



Discussion Group Meeting

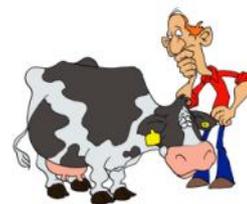
Synergy Farm Health's group of spring block calving dairy farms gathered for their annual meeting at the Acorn Inn, Evershot on the 29th January. The topic for discussion this year was Antibiotic Resistance. I gave an overview of the situation nationally and globally, seeing what other countries were already doing to reduce their usage. This was followed by a good debate about how management factors and economic pressures could be influencing antibiotic resistance on their farms, such as feeding waste milk to calves. We then looked at the group's antibiotic use data for the last 12 months and benchmarked the individual farms against each other, based on production system (organic/conventional) and average milk yield.



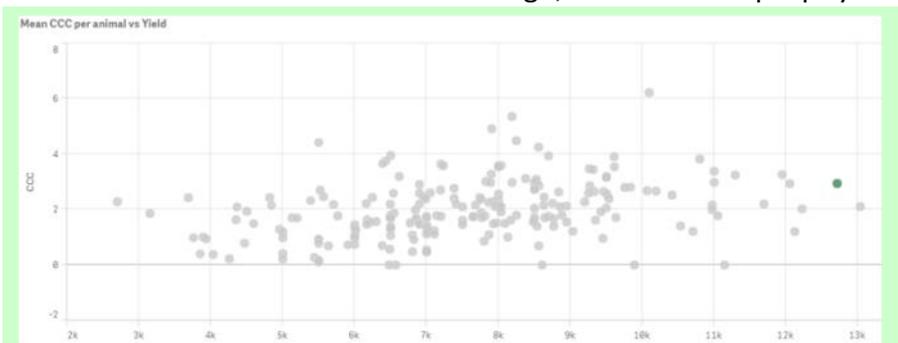
Using an individual farm report each farm was able to drill down to see where their main usage areas were and this opened up useful discussions about selective combination dry cow therapy, prophylactic pneumonia treatments and concentrating the minds to generally reduce disease levels on farm. After a good shepherd's pie and a pint we finished off by creating an "Antibiotic Stewardship Plan" with everyone contributing practical solutions to encourage the correct use of antibiotics, improve monitoring of medicine usage, reduce prophylactic

antibiotic use and minimize disease levels on farm.

One topic that kept coming up was the need for training of the staff who administer the drugs and the need for clear protocols for specific treatments to be drawn up in conjunction with the farm's vet. I hope that the farms involved took away some positive messages.



Rationalizing the use of antibiotics on farm will not only help reduce resistance pressure on bacteria, but also result in lower medicine costs which in the current dairy climate can only be a good thing.



Scatter graph showing relationship of farms average 305 day milk yield Vs number of antibiotic courses per cow per year

February 2016

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- Interesting case
- New Vet
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Tom Clarke



Mastitis and Antimicrobial Resistance

My father recently had a very unpleasant experience with a hospital acquired coli septicaemia, which would not respond to first line treatment. Luckily, one culture and sensitivity later, a more effective antibiotic was prescribed and he made a rather delayed recovery.

It is easy to imagine that a world without effective antibiotics would be a very different place, but it is harder for us to work out what we can do to help stop that from happening, especially as there is a real lack of scientific research in this area. Isn't it a problem for the medical profession to address, and those countries using a lot more antibiotics than we do?

Perhaps it helps to look at an example like mastitis, and how treatment might contribute to the development of antibiotic resistant bacteria. Every time we treat a cow with mastitis we hope that the bacteria in the udder are susceptible to the medicine we are using, and will be polished off by a combination of the antibiotic, the action of the cow's immune system and milking out. If there is a population of bacteria, however small, that have an antibiotic resistant gene they may persist and multiply, particularly as their "competition" has been knocked out. Alarmingly, they may even pass the gene on to other bacteria. Fortunately laboratories inform us that the prevalence of antibiotic resistance bacteria in mastitis samples is still quite low, and many of the tubes we use have a combination of antibiotics to cope with the eventuality. However, more of these organisms are appearing and the more cows we treat, the greater the chance of this scenario occurring.

Lactating cow tubes are topical treatments, which means that they don't spread elsewhere in the body in appreciable concentrations. If an injectable antibiotic is given though, this may accumulate at low concentrations in the digestive tract, creating a selective pressure for the antibiotic resistant variants there, which are deposited widely around the farm in dung!

What then happens if antibiotic discarded milk is fed to calves? Again, a sub-therapeutic concentration of the antibiotic will be present in the calf digestive tract creating a selective pressure for resistance, which ends up in the environment. Depending on the animal type, there is a risk of contaminated meat or milk as well.

Recent research looking for extended spectrum beta lactamase (ESBL) E coli on UK farms found levels between 0 and 2.7%. Further work is needed to work out if this low figure is a good sign or just an indication of trouble ahead. Studies from India suggest that >80% of E coli isolates from groundwater samples are multidrug resistant. Scary. Many other countries with lax prescribing practices look likely to follow suit.

So how can we avoid an innocent intramammary infusion turning into a post-antibiotic apocalypse?

- 1) Do not feed antibiotic waste milk to calves
- 2) Agree a treatment protocol/sampling regime with your vet and review it regularly
- 3) Avoid prolonged tube courses or injectables unless culture results support their use
- 4) Reduce mastitis levels through good management! Aim for less than 35 cases/100 cows/

year. Ask us for advice, sign up for one of our mastitis packages or get the Dairyco Mastitis Control Plan

5) Consider using selective dry cow therapy. This will save money, the planet and lead to better outcomes if done correctly.

6) Consider vaccination if your mastitis follows a coliform or Staph aureus pattern

7) Have you heard of our new Vetorapid culture system? On farm culture can identify mastitis cases which will **not** benefit from

treatment. Probably only suitable for larger farms with good monitoring systems already in place.

In the current climate it is worth pointing out that none of these measures cost the earth but they do generate a clear cost benefit.

Denmark is cited as a big success story for halving their antibiotic use in recent years, although this has only brought them slightly below that of the UK. It is possible that the policy of requiring a vet to administer every antibiotic treatment would not go down very well round here. Surely we could all contribute to reducing the UK's usage and create a much bigger good news story, without having to resort to such draconian measures?

A national good news story about UK agriculture: now wouldn't that be nice?! !



Rachel Hayton

'Keep an Eye Out'

Pardon the pun, but I couldn't resist – as you may have guessed, I would like to quickly mention 'Silage Eye'. This is not exactly a common condition, but one I have seen in several animals in recent weeks. It differs to the more common 'New Forest Eye' in both cause and appearance and is much more of a winter disease.

The bug causing all the problems is *Listeria*. In this instance it doesn't cause the more well-known neurological signs – just a nasty eye infection. It usually occurs when animals have been fed mouldy feed, or there is some mouldy bedding around – the *Listeria* live in the mould and if the silage or straw scratches the surface of the eye it allows the bug to enter.

Whereas 'New Forest Eye' causes a problem on the surface of the eye, 'Silage Eye' infects the front chamber, however some of the signs are similar – it is very painful so they close their eye or squint, it gets very watery and the edge of the eye becomes very reddened, but more specifically the front of the eye itself goes a nasty yellow or white colour. If it is very bad they will be temporarily blind in the affected eye.

Treatment is relatively straightforward and as with any other condition – the earlier you treat the quicker it heals. So look out for those early signs of squinting and watery eyes, you may also notice the eye looks a bit cloudy.



At this stage it would respond well to Opticlox cream. If you don't happen to notice it until the later stages it is best to call your vet and we can administer antibiotics into the eyelid which works really well.

As always, prevention is better than cure so look out for mouldy lumps of feed and bedding and get rid of them.



Esme Moffett

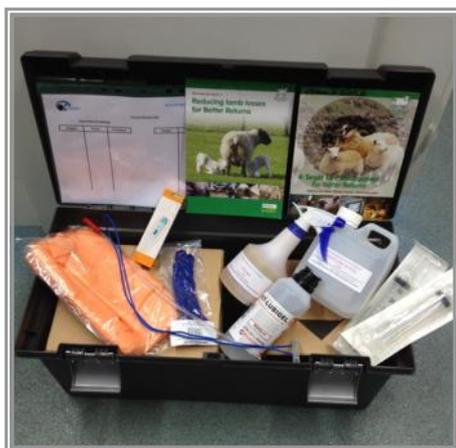
Synergy Lambing Kits

Get yourself organised for lambing with the Synergy Lambing Kit

**ONLY
£30**

Includes:

Synergy Guide to Lambing, template for flock record book, lambing protocols, 2 x 50ml dose syringes, stomach tube, lambing snare, 2 x lambing ropes, vet lube, arm length gloves, thermometer, iodine tincture and spray, propylene glycol, all enclosed in a free tool box



New Vet

New Zealand vet Krispin Kannan has started with us as a locum in the North region. Based near Langport he comes to us with a wealth



of farm animal experience and is looking forward to immersing himself into our farming community.

Plan your Pre-Turnout Vaccinations

Turnout time will soon be upon us, so now is the time to start planning prevention of a few problems including Leptospirosis and Lungworm. We are pleased to be able to offer a 5% discount on combined purchases of Leptavoid H and Bovilis BVD.

	Price per dose	Combi Price per dose
Leptavoid H (25 dose pack)	1.80	1.71
Bovilis BVD	2.00	1.90

News from our Rounds

Tim Cameron



It's been a good few months now since I joined Synergy down in the South area of the practice and it's been a great experience so far! While everyone has been friendly and helpful, someone could have warned me to bring my boat and snorkel down to get to farms! Despite the slightly damp weather my wife and I have settled in well to the area, and have very much enjoyed the coast and local sights (and a few local beverages).

Thankfully the days are starting to lengthen out again, and it's a beautiful frosty morning as I'm writing this. In recent times there have been a lot of clients around mentioning footrot in both cattle and sheep, along with other clients concerned about digital dermatitis. The wet, muddy conditions haven't helped with this at all. As you all know, footbathing can be a great way of controlling these conditions, so it is a good idea to continue doing this as regularly as needed! There have also been a number of sick calves around recently, so remember to get that 6 litres of colostrum into the fresh calves within 6 hours of being born! Any problems don't hesitate to give us a call.

Tom Cook



Hello all, this is my first contribution to Regional News. For those who haven't yet met me I joined the North team 12 months ago, balancing working for Synergy part time with helping run the family dairy farm near Taunton during the rest of the week.

Unfortunately TB seems to be rearing its head in 2016. I have already found reactors on more than one farm this year. It is important to remember what we as farmers can try to do to limit the effects of the disease - good biosecurity measures and a strict buying-in policy, for example. Government policy looks helpful with the rollout of more badger culling as part of the longer term strategy for controlling this disease.

It is nice to see the nights drawing out now - Spring is in sight! I wish all the clients well for 2016, hoping for some drier weather and then good conditions to turnout in - start planning your pre-turnout vaccines now!



Dozing off head first - usually calves just lie down shortly after being sedated, whereas this calf took her snooze standing!

Josh Swain



I've been with Synergy for just over six months now, as the latest in a long line of interns starting with Great-Great-Grandad Gareth (he's that old!) and feel like I'm settling in well and learning my way round. In that time I have met many of you on the East and some elsewhere whether it's been treating sick sheep, calving cows or TB testing.

One of my first jobs at Synergy has been taking on some of the knock-down disbudding. It's just like normal disbudding except we give the calves some sedation causing them to 'doze off'.

The benefits of the anaesthesia are; less stress for the calf, some added pain relief, limited handling/restraint required and less sweating from the person with the iron! Since August, myself along with one of our experienced vet techs (usually Gary) have knocked-down and disbudded just over 800 calves, averaging between 20-30 calves per hour.

The extra benefit is that many clients use the time whilst the calf is asleep to squeeze in other jobs such as vaccinating, weighing or removing supernumerary teats.

With calving close to kicking off for some of you there is no time like the present to think about knock-down disbudding. If you are interested and would like to find out more or even try it out please speak to one of the vets/vet techs or ring the office.

EVENTS

2 Day Foot Trimming
22nd-23rd February

Cattle Lameness
ACADEMY

Coming Soon...
Workshop - Cow Tracks/Cow Flow

Please visit www.cattl lamenessacademy.co.uk for more information or call Rhi on 07792 726338/
info@cattl lamenessacademy.com to book your place

Worm Egg Counting Course with Emily Gascoigne at Evershot
Tuesday 16th February *or*
Thursday 18th February - **FULL**

Practical Lambing with Emily Gascoigne
Wednesday 17th February -
at Evershot **£66 + VAT**

COMING SOON - AI Course - 6th-8th April

For further information or to book your place on any of these events please contact 01935 83682
or email courses@synergyfarmhealth.com

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