



Farm Vet News

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In this issue...

- Page 1** Introduction
Message from CVS Head Office
- Page 2** Antimicrobial Usage
Chicken Husbandry 101
- Page 3** Sheep Worm Control and Resistance
Management
Safe Handling for TB Testing
- Page 4** On Our Rounds: Goat Disbudding
Payment of Invoices During COVID-19
Lockdown

Introduction

In our last newsletter we discussed the new agricultural bill, Brexit, new ministers, "state of nature" report and rain and rain and rain and rain!! Remarkably, things have become even more dramatic with a pandemic and subsequent six-week lockdown. One of the immediate effects of the lockdown has been the reduction in the consumption of liquid milk as coffee shops have had to close and the resulting spot market price crash - corresponding trends have been seen in the beef market.

Whilst it remains to be seen what the economy looks like as we emerge from lockdown, we can only hope that the British public chooses to place a value on home-grown agriculture given the new disease "global" trade has given us. We can also hope that the UK Government pays more than the lip-service it is currently to the "key worker" status it has given agriculture and provides some form of support until the markets recover.

Jim

Message from CVS Head Office

We have been working differently recently as we follow government and our regulatory body (RCVS) guidelines, to ensure we can continue to provide veterinary support safely during the COVID-19 pandemic, protecting our staff, clients and their animals.

We have been overwhelmed by the messages of thanks and support and we'd like to thank all of our clients for being so supportive.

We would also like to give a big thank you to all our staff at Endell Veterinary Group for their commitment, professionalism and dedication whilst still offering an outstanding service to our clients and their animals.



Antimicrobial Usage *by Lillith Walton*

Antimicrobial usage (AMU) within food producing animals has been under public scrutiny in recent years, with pressure to reduce general usage as well as the use of Highest Priority Critically Important Antibiotics (HP-CIAs) coming from milk buyers and assurance companies.



The main concern regarding AMU in livestock is for the potential increase in the number of bacteria becoming resistant to antimicrobials. Misuse of antibiotics, across veterinary and human medicine, has facilitated the development of this resistance. There are fears that resistant organisms in livestock, and animals in general, could pose a risk to human health, although the importance of this risk is unknown.

As an industry antimicrobials have been used in the past in cases which are deemed:

1. Inappropriate (e.g. to prevent a bacterial infection that may or may not cause disease).
2. Ineffective (e.g. used to treat a disease caused by a virus).
3. Preventable (e.g. to treat diseases that are preventable via vaccination, improving hygiene etc.).

There are many ways in which AMU can be reduced on farm, however the main principles are simple and can not only reduce AMU, but also improve the overall health status of your herd. It's important to note that we are already well on the way to achieving vast reductions in AMU and as a whole the dairy industry has put good steps in place in order to achieve this. For more information on specific areas to consider when trying to reduce antimicrobial use on your dairy farm please see the full blog article at www.endellfarmvets.co.uk or contact one of our vets via 01722 333291 (1).

As with everything, there is always room for improvement...

There are four key general concepts in order to reduce overall AMU as well as the use of HP-CIAs (The 4 R's);

- **Reduce the need** - by improving biosecurity/hygiene on your farm you can reduce the need for antimicrobials in the first place.
- **Replace HP-CIAs** - using drugs deemed as 'less important' by the World Health Organisation, especially as first line treatments.
- **Record keeping** - timely and thorough recording of which animals were treated, with what drug and the response to treatment.
- **Refine** - refine your farm practices and treatment protocols by having regular herd health reviews.

Chicken Husbandry 101 *by Harry Smith*



Over the past decade, pet birds have grown hugely in popularity; in 2020 domestic fowl can be found in over 3% of households, with more people owning chickens than horses!

These birds need adequate space to move around in and exhibit normal behaviours, whilst providing security from predators such as foxes, especially at night. This can be achieved with a large fenced enclosure and a house/coop that they can go in to overnight, with a sturdy door. Inside the coop a nest box facility and perching provision are essential. Although wooden houses may look nicer, those made from plastic are much easier to keep clean. The average-sized adult hen needs approximately 100g feed per day, which should be fed from a sturdy/heavy feeder, to prevent it from being knocked over.

Please visit our website www.endellfarmvets.co.uk to read the full blog article, which describes the basics of looking after chickens in greater detail, signs that may indicate your chicken is unwell and common UK pet breeds.

Sheep Worm Control and Resistance Management

by Rachel Styles

Resistance to the products used to control parasites in sheep is one of the biggest challenges to the future health and profitability of the UK sheep industry.



Use of the newer wormer groups has increased since they became available through SQPs at merchants but we could still harness their potential more. As well as being an important option for quarantine treatment of incoming stock, SCOPS recommends that either of the two newer wormers are used as a 'mid-season' or 'break drench' to remove worms that have survived prolonged exposure to other wormer groups used earlier in the season. Using newer wormers as a mid-season lamb dose can therefore help slow resistance to the older groups (white, yellow and clear), keeping them working for longer and improving late season lamb growth rates.

In the long term this means cheaper, effective worm control compared with the dangerous prospect of having to rely on the newer groups completely. Not only would that be very expensive, but if the newer groups become the only treatment option then resistance to those would increase rapidly.

For more information on worm control and resistance management, please visit our website www.endellfarmvets.co.uk to read the full blog article.

Safe Handling for TB Testing by Joaquin Diaz Galvez

Every year serious injuries occur on farms while handling cattle; in 2018-19 over 20% of on-farm fatalities involved cattle. For many beef herds, TB testing is one of the only handling events in any year. Inadequate equipment or understanding of safe handling methods can lead to the risk of crushing, kicking or goring while restraining animals appropriately for TB testing makes the procedure safer, quicker and more accurate. Cattle remember and learn from previous experiences so reducing stress will pay off in the future. Working quietly but confidently and moving without sudden movements will calm anxious cattle.

Our top tips for how you can improve TB testing for the TB testers, the cattle and farm staff are:

- Keep the crush and race in a covered area away from bad weather.
- Bailer twine is not always the answer to your fencing needs.
- Ensure sliding doors are working properly and quietly.
- Provide water troughs in the yard.
- Use sticks to extend your arm length but not to beat cattle.
- Avoid slippery floors near the handling system (for both cattle and people!).
- Ensure all staff are aware of the risks of, and how to safely use, a back bar.
- High sided, sheeted races will improve cattle flow.
- Consider investing in a smaller crush for younger or smaller animals.



If you would like to learn more about implementing improvement measures why not check out the full beef blog on our website or contact the team to discuss anything relating to TB testing safety and efficiency.



On Our Rounds: Goat Disbudding

Goat disbudding season is in full swing as all the new kids arrive in spring. Many owners decide to disbud their goats for safety reasons but goats are also renowned at getting their horns stuck in fences and feed troughs so disbudding them prevents this. It is illegal to perform goat disbudding under local anaesthetic alone in the UK which means that they require a general anaesthetic making it a veterinary-only procedure.

Once asleep the goat's individual horn buds are burned off, which the goat kids cannot feel. Indeed, they are often up, awake and back nursing from the doe again within fifteen to twenty minutes from the start of the procedure.

Successful goat disbudding relies on a number of factors which includes choosing the appropriate cases. All goats should be less than two weeks old at the time of disbudding as their horns grow so quickly after birth, that any time after this often means the horn bud is already too large for the vet to remove completely. Testosterone from males also drives horn growth so it is advised to get entire males done within one week of age. We are happy to perform these as soon as goat kids are dry, strong and healthy.



If you would like to discuss goat disbudding in more detail, please give us a call on 01722 333291 (1)

Payment of Invoices during COVID-19 Lockdown

Please may we request that during this period of social distancing and isolation that invoice payments are made via BACS (direct bank payment) or over the telephone (01722 333291, **option 2**) by debit/credit card? This will help to limit visits to the bank with cheques, helping both our employees and bank employees to avoid contact. To confirm, our bank details for payment are:

Bank: NatWest ▪ **Account Name:** Endell Veterinary Group ▪ **Sort Code:** 56-00-68 ▪ **Account Number:** 44891466

We ask you to please quote your invoice number and/or name and postcode so that we can allocate your payment to your account.

We would like to reassure all of our clients that we are open for business as usual during this difficult time, we will however be practising social distancing and would like to remind you to be mindful of the 2m rule.

Thank you for your understanding.



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