

PEAK VETERINARY NEWS

May 2019

Upcoming Farmers Meetings

Responsible Use of Medicines

Lasts months meeting was a great success, thank you to everyone who attended.

As this is likely to become a requirement for all red tractor farms in the near future, we are compiling a list of farmers who would like a second meeting run. If you would like to be added to the list, please let us know.

We would also like to add that the meeting **must** be attended for the red tractor to sign off on the medicines part of the inspection.

Staggers

Grass staggers, or hypomagnesaemia (low magnesium) typically occurs at turnout onto lush, quick growing grass meaning potassium and nitrogen intakes are high and sodium and phosphorus intakes are low. Due to this, there is a lack of absorption from the rumen (cows cannot store magnesium), resulting in the body's demand for magnesium exceeding the intake.

There is also a link between calcium and magnesium absorption, meaning there is a higher risk in cows that are predisposed to hypocalcaemia (otherwise known as milk fever).

Clinical signs happen very quickly and if not treated promptly, it will be fatal. Typically it will present:

- Agitated, twitchy cows (hyperexcitability)
- Mild reduction in milk yield
- Stiffness and muscle tremors
- Fitting, coma and death

Treatment needs to be administered rapidly, especially if clinical signs are starting to show. If convulsions haven't started, prognosis is favourable. Following treatment, animals shouldn't be moved, transported or stimulated in any way as this can trigger further convulsions.

As with any metabolic issue, prevention is better than cure. The following measures are advisable to prevent staggers:

- Daily magnesium supplements. This can be in many forms but the easiest tends to be salt licks
- Housing cattle at night, especially during frosty/wet/windy weather
- Reduce silage intake prior to turnout
- Delay the use of potassium-rich fertilisers until later in the year
- Keep an eye on the weather forecast – bad weather increases staggers risk

If you are in an area of high risk, you are more than welcome to keep some magnesium in stock for use under the skin if required.



BACS Payments

Thank you to all of you who are now paying by BACS transfer.

As you may be aware, we have changed bank accounts. You should have been informed by your bank of the change.

If any payments from now go to the old account, they will be re-directed to the new one.

If any of you need the details or want to start BACS payments, just get in touch.

Top Tips for Worming and Fluke Control

- The principle of worm control in youngstock is to build up their immunity during the first 2 years of life. Adult cattle should not need worming at all and adult sheep only need worming at lambing time.
- Liver fluke infects sheep and cattle and is not species specific. Worms are specific to species, so cattle worms cannot infect sheep and vice versa!
- Graze land that wasn't stock grazed in the last year (e.g. used for silage), especially with youngstock.
- Never put youngstock on pasture that was grazed by youngstock the previous year.
- Housing is the best time to worm, not turnout.
- Rotate classes of wormer to prevent resistance.
- The liver fluke life cycle involves the mud snail so wet or muddy fields pose the most risk of infection.
- In lambs, regular faecal samples should be collected and brought to us for egg counts and we will advise you when worming is required, if you do not do this you may worm unnecessarily and this can lead to resistance and is a waste of money.

Watch Out

Now that turnout is approaching there are a few things to keep in the back of your mind when turning stock out:

- **Husk**
 - Caused by *Dictyocaulus viviparus*, this worm resides in the bronchi causing the characteristic coughing. However, it's the larvae that have wintered on the pasture that will be putting youngstock at risk. Prophylactic ivermectin can be given to prevent infection. However, animals will develop their own immunity with a small burden.
- **Fluke**
 - Otherwise known as *Fasciola hepatica*, this is something to bear in mind, particularly on wet ground. Avoid turning out near water or on boggy ground (if possible). This is something that would take time to be come into play, so monitoring pastures is vital.
- **Nematodirus in lambs**
 - Watch out for this in lambs >6w old and grazing. This worm can have high mortality rates if left untreated. Try to turn lambs out onto pasture ungrazed last year. We have been moved to a high risk area (red and black spots), so definitely keep an eye out for this one!!



<https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/>

As always, any issues you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact us,

Warm Regards:
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