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FARM NEWSLETTER

It is with very mixed emotions that I write my final newsletter, and by the time you read this I will be long gone into the South American wilderness. I leave you in the very capable and willing hands of my (many) replacements, including Helen S, James and Nancy... All being well I will be back next summer raring to go again! Sam

CATTLE

LOWER BOTH YOUR SOMATIC CELL COUNTS (SCC) AND CULLING RATES...

A study in New Zealand involving over 11,000 cows has revealed that adding long-acting anti-inflammatory drug **Metacam** to the antibiotic treatment of farmer diagnosed clinical mastitis can reduce both SCC and culling rates.

A single injection of Metacam was found to lower SCC by an average of approximately 160,000 compared with cows that didn't get an injection, irrespective of the severity of the mastitis at diagnosis. In addition,

in cows injected with the drug there was nearly half the risk of being culled compared with cows in the placebo group.

High levels of culling and of SCC in cows are both serious economic drains on dairy farms. The results shown in this study have shown there to be significant financial benefit in using Metacam to help manage and reduce these risks.

Diary Date: 15th December 2010
Meeting @The Horse & Groom, Milcombe, 7.30pm on:
Mastitis/Metatcam

PREGNANCY DIAGNOSIS SUCKLER COWS

Now is the time to get your suckler cows PD'd if you haven't already! Finding any negatives now will save you time and will reduce your feed/bedding costs. Please don't forget to check the heifers that may have been caught by the bull this summer – you don't want any surprises later on and the added cost of caesareans!

YEW POISONING

We've had some interesting cases this month leading to sudden death in some animals. If there are any Yew trees in the near vicinity of your fields, please make sure the animals do not have access to them.

Animals only have to eat a very small amount of Yew to have a deadly affect. If you find animals

that are dull, lethargic, nervous, trembling, ataxic/wobbly on their feet (or dead) and there is history of access to Yew - don't forget garden trimmings dumped in the field - it likely that this is the cause. There is no known successful treatment once animals have eaten this poison. We are happy to carry out post mortems to confirm cause of death.

Also, don't forget oak trees and acorn poisoning, leading to a wide range of clinical signs, and death.

PREVENTING CALF SCOUR

Calf scour is a very important disease problem in calf rearing and causes more financial loss to the calf producer than any other syndrome. Rotavirus is most common cause of diarrhoea, with over 30% lab diagnoses being Rotavirus. The virus is present on nearly every farm so virtually all calves are at risk, though the risk is highest on farms where other agents, particularly *E. coli*, Coronavirus and Cryptosporidia, are present. These agents often combine with Rotavirus to cause more severe diarrhoea than either would on their own. Controlling Rotavirus can thus significantly reduce your losses due to calf scour even if you have other problems on farm.

There are two keys to preventing Rotavirus and other scour problems: maximising hygiene and making the most of colostrum. Good hygiene reduces the spread of disease between

calves. Ensure that bedding is clean and dry, don't mix different ages of calves, remove sick calves to a sick pen as soon as possible (and don't return them to their old group) and above all use an all-in, all-out policy with disinfection between groups.

Colostrum intake is vital to all calves. Calves should suck at least 4L of colostrum off their dams in the first 6hrs of life. If they are weak and not sucking they should be fed via the bottle/bucket or stomach-tubed. It is a good idea to have some chilled/frozen or artificial colostrum available at all times for any such circumstances.

On problem farms the use of **Rotavec Corona**: a single-dose i/m vaccine given to cows 4-12 weeks pre-calving will ensure the colostrum has high levels of antibodies to Rotavirus, Coronavirus and E.coli and considerably reduces scouring problems.

SHEEP

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.

TRACE ELEMENT TESTING

If you have suffered from swayback in previous years, or know that your sheep graze pasture that is low in copper, it is sensible to get 5 or 6 sheep tested during mid-pregnancy, to monitor copper and selenium levels. Low copper will require supplementation in mid-pregnancy with either a copper bolus or injection, to prevent swayback in new-born lambs.

FOOTROT AND FOOTVAX

The level of foot rot within a herd can be significantly reduced through vaccinating with **Footvax**. The vaccine requires a single injection subcutaneously, lasting for a period of up to 5 months.

At the time of vaccination, all sheep need to be turned up and their feet examined. Any sheep infected with footrot can then be marked and separated from the un-infected sheep. If clean pasture which has been rested for three weeks is available, any un-infected sheep can be foot-bathed and turned out onto this pasture. Infected sheep also need to be foot-bathed, but

should stay on the dirty pasture. They should be treated with antibiotic spray, **Cyclopray**, and a large single dose of **Penstrep** or **Betamox LA** (1ml/10kg I/M)/**Tetroxy LA** (1ml/10kg I/M). These can then be re-examined and foot-bathed every week. At this weekly examination any sheep whose foot-rot has cleared up can then be turned onto the clean pasture.

Consider culling sheep which do not respond to three consecutive treatments.

Don't forget to sweep up and burn the infected foot trimmings!!