

September 2010

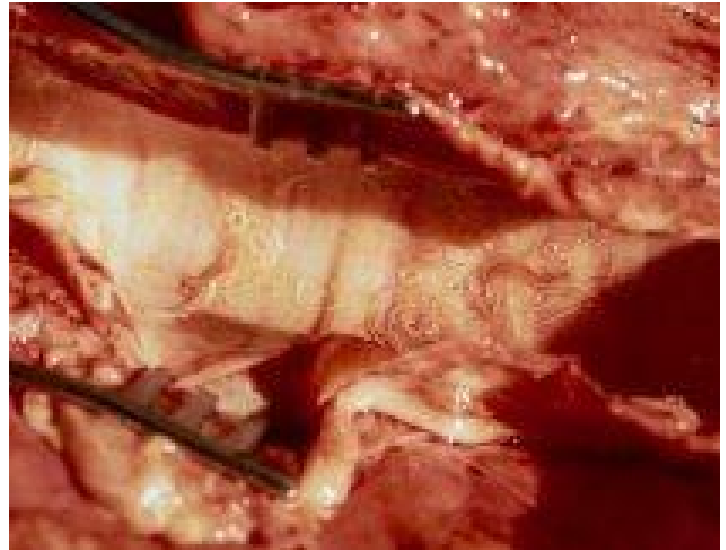
## Lungworm Risk

The weather patterns we have seen this summer mean that there is relatively higher risk of lungworm in cattle of all ages, including vaccinated ones, this autumn. The lungworm larvae require moisture to complete their life cycle, and so the recent rainfall is likely to have helped this. Coupled with the drier start to the summer this means that there are high numbers of eggs on pasture ready to hatch. These eggs lie within the faecal pats on the pasture and the recent heavy rain will have helped to have distributed these.

Long term immunity to lungworm relies on a constant low level of challenge. This means that animals vaccinated earlier this year that have not been exposed to much challenge through the summer could still be at risk from disease this autumn, as could older animals whose immunity has dropped through lack of exposure. 1<sup>st</sup> lactation Dairy heifers are a group particularly at risk, as even though they may have been vaccinated at the start of last years grazing season, if they have had little exposure this year, and then calve into the herd and are exposed to high levels of infection on the main grazing ground, along with the stress of calving and entering the herd leading to reduced immunity they are particularly at risk.

Worming is obviously required for animals suspected of having lungworm, but blanket worming of all stock also carries risks, as mentioned before killing all lungworm in non-affected animals will reduce immunity, so prolonged action products may be best avoided. Blanket worming also puts pressure on development of resistance. Early treatment is best, as large numbers of larvae can kill

animals, so investigation and/or treatment of any cattle coughing at grass is recommended. The yellow drenches (levamisoles) are often best suited to use as treatment, as they avoid overkill, and it is often the dead larvae post treatment that can cause as much trouble. Antibiotics to cover any secondary infections should also be considered. For animals in milk the only licensed product with no milk withhold is Eprinex.



*Lungworm in a bullock post mortem*

## Beef Southwest 2010

We are pleased to announce that we will have a stand at this years exciting new **Beef South West event** which takes place at **Exeter Livestock Centre, on Wednesday 29th September 2010**, on a wave of renewed optimism for British beef.

Organised by the **National Beef Association South West**, this dynamic one day event will showcase the breadth and depth of quality breeding and production, with the focus on profit and performance. The West country is a major player in the UK with 20% of the national cattle herd.

Highlights include a major prime stock show, cattle auction, cookery and butchery theatre as well as forage and technology transfer features. Involving young beef producers of the future is a key objective of the event to

encourage increased beef production in the South West.

The NBA South West have moved the event, now in its 4th record year, to Exeter Livestock Centre from Hatherleigh to benefit from the excellent transport links, making it easier than ever for beef producers from all over the UK to come to the show and have a great day out. So if you have an interest in beef farming, whether that be Pedigree Beef Cattle through to rearing beef bred from dairy cattle we hope you will come and see us at the show ó light refreshments will of course be on offer!!

### **West country Cattle Breeding**

Being recognised as having a leading interest in cattle breeding, and having a progressive and active embryo transfer team we had the privilege last week of being invited to a meeting with UK Sire services. Their southern area stud at Tigley, part of the old Dartington Hall complex, was rescued some years ago by the brave and bold efforts of Rob Wills and a hastily formed group of shareholders. Since then a northern, and more modern stud at Kelso has been added, and a huge web of worldwide contacts has been established to both export UK genetics as well as import semen from abroad.

Rob's huge enthusiasm for the UK (especially West country ) cattle industry is infectious and he firmly believes we have cattle of great merit, in many breeds, that can be of real value worldwide. At Tigley they have collected semen from 36 breeds, each one of which has no doubt evolved to fill a special need. That need will no doubt exist somewhere else in the world and we should be filling it.

So if you have a special animal in the herd whose genes should be spread why not let Rob and his team collect semen from it ( on farm or on stud) if it is a male or let us flush some embryos if she is your favourite cow. If you are interested any of the farm team will give you details of pre collection tests needed and likely costs.

On a more sombre note, semen can only be collected if the herd is TB free and the donor passes a pre-collection TB skin test. Likewise we

have we have to obtain a licence to flush embryos on a farm under TB restriction. There is nothing more depressing than seeing a top flight young animal leave a farm destined for a TB abattoir, with nothing to show for years of hard work and planning. Embryo collection could be a positive insurance policy: unless you know that the government will get rid of TB tomorrow!!

### **Repeat breeder embryos.**

With the continuing battle with Holstein fertility seemingly ever more challenging we are using the technique of implanting embryos on day seven following an AI or natural service more and more frequently. This is proving successful in between 50 and 55 % of cases where no abnormalities of the uterus or ovaries are found. Our biggest problem is harvesting enough embryos to keep up with demand so if you have a healthy cow around the 80-120 day stage (genetic merit is not important) please let us know if you would be keen to collect embryos for your own use or for sale to the practice.

We have available, through the efforts of UKSS, semen from an extremely easy calving red Angus bull to use in the flushing program. This is to ensure that while you need a highly skilled vet to get the embryo in successfully you will not need a complicated surgical procedure to get it back out nine months later.

### **Bovilis BVD Vaccine.**



We are continuing to have some supply problems with Bovilis BVD. The withdrawal of one of the alternatives due to possible links with Bleeding Calf Syndrome has inevitably meant increased

demand for Bovilis BVD vaccine. This has put pressure on the manufacturers to keep up with this demand.

We have stocks at present. Please can you review your BVD vaccine requirements and let us know what you require and when, in good time so that we can ensure that your need can be met

## Imizol and Redwater

Imizol is a drug used specifically for the prevention and treatment of Redwater in cattle. The use of Imizol for the treatment and prevention of Redwater in cattle has always been fairly tightly controlled. But we have recently been contacted by DEFRA to inform us that they are improving the administration of the controls:

Prescribers should be advised that full records of product administered to identifiable animals must be maintained and that it is the duty of the farmer to keep a careful record of all administration of the product as required under Section 10 of the Animal and Fresh Meat (Examination for Residues) Regulations, 1988.

Farmers should inform the local Divisional Veterinary Officer of the State Veterinary Service when treated animals go for slaughter for human consumption, or when milk from treated animals is intended for human consumption.

In practice, in addition to the usual medicines records kept, you are required to inform DEFRA with details of animals that are treated, and inform them again when the milk withhold and meat withhold time for treated animals has elapsed.

The milk withhold is 21 days, and the meat withhold is 213 days.

We will give you a note when you purchase Imizol to remind you about these requirements.

**Fortunately Redwater is relatively uncommon so this will not be a great burden to you: or us!!**

Some information is included below about Redwater from NADIS as a reminder for those of you who do see it, and for interest for those who don't!!

## What is Babesiosis?

This parasitic disease is usually first reported in May/June when its tick host first becomes active.

Babesiosis is an infection of the red blood cells by a single cell parasite of the genus *Babesia*. In the UK, babesiosis is usually caused by *Babesia divergens*. The disease is spread between cattle by ticks (*Ixodes ricinus* in the UK). The *Babesia* is injected into the bloodstream by the tick and then invades the red blood cells and begins dividing, eventually rupturing the cell. Clinical signs begin around 2 weeks after infection.

Babesiosis is rare except in known tick areas. However in these areas even though disease is often relatively mild there is a significant impact on productivity and fertility in affected cattle.

## Clinical Signs

- Increased temperature
- Diarrhoea which ceases after around 36 hours and then becomes constipation
- Red urine (due to haemoglobin produced by the rupture of the red blood cells) which becomes darker with time
- Increased pulse rate
- Abortion of pregnant cows
- Death is rare in babesiosis in the UK.

## Diagnosis

- On the clinical signs described above
- Recent movement to pastures known to harbour ticks
- Blood smears can show up the parasite

## Treatment

Mild cases may recover without treatment.

More severe cases need treatment. This is often best combined with a preventative treatment for the as yet unaffected cattle. This choice is best made on an individual farm basis in consultation with your vet.

## Prevention

Identification of risk areas  
Prophylactic treatment of cattle about to be moved to a risk area  
Tick control

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## TB testing and the credit crunch.

As the government tries to sort out the financial situation and everyone blames everyone else, the local DEFRA office are faced with reducing their spending. One of the biggest costs is the ongoing TB problem, although the number of new cases and reactors taken this year is decreasing.

One of the ways that they are reducing costs is to use their own staff to take on some of the TB testing.

This means that they will be doing some of the short interval TB tests that we would usually do. It is a return to the situation in the 90s when there were more MAFF staff around and less TB.

We are unable to influence who and which tests are involved but we have asked that DEFRA let us know as soon as possible which tests they are doing so that Carole can continue to run our TB testing as efficiently as possible.

On the subject of TB, an advisory group has been set up in the southwest for farmers. Below is some information and their website address. They are coming to talk to the vets in the practice in a few weeks, so more information after that!!

## SW TB Farm Advisory Service

With the escalating problems and scale of bovine TB (bTB) in the South West, there is a clear need for a dedicated advisory service, open to all farmers with TB or at risk from TB, for guidance and support.

The recently established and independent South

West TB Farm Advisory Service (SWTBFAS), hosted by the NFU, with a lead advisor, three trained and practical advisors and an administrator will be able to visit farmers to give free, bespoke individual help and advice to mitigate the risk of contracting TB in the herd, as well as measures to reduce the impact of TB on farms who already have the disease. The advisors will also provide written guidance, a user-friendly website and advisory documents and bulletins.

The aim of the Service is to ensure a high level of independent and confidential farmer-friendly support linked to all practical aspects and solutions of TB and to enable dairy and beef farmers to continue to trade.

The South West TB Farm Advisory Service will complement other work already being carried out in this field and will ensure that the advice given to farmers is universally discussed and approved between professionals and partner organisations. The strategic direction and governance of the Service will be provided by the Industry Reference Group, made up of stakeholders, partner bodies and organisations, with South West Food and Drink as the lead agency and secretariat.

For more information contact:

[www.southwest-tbadvice.co.uk](http://www.southwest-tbadvice.co.uk) or telephone (01392) 440706

