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## Cattle at Housing

As we get closer to housing, it is time to think about worming to maximise growth throughout the housed period; this is through minimising losses due to parasites, eg: gut worms, lung worm, liver fluke or skin parasites.

### Gut worms

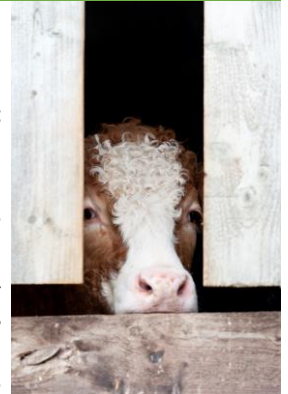
- *Ostertagia ostertagi* develops in the glands in the abomasum causing indigestion of protein leading to diarrhoea. Eggs build up on the pasture during the grazing season. As the ambient temperature drops the larvae arrest in the gastric glands, leading to a sudden emergence on maturation.
  - Profuse diarrhoea, bottle jaw, anorexia, weight loss and has a high mortality.
  - Youngstock that have not had two grazing seasons have not acquired immunity.
- *Cooperia oncophora* inhabits the small intestine
  - Inappetence and poor weight gain in calves.
  - Immunity is developed in three to six months of grazing. Worms should be assessed by a worm egg count.

### Lungworm

- *Dictyocaulus viviparus* causes parasitic pneumonia, coughing and weight loss. Low numbers of lungworms are needed to cause serious disease which can lead to death.
- Higher risk in dairy, with decrease in yield by up to 50%.
- First year grazing cattle are most at risk during the late summer and autumn.
- Drought that suspends the lungworm lifecycle, leading to outbreaks occurring into the early winter, NB this summer!
- Adult cattle are mostly resistant to reinfection, but coughing due to mild infection is common. If there is lack of exposure to lungworm in young cattle it may present with clinical signs.

### Fluke

- *Fasciola hepatica*, which requires the snail *Galba truncatula* to mature.
- Wet weather and ambient temperatures of more than 10°C increases burden (NB climate change).
- Resistance to triclabendazole (the drug in 'Fasinex').
- Loss in condition, reduced appetite, emaciation, pale mucous membrane, jaw oedema.
- Adult cattle not immune.
- Risks of fluke:
  - Wet land.
  - Land known to have fluke.
  - Cattle bought in carrying fluke.
- Use the fluke forecast alert.
- Abattoir report showing adult fluke in liver.
- Blood or milk serology will identify if the cattle have been exposed to fluke in the preceding three months.
- Faecal fluke egg counts are used to identify if adult fluke are present, but there will be no eggs present at this time of year as only immature fluke are present.
- A coproantigen test will identify the presence of adult and late mature fluke from about a month of age in the faeces, so can be used six weeks after housing to identify if treatment is required.



### Checklist

- ✓ Treat youngstock with a macrocyclic lactone such as ivermectin. Identify poor adult cattle and consider a worm egg count (WEC).
- ✓ Assess risk of fluke and administer with closantel now if positive in faecal fluke egg counts, check the data sheet before use, weigh the cattle for accurate dosing and maintain the dosing gun. Repeat dosing in seven weeks.
- ✓ Watch for signs of lice or mange which presents as itching, hair loss and scaly lesions. Treat accordingly with a macrocyclic lactone pour on.
- ✓ Empty out bedding from buildings and clean. Fix and remove debris from gutters to minimise humidity. Ensure there is adequate outlet ventilation of 0.1m<sup>2</sup> per animal over 500kg (0.04m<sup>2</sup> for young calves), inlet ventilation should be four times the size of outlet ventilation of inlet ventilation of 0.2-0.4m<sup>2</sup> per animal over 500kgs specific to the age of cattle being housed.



## Upcoming Events and Courses

### Responsible Use of Medicines

Online Course

Tuesday 15 November, 2pm

Tuesday 17 January, 1pm

£25 incl VAT per person

### Christmas Quiz 2022!

Monday 5 December, 7pm

White Hart, Stockbridge

Free for Smallholder Club and Flock Health Club members

### Understanding Sheep Worms

Monday 16 January 2023, 2pm

Location TBC

Learn the importance of carrying out your own worm egg counts  
£10 for non-Flock Health Club members

If you would like to attend any of these meetings, please ring the office to book your place (01722-333291, option 1).

## Lucy Jerram



We are sad to announce that Lucy has decided to leave us to explore a new life in the Republic of Ireland with her Irish fiancé, Tom. Lucy has been part of our team since 2017, part of which she spent as an RVC resident whilst she achieved her European Diploma in Bovine Health Management (ECBHM). Lucy will be a much missed member of our team, but we wish her the very best for her future life with Tom and the next step in her veterinary career.

## Vitamin D Supplementation in Alpacas



Alpacas require vitamin D during the winter months in the UK due to the short days and low sunlight. Vitamin D can be acquired through direct sunlight and diet. Vitamin D is necessary for calcium and phosphorous absorption and helps with normal bone regulation and formation. Camelids can develop bone diseases, such as rickets and long bone malformation. Clinical signs can vary from subtle to severe. Signs include gait changes, weight shifting, lameness, bunny hop gait, changes in limb angulation and eventually reluctance to stand. These events are more severe in young camelids with developing bones. Crias born to a vitamin D deficient dam are at a higher risk of developing rickets and angular

limb deformities. Darkly coloured and heavily fleeced animals have lower vitamin D concentrations because they have less skin exposure. Increased housing time also exacerbates vitamin D deficiency.

Prevention is better than cure. Ensure adequate and balanced calcium and phosphorous in all forages and supplements. Vitamin D supplementation can reverse pathologic changes and prevent disease.

The recommended dose for vitamin D is 1000-2000 IU per kg of body weight under the skin repeated every two months (darker animals may benefit from 2000 IU per kg). Oral Vitamin D should be dosed at 1000 IU per kg of bodyweight and repeated every month. Preventative dosing regimes should be done from October to March/April and can include injectable and oral. Different products may have different concentrations, so always check both injectable and oral beforehand.

Vitamin D supplies are back in stock, so please phone to order or with any queries.



## Management of Down Animals

When animals are unable to stand, it causes severe muscle damage due to blood being restricted from flowing to tissue, depriving the cells of oxygen and nutrition, leading to cell death. If left for more than six hours, this leads to a poor prognosis for recovery. Other prognostic indicators include cause of being down, and a heart rate of greater than 100bpm. A blood sample can be taken to assess the level of Creatinine Kinase (CK), a marker of acute muscle damage. Cows down for more than two days with CK >163000 U/L have a <5% probability of survival. Aspartate Aminotransferase (AST), a marker for ongoing muscle damage, doubles the risk of not ever getting up if the levels are 500-1000 U/L and increases the risk by five times if >1000 U/L.

### Down animal requirements:

- Frequent turning over onto their other side.
- Support, eg: with a bale, to keep them upright.
- Fresh water and nutritious food must remain within their reach, so requires moving if the animal moves.
- A soft surface with sufficient purchase.
- Anti-inflammatories.

Please seek veterinary advice if an animal has been down for more than 24 hours.

## Update on Red Tractor Guidelines

As mentioned in our January newsletter, there have been some changes in the Red Tractor guidelines as of October 2022 that will affect accredited beef farms. A control plan for Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) will be required to be included in the herd health plan – up until now, this rule only applied to dairy farms. BVD is a complicated disease – its transmission, clinical signs and impact have been covered elsewhere – and it is the persistently infected (PI) animals that cause the majority of the problems. There are a number of ways it can be controlled:

- **Don't buy it in** – know the status of your source farm: Do they vaccinate? Have they had recent tests confirming BVD-free status?
- **Testing calves** – all calves born on farm are tested for the virus. PCR testing a small tissue sample from the ear is the most accurate, known as 'tag and test'. It is useful to test stillborn calves in this way, as well as those born live.
- **Testing youngstock** – also known as a 'check test', 5-10 animals between 9-18 months old in each management group are randomly chosen for blood sampling. This test assesses exposure to BVD, so indicates whether there are PIs present in the herd, but not necessarily which one is the PI.
- **Whole herd test** – by blood sampling every animal in the herd, the BVD status of every animal is known, so PIs can be identified and culled. However, this is by far the most expensive option, and unsuitable in many cases!
- **Vaccination** – cattle can be vaccinated against BVD from eight months onwards, but be careful! PI animals will have been infected in utero, so the vaccine will have no effect at all on them. It is wise to know your herd's BVD status before you begin a vaccination programme.

As you can see, there is no 'one size fits all' approach, and effectively controlling BVD depends on your type of beef system. For example, for a beef finishing unit, testing calves is irrelevant, so the focus would be on not buying it in. For a very small herd, testing every animal would give a definitive picture of the herd's status, but the financial cost of this could not be justified for many larger systems. Your vet can advise you on a control plan that works best for you and your herd.



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