may be changing. It is worth remembering that this may affect your need to Pre-Movement Test your cattle, which will be required in both yearly and two yearly testing parishes.

blood test is used because it can catch infection at an earlier stage than the skin test and can therefore be very useful in cleaning up a herd which has had a breakdown faster than the skin test could. By its nature, it does find more reactors than the skin test, but only if they do have TB!

ACTUAL MEANING of NVL (No Visible Lesions)

TB is a disease with a very long incubation period so it can take a long long time (sometimes years) from an animal inhaling a TB bacteria to developing abscesses in the carcass. Equally, if you don't swab the one

virtually never picks up a false reactor and as the blood test picks up disease earlier, there is more chance of getting an NVL. Getting more NVL's means we are finding the disease sooner!

Finally, the way that Inconclusive reactors are dealt with will also be changing. Currently an animal can test Inconclusive three times before it is condemned as a reactor on its third IR. Under the new regulations it will only be allowed to test Inconclusive twice, and on its second IR it will be classed as a reactor. This is a good change, as it has been shown that animals that repeatedly test Inconclusive are actually infected and, if left, can be continuing to spread the disease.

BADGERS!

An update on TB would not be complete without mentioning the new Badger Vaccination Deployment Project, aimed at reducing the chances of spread to

cattle by increasing immunity in the badger population. This will be a 5 year plan starting in 2010 by way on an injectable vaccine (trap and jab!), vaccination will start by area and continue on an annual basis - simply vaccinating as many as possible.

There will be an opportunity for farmers to 'opt in' to vaccination on their property if not included in the first areas to be tried, but it will involve paying for vaccination themselves. If you have very high value stock you may want to talk to Animal Health about this further.

SHEEP

TRACE ELEMENTS

Deficiencies in trace elements (Copper, Selenium, Cobalt, Iodine) in both sheep and cattle can show themselves as problems with poor growth or reproductive performance. Deficiencies generally occur due to deficiencies in the diet: i.e. low levels in pasture or lack of minerals .

We can blood sample animals and obtain levels of Copper, Selenium and Cobalt as a package from the VLA to assess levels in your animals. Only a small proportion of the group need to be tested to know

whether there are problems in the group: usually 6-10 animals.

Sometimes the best way to supply minerals to young stock is to treat the pregnant mother. Cobalt, Selenium, Copper and iodine are readily transferred across the placenta and (with the exception of Copper), secreted into the milk. Treating the mother before mid-pregnancy will prevent deficiencies in the young from birth to weaning.

We advise blood sampling ewes in mid pregnancy preferably before scanning so you can give the Copper at scanning. 6-10 ewes are needed. Total Vit plus drench is available, which contains Cobalt and Selenium as well as multi-vitamins. It is an excellent Trace Element and Vitamin supplement for sheep and cattle. It can be given to ewes pre-lambing and to young lambs, and is recommended for cattle pre-calving and for calves prior to turnout.

Cosecure boluses for cattle and sheep contain Copper, Cobalt and Selenium and are a good option for ruminating cattle over 6 months of age.

If you are concerned about Trace Element deficiencies on your farm, please contact a farm vet for more information.

OVINE INFECTIOUS KERATOCONJUNCTIVITIS (OIKC)

OIKC or 'pink eye' is a contagious eye disease of sheep. Most commonly it is seen in housed ewes especially when trough-fed and in close contact. Mycoplasma Conjunctivae is the causative organism but other bacteria can also be involved. It usually responds well to being treated with Opticlox or Orbenin eye ointments plus Injectable antibiotics, especially if caught early. Relapses though are common as treatment only resolves the ocular signs and does not remove the bacteria from the eye, therefore often treatment will need repeating. Infected animals can remain carriers for a long period and the disease will continue to spread. It is important to separate infected from uninfected animals especially around lambing time.

REQUEST FROM THE FARM SHOP

The girls in the farm shop would like to remind you again to please order drugs in 24 hours in advance so that your order can be ready at the time of collection with no waiting around! Don't forget they need to ask a vet before they can dispense the drugs to you, and sometimes we aren't around at the time.

Also they would like to remind you that LAMBING LISTS are available on our website: www.hooknortonvets.co.uk as well as in the farm shop.

These are great for ordering
all your lambing products
and payment on collection
will give you a 5% discount
from the total bill!

SEASON'S GREETINGS TO
ALL OUR CLIENTS!