



Practice News

Easton & Ottley College finished off their show season with some cracking and well deserved results in the Norfolk Herd Competition run by the Holstein Society; 2nd and 3rd in a large Star Cow class of 12 animals, 2nd and 6th out of 11 in the Homebred class, 1st in the female family class and 2nd in the Group of Three – Congratulations to Steve, Kyran and the whole team.

The Aylsham Show, held on Bank Holiday Monday, was nothing if not wet! However there was still much to celebrate as Stephen Temple was among many to gain success when he won the Jubilee Cup for the Best Livestock Enterprise in the Norfolk County Business Competition. A huge amount of credit goes out to all the competitors, stewards and other helpers who gave up their time and in many case became drenched through to entertain the public at what is an event that raises huge amounts of money for local charities.

We are pleased to announce the return of Becca Colman to the vet practice. Becca worked as our veterinary technician 2013-2014 and has returned to the practice after receiving a 1st in her degree at Harper Adams. We are all thrilled to have her back.



Becca

Environmental Mastitis Cure Rates

A number of causes of environmental mastitis may cause profound disease. E.Coli is the most obvious environmental bug that can cause rapidly fatal disease. Others, such as Strep. Uberis, may result in a chronic condition that responds very badly to conventional treatments.

However, there are other pathogens which will self cure. By a happy coincidence, this often happens over the same period that you are treating with a milking cow tube. The fact that the milking cow tube contains some complex and highly effective antibiotic, and maybe some anti-inflammatory drug as well, may actually make no distinguishable difference to the rate of cure of the mastitis case.

This presents farmer and vet alike with a difficult predicament - you can't be sure of the bug's identity in time to know whether or not treatment is really necessary, as the risk of leaving a persistent or damaging bug untreated is too great. Therefore, you must treat based on clinical signs. But why not collect a sample at the time of first treatment?

You can do one of two things with this sample:

- Either pass it straight to the vet for culture to try and identify in a couple of days whether there is a need to persist with treatment – for example, in the case of S.Uberis where a prolonged course of therapy may be appropriate.
- Or, mark it with the cow ID and the date and put it into a tray of 10 in the freezer. When you collect 11, throw the oldest one away such that you always maintain 10 samples in the freezer. This way, if your low number of cases becomes a flurry of mastitis, we at least have some samples to work from.



Armed with this information, we can provide guidance on sensible tube usage.

Ram MOT

It is time for our annual reminder that you should consider MOT testing your rams before the breeding season ahead. The same can be said for bulls. We see a number each year who are only proven to not be working when the females (ewes or cows) break after a cycle, or often two.

The cost of the fertility test will be more than absorbed by the reduction in losses felt by this shift in your lambing or calving patterns.

Why not call us and book your MOT (full physical examination and semen collection and evaluation) now?



Summer Sheep Management Part 2

With summer well under way, we are looking to maximise growth rates in lambs still on farm and ensure that ewes are in top condition for tugging.

Parasitic Gastrointestinal Worms

Unfortunately, parasitic gastrointestinal worms are traditionally at their peak in mid-summer, although exact levels are dependent on the weather and historical worm egg output. A good way to stay abreast of the likely timing of the peak in worm burden is to register for NADIS parasite forecast updates at www.nadis.org.uk.

Worm egg counts should be measured by taking faecal samples from multiple animals in the same cohort and dropping them in to the practice; repeating this monthly can be useful for monitoring worm burdens during the summer which allows us to ensure we are neither unnecessarily spending money on wormers or, as importantly, building up a resistant population. However, it is essential to take these results into context with the BCS (body condition score) of the stock and also any scouring seen.

Remember that simply picking worming products at random, or even rotating wormers, may be fruitless and expensive as the stock to be treated may be left partially, if not completely, unprotected.

Please discuss treatment options with the practice to ensure that you give your flock the best possible level of protection and do not create problems for the future by building up a resistant population of worms.

Pre-mating Management

Pre-mating management is a crucial step for next year's lamb crop. One of the main objectives in this period is to score the body condition of the ewes.

For best results, the target is body condition 3.0-3.5 at the start of the tugging season laying hands on at least 10% or the ewes from the middle of



the flock as recommended by EBLEX. The key is to score the flock's body condition in plenty of time in order to adjust feed accordingly. Don't forget to get your ram MOT's with a fertility test, analysis of semen in addition to assessment of the 3Ts (teeth, testicles and toes), ideally at least 6 weeks before he is required.

Please contact the practice for further information, including nutritional advice.

TB Testing

Please do not ignore any messages regarding TB testing until it is too late.

There have been cases around the country of farmers pleading that 'my vet was too busy to test' in mitigation for their late testing. This has not been accepted by DEFRA and has resulted in the loss of a percentage of the single farm payment on these farms.

We are still very happy to carry out your TB testing, even though the notification letter may state that the test will be carried out by XLFarmcare. Please therefore continue to contact us to ensure that we can organise your test, at your convenience and within the testing window.



Heat Detection

Of all the cows that we see for infertility issues, the overwhelming majority are still cases of missed heat.

It is important these cows are examined by a vet as we can usually judge from a single examination whether a cow is cycling; but by recording the activity on her ovary we can judge definitively on a second visit whether she has been missed, or is not cycling.

Given this, and known factors such as reduced success in conception following prostaglandin treatment (which is often administered for 'not seen bulling cows'), it is easy for us to make the following recommendation:

"If you are finding reduced submission rates during the summer months, you should find a way to devote more time to watching your cows."

This should be carried out:

- Away from the parlour
- At times distinct from other interference, such as moving or dosing
- Ideally by somebody who recognises the cows well enough to easily identify each one, without needing to get amongst them too much.

A target observation period of twenty minutes, three times a day, may feel like a lot. However, this must be considered against the cost of losing the difference between peak milk yield and tail end yield for every day that she isn't served.

Westpoint - King's Lynn

30 Gayton Road, Grimston, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE32 1BG Tel: 01485 609031
Fax: 01485 609029 Emergency: 07920 104174 E-mail: info@westpointfarmvets.co.uk

www.westpointfarmvets.co.uk