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Introduction – Jim Willshire

Early summer has been a game of two halves; we've managed to record the wettest May, whilst June scored the highest temperatures for 2021 and rattled the post of the hottest on record. These swings are reflected in the quality of the forages and maize we've seen on our rounds, those that managed to cut and collect it at the right time have large cuts of first cut which seems to be analysing well, whereas we have some clients who were less lucky. Many maize crops seem unlikely to make "knee-high by the first of July" (the first year I've known where this might not happen).

June was also the month that APHA informed us (and those of you it affects) that they'll be moving to six-monthly TB testing in some areas, see Mel's article in this newsletter which might offer some good news!

Fingers crossed England can be more like June, even if Scotland and Wales were more like May in their performance at Euro 2020!



How to avoid the change to six-monthly TB testing

– Mel McPherson



From 1 July 2021, six monthly TB testing is being brought in for the High Risk Area (HRA) of England. Cattle tested by the end of June 2021 will not need another routine test until June 2022 but any cattle tested from 1 July 2021 onwards will have their next routine test six months later.

Herds in the HRA will be able to remain on annual testing if:

- they have been in existence for at least 6 years and have not had a TB skin test breakdown in that time and
- they are registered to a bovine TB health scheme licensed by the Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHeCS) and accredited at a level 1 or above.

The TB CHeCS aims to encourage farmers to improve their biosecurity as well as additional strategic testing to try to avoid infection from wildlife, bought in cattle and neighbouring cattle. There are two levels of membership: herd accreditation and entry level. CHeCS sets the standards, but it is run through participating cattle health schemes eg: Axiom Cattle Health Scheme and the Premium Cattle Health Scheme run by SRUC.

Herd accreditation

This is the level required to remain on yearly TB testing.

Accreditation involves additional testing and biosecurity measures. A herd's score improves every year it is free from a TB breakdown and is awarded a status of 0–10 corresponding with the number of

years TB-free. In England, herds in the High Risk and Edge Areas on six-monthly testing can remain on **annual testing if they are CHeCS TB Herd Accredited** with a score of at least 1. Also, when animals moved into a TB breakdown herd are subsequently removed as TB reactors, the standard 50% reduction in compensation does not apply if the herd is CHeCS TB herd accredited.

Here are some examples of the requirements for accreditation (full details on the CHeCS website):

- Additional pre and post movement testing.
- Not purchasing cattle from herds with a more recent TB breakdown than your own herd.
- No common grazing or nose to nose contact with neighbouring cattle.
- Not grazing pasture that has had non-CHeCS TB Herd Accredited cattle on it in the previous two months.
- Removal of resolved inconclusive reactors.
- Badger proofing water and feed troughs, licks and feed stores.

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Entry level membership

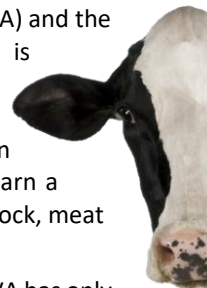
From 1 August 2021, all farmers wanting to gain accreditation will need to complete this level first.

This level requires farmers to implement one biosecurity option from six risk factors:

1. Minimise TB risk from purchased cattle.
2. Minimise TB risk from contact with cattle in other herds.
3. Minimise TB risk from your own animals.
4. Minimise the spread of TB through muck or slurry.
5. Reduce TB risk to and from badgers.
6. Have a TB failure contingency plan.

A BCVA-accredited TB veterinary advisor (BATVA) and the cattle farmer complete a declaration which is submitted to their cattle health scheme before membership can be granted. There are no government incentives for participating in the entry level membership but it may help earn a farmer recognition when selling breeding livestock, meat or milk.

The training required for vets to become a BATVA has only just been released and involves over three hours of online training so please bear with us while our vets complete the course.



Focusing on Calf Diarrhoea

– Josh Williams

Calf diarrhoea continues to be a commonly discussed and managed issue affecting both beef and dairy enterprises on a regular basis. Around 140,000 calves die each year as a result of scour (Herdt, 2000) with it being shown to cost around £44/case (excluding labour; SAC). Data from submissions to the GB veterinary diagnostic network (such as APHA VI centres and veterinary universities; Figure 1a & 1b.) report that Cryptosporidiosis and Rotavirus together represent over 70% of pre-weaning scour diagnoses. However, please note that this only represents submitted cases, rather than reporting on all cases of scour on UK farms.

Colostrum management plus hygiene around calf husbandry remain two of the most important factors for tackling calf scour.

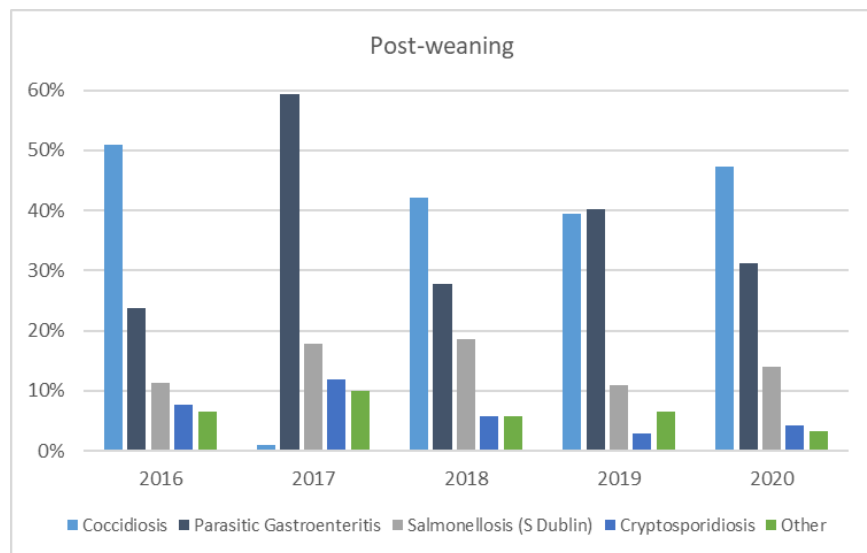
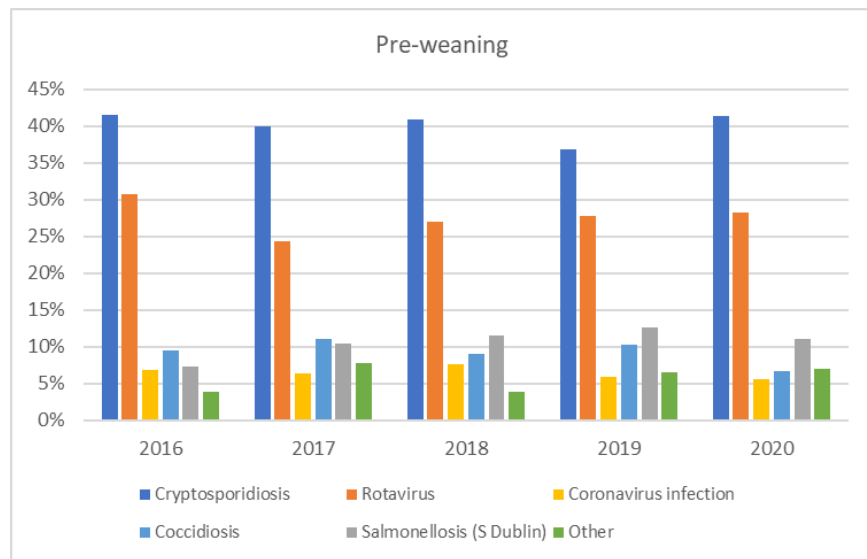


Figure 1a & 1b. Data from the Cattle Disease Surveillance Dashboard - surveillance information from submissions to the GB veterinary diagnostic network.

Goat Disbudding

– Maggie Dreistadt



Disbudding is a common procedure, but is not a task that should be undertaken lightly. It is one of the most common surgical procedures carried out in goats and is a very different procedure to the technique used in calves. Disbudding is considered a mutilation

under the law of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, but is recognised as a procedure that can be carried out for non-therapeutic reasons.

The decision to disbud needs to be carefully made by your vet with a legitimate reason for the procedure. Reasons often include; health and safety towards handlers, children and other in-contact animals. Goats are friendly by nature with the need to establish dominance. This results in very close human contact with accidental injuries and injuries associated with asserting their dominance. Dehorned goats will still fight for a place in the pecking order and are at a huge disadvantage to a goat with horns. Horned goats should never be kept with hornless goats.

If you would like to discuss disbudding please do not hesitate to contact one of our vets for further detail to decide whether disbudding is the right choice for your goats and farm.

Wiltshire TB Eradication Group

Our vet Mel McPherson is chair of the Wiltshire TB Eradication Group. After an absence of meetings since Covid, they are looking to restart them next month.

The aim of the group is to gather together individuals, farm businesses and industry organisations with an interest in eradicating TB in Wiltshire. They share the latest science and activity in line with the government 25 year TB eradication strategy and discuss and respond to government consultations on the control of TB in England.

If any of you have a particular interest in being part of this group then please email Mel on: mel.mcpherson@endellfarmvets.co.uk

Thin Ewes – Mel McPherson

With most of your lambs weaned, depending on when you lamb, now might be the time to start taking a closer look at your ewes who have worked hard for you over the last few months.

Body Condition Scoring

You will all be aware of the importance of regular body condition scoring. Getting into the habit of putting your hands on the backs of ewes, rams and lambs whenever they are gathered keeps you in tune with it and allows you to assess trends which is much more useful than one off scoring of a flock. Scoring is subjective so it is better that the same person carries out the task to be able to make useful comparisons.

	Hill	Upland	Lowland
Weaning	2.0	2.0	2.5
Tupping	2.5	3	3.5
Mid Pregnancy to lambing	2.0	2.5	3.0
Eight Weeks Post Lambing	2.0	2.0-2.5	2.5-3.0



Reasons for Poor Condition in Individual Ewes

- Tumours
- Arthritis
- Endocarditis (heart valve infection)
- Scrapie
- Chronic pneumonia
- CLA

Reasons for Poor Condition in Small Groups

- Poor dentition
- Johne's disease
- OPA/SPA
- Maedi Visna
- Parasitic gastroenteritis (worms)

Reasons for Poor Condition in Larger Numbers

- Inadequate nutrition
- Liver fluke
- Sheep scab
- Foot rot
- CODD

Maedi Visna Monitoring

Maedi Visna (MV) is a chronic infectious viral disease affecting the lungs and nervous system of sheep, and often just presents as poor condition. There is no vaccine or cure and it can be fatal. As more sheep farmers become aware of the disease, those selling stock to other farms are more likely to be asked what their MV status is before purchases are made.

It is also in the interest of your flock to keep them as healthy as possible even if you are not selling animals.

Flocks can either be monitored or accredited, with monitored flocks being those that cannot totally isolate their flock and therefore can't be accredited.

Please speak to one of our vets if you would like more information about MV monitoring/ accreditation.

Investigation of Thin Ewes

It may be obvious on history or clinical presentation what is causing the poor condition eg: pneumonia, scald/foot rot, or after completion of non-invasive tests such as worm egg counts or fluke egg counts.

Other times the cause of ill-thrift may not be easy to determine and you might want to consider post mortem examination of 1-3 ewes that have been identified for removal from the flock due to poor condition.

Our vets can carry out on farm post mortems to aim to identify diseases with obvious changes such as in liver fluke and tumours but a post mortem at one of the Veterinary Investigation Centres will be able to check for diseases that are not obvious to the naked eye such as Maedi Visna and Johne's, that may have implications for the whole flock.

Upcoming Courses and Meetings

We have a wide range of meetings coming up and are looking forward to seeing you in person for some of these! To book your place or register your interest, please contact the office in the usual manner as places are limited.

- **DIY AI Courses: 13-15 July (Day 1 in Salisbury, Days 2 and 3 on-farm) or 20-22 September**

DEFRA-approved Certificated DIY AI Training providing dairy or suckler farm staff with the knowledge and skills to carry out this important process themselves. The course covers bovine anatomy and physiology and heat detection and AI timing theory. It then provides the chance to get to grips with the practical technique using uteruses and then live cows to ensure safe passage of AI guns through cervixes and into the correct part of the uterus. **Cost:** £450 for full course including learning material to take away. We also offer refresher options if spaces are available for the on-farm days - please contact the office if this is of interest.

- **Foot Trimming Course (three hour course, please register your interest for confirmation of date and location):**

DIY Foot trimming course discussing anatomy/physiology of the bovine foot before providing the opportunity to practice routine foot trimming on a variety of feet. **Cost:** £100

- **Calving Course: 27 July, Newton Wood Barns**

Afternoon course discussing the normal calving process, common issues and how to intervene before providing practical experience using our Blue Barrel 'cows'. Would suit less experienced farm workers looking to gain more confidence. **Cost:** £80

- **Responsible Use of Medicines Online Course: Thursday 19 August, 9am. Cost:** £25 per person

- **Beef Working Group Lameness Meeting: 23 August, location to be confirmed**

Evening meeting and farm walk discussing the causes of beef lameness and its impact on your herd as well as options for treatment and prevention. **Cost:** Free

- **Annual Smallholder BBQ – late summer, awaiting final COVID announcement!**

If you would like a specific or tailor-made training course for your farm, please contact us to discuss.



Utilising synchronisation protocols in the beef herd

– Olly White

Synchronisation is the use of veterinary drugs to manipulate the female reproductive cycle to enable ovulation to occur during a known set period. There are several synchronisation protocols available, all of which can utilise artificial insemination and natural service, allowing for selection of a protocol to fit your system and requirements. First service conception rates can be up to 65% with good animal management and precise following of the protocols.



Artificial insemination (AI) is often overlooked in beef systems due to the issues associated with heat detection and daily handling of animals over a prolonged period. Synchronisation overcomes this by limiting handling to a short time window. AI allows access to high genetic merit bulls with Estimated Breeding Value (EBV) data allowing selection of bulls with traits for producing heifer replacements, reducing dystocia rates and producing quality calves for beef production whilst reducing the risk of bull failure resulting in empty cows.

Additional benefits of synchronisation include shortening the calving period by ensuring all eligible females are served on day 1 of the breeding period; increasing pregnancies by ensuring a service and overcoming the natural delayed return to cyclicity often seen in suckler cows.

Protocol	Natural Mating?	AI at observed heat?	Fixed time AI?
CIDR-sync <i>Suitable for cycling and non-cycling animals</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prostaglandin programme <i>Suitable for cycling animals only</i>	Yes, but animal identification is crucial and bull:cow ratio must be considered	Yes	Yes, but results improved with heat detection
CIDR-programme <i>Suitable for cycling animals only</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes, but results improved with heat detection

Optimising success

Prior to beginning a synchronisation programme it is wise to ultrasound scan the reproductive tract of eligible females to identify conditions which impede success, such as infection, cysts, immaturity or Freemartinism.

Management factors such as diet and housing have a marked effect on fertility and should be kept consistent before and during synchronisation. Additionally females should be at least 50 days calved and have a good body condition score (2.5/3).

If the chosen protocol requires heat detection this should be optimal with animals observed at least 3 times daily for 20 minutes. Heat detection aids such as Estroprotect stickers, Kamars or paint are hugely beneficial but do not replace physical observation.

Further details of the available protocols can be found in the full blog on our website (<https://www.endellfarmvets.co.uk/images/blog-posts/Beef-Sync-Protocols.pdf>) and for costs associated and choosing the right protocol for your system please contact the practice.

Congratulations!

Finally, please join us in congratulating our client Andrew Carter, of Standlynch Farm, who has recently been voted onto the council of the Aberdeen Angus Cattle Society. Andrew's herd of high health status pedigree Aberdeen Angus cattle has been striving to produce breeding stock of high genetic merit since 1999. Stock bulls are available for sale all year round as well as AI straws through UK Sires.

Webinars

The following webinars are available on our website:

Beef Benchmarking Introduction

Bovine Respiratory Disease Prevention

Colostrum Management in Beef Calves

Block Calving – to Estrumate or CIDR?

Getting Lambs to Grow

Backyard Pigs

Please visit

www.endellfarmvets.co.uk for more information.

Please visit our website if you would like to read the full blog articles summarised in this newsletter.



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