



A Challenging Lump

This young cow was presented with a peach sized lump sitting directly on its spine above the ribs. It had apparently appeared quite suddenly. The cow was fine in herself, milking well and waiting to be served.

no loose skin on the spine to close up what was going to be a big hole.



My default position on lumps is to leave well alone if

they aren't causing any trouble - they often are not as easy to remove as you might think and 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' is a good approach! The problem with this one was that it was ulcerated and bleeding - with summer on its way it would take more than some blue spray to keep the flies off; this one had to be removed. My worries were that it might bleed uncontrollably, but also that there is

As it turned out, after some sedation and local anaesthetic the lump came off quite easily without too much bleeding. The skin was tight, but by making some extra skin incisions I could create a 'string vest' effect, giving me crucial extra stretch to close it up. A special tension spreading stitch with rubber bungs to prevent 'cheese wiring' would hopefully make it hold even when she arched her back to have a pee!



As vets we can never resist cutting into lumps - when I sectioned this one it wasn't what I expected. For interest it has been sent away for analysis. I'll let you know how she progresses and what the diagnosis is next month!



Mark Burnell



Tower to Tower

On Sunday the 1st May, three local young farmers; Joshua Fincham, Will Dyer and Morris Burrough began their Tower to Tower challenge. The three lads set off from the Eiffel Tower in Paris with the hope of reaching the Blackpool Tower just 4 days later, covering a distance of 600

miles. The team of 3 took on the challenge in aid of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, to help a little girl called Phoebe Bardwell. The trip was a great success; they only had one puncture, no crashes and reached Blackpool within their target time. So far they have raised over £6500 - a phenomenal achievement. During the challenge the



guys reckon they burnt about 30,000 calories each - no doubt they refuelled appropriately at the YFC Nationals!

An update on Neospora

Neospora is one of the most frequently diagnosed infectious causes of abortion in cattle worldwide, accounting for a quarter of all UK abortion cases sent to labs in 2014. Cows that are infected with Neospora are 5 to 7 times more likely to abort than uninfected cows, although they will not show any other clinical signs. Neospora is caused by a microscopic protozoan parasite called *Neospora caninum*. Other protozoa you may be familiar with are Coccidia and Cryptosporidia and for those that keep sheep, it is closely related to *Toxoplasma*.

The lifecycle of Neospora is complicated as it involves an intermediate host; the dog.

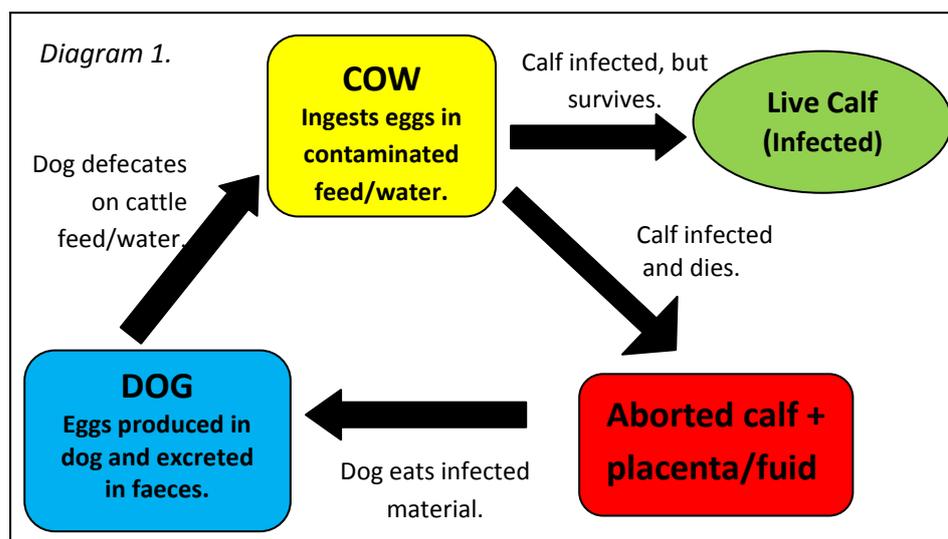
still no proof that Neospora can be transmitted by the bull.

Dogs on footpaths are rarely a source of infection as they are unlikely to have ingested aborted material, it is more likely that there is a new dog on the farm that has access to cattle yards, calving pens and cattle feed and pasture. However, the most common route of introducing the disease is by buying in infected cattle.

Cows may abort from 3 months of pregnancy until their due date, with the peak time around 5-7 months. Not all animals will abort but their offspring will be infected. We tend to see three patterns of abortions when on farm:

treatment or vaccination for Neospora, so prevention is key. Here are some ways you can prevent or reduce Neospora in your herd:

- Biosecurity – keeping a closed herd is best.
- Keep dogs away from calving pens, don't allow them to eat aborted material and make every effort to ensure they don't defecate near cattle feed or drinking water.
- 'Breed to beef' is a useful policy for dairy cows that have had a confirmed Neospora abortion. It means there won't be an infected replacement heifer entering the herd, but also beef cross pregnancies are less likely to abort.
- Blood test all heifer calves at birth. Not only will it tell you if they are infected, but it can also be cross-referenced back to the mother.
- A test and cull policy is obviously very expensive and is only economically sustainable if only a small proportion of animals need to be removed and there is good control of other diseases in the herd.
- Anecdotally, it would appear that animals infected from birth that then go on to join the adult herd seem far more likely to abort with their first pregnancy than their second and that younger animals appear to abort earlier in their pregnancy.



Dogs eat infected aborted material (foetuses, cleansing etc) and then excrete the eggs in their faeces. If they defecate on pasture or other feed the cattle ingest the eggs and become infected. Rivers can also be a potential source of infection if they have been contaminated up stream. Dogs get no clinical disease from the infection, but can shed the parasite in their faeces for 2-5 weeks after initial infection. The more common route of infection is trans-placental; infected cows give the disease to their unborn calf and will continue to do so for each subsequent pregnancy. This is why, once a herd has the infection it can be quite hard to get rid of. The good news is there is no direct transmission between adult cows and

- 1.) 'Abortion storms' where up to 10% of the herd can abort in a 3 month period. This usually happens if a naive herd are exposed at the same time.
- 2.) Persistent abortions over months and years as the parasite infects family lines.
- 3.) Sporadic abortions occur from time to time.

Neospora can be a costly disease; not only do you lose a potential replacement or calf to sell, the cow will have an extended calving interval, reduced milk yield and increased chance of premature culling due to the risk of continued abortions or infecting replacement stock.

At present there is no available

There is no doubt there is still a lack of knowledge regarding this disease, it was only identified in 1989! Current work involves trying to improve diagnostic tests to identify persistently infected cattle, ascertain whether vaccination is going to be an effective way to control Neosporosis and develop more practical on farm measures which would help reduce the impact of the disease within herds.

With thanks to The Moredun Foundation.

Alasdair Moffett



Common things are common, but occasionally...

A weaned Holstein-Friesian heifer calf was presented with massive enlargement of the superficial lymph nodes. These appeared as lumpy swellings all over the calf's body, most notably the retropharyngeal lymph nodes - which gave a 'hamster cheek' appearance to the head. Despite a high temperature the calf was bright and eating, although in poorer body condition than its pen mates.



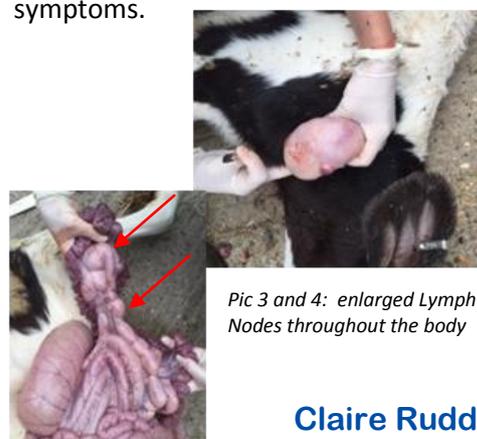
Pic 1: enlarged Lymph Nodes behind jaw

Lymph nodes are present throughout the body and form part of the immune system. They produce white blood cells to combat 'invaders'. A single lymph node may increase in size in response to a localised infection as the body mounts an immune response. For example, you may feel your 'glands' are up when you have a throat infection, or you may see enlarged lymph nodes at the top of a cow's udder with mastitis. Unfortunately when all the lymph nodes are enlarged this indicates a widespread infection or a cancer of the lymphatic system. Given the age, signs, history and lack of response to treatment Lymphoma was strongly suspected and she was euthanased.



Pic 2: Enlarged Liver

A post-mortem was performed for our own interest; note the ENORMOUS lymph nodes throughout the body and grossly enlarged liver! Lymphoma is a sporadic condition involving enlarged lymph nodes throughout the body. This condition is extremely rare, not contagious and with no known cause when diagnosed in youngstock. Please note though that Enzootic Bovine Leukosis (a notifiable disease) also causes these signs in adult cattle, so please call us if you are concerned about an individual showing similar symptoms.



Pic 3 and 4: enlarged Lymph Nodes throughout the body

Claire Rudd

Feeding Kitchen Waste to Pigs is Illegal



Since the last major Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001, the feeding of kitchen and catering waste to all farmed animals, including pigs, has been made ILLEGAL. Although feeding pigs with scraps may appear to be a handy way of recycling waste food, it is prohibited and dangerous. This is explained below:



Pete Siviter

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| What Does the Law State? | It is illegal to feed pigs (or other livestock) with waste food from a kitchen or from any catering establishment, processed or unprocessed . This includes every item that leaves the kitchen or other establishment, as well as all meat and offal from any source whatsoever, and any product that may have had contact with meat or offal during its production. |
| Why is it Prohibited? | 1) There have been serious outbreaks of notifiable diseases (including Foot & Mouth and Classical Swine Fever) since the millennium, which have resulted directly from the feeding of human food waste to pigs. These have had enormous consequences for the health and welfare of the UK pig herd . 2) Two major new threats are now present in Europe; African Swine Fever and Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea , both of which can be spread to pigs by the feeding of catering waste. |
| What is the Risk to Pigs? | All of the diseases mentioned above can be fatal to pigs. If your animal survives infection then transmission to other livestock may be inevitable and catastrophic, with far-reaching effects. |
| Is there an Alternative? | There is an alternative: a properly formulated pig ration from a reputable agricultural supplier will provide your pigs with a healthy and consistent diet. There is absolutely no nutritional benefit to feeding catering waste or kitchen scraps. |

News from our Rounds

Josh Swain



Spring has sprung past quickly and summer has arrived with plenty of tractors hauling trailers full of grass, with the social media savvy amongst you showing off various machinery using #silage2016.

With that, the tail end of calving has kept me busy both during the day and at night with a few interesting cases. I feel like I have had a calf in every presentation and have had to throw out the rule book on a few occasions. A set of twins was one such example.

The first calf was back to front and upside down, with one leg almost out by the time I arrived! After giving the cow a drug to relax her uterus and an epidural to stop her straining, it was obvious that the second leg couldn't be retrieved and the discussion of removal via the side door began. However, after a good feel around inside it was decided that due to the small size of the calf, combined with the roomy pelvis of mum it might just be possible to avoid surgery with an unconventional delivery. With lots of lube and slow and steady traction a live calf was delivered in the splits position. Its twin followed, also backwards (but this time both legs up!) alive and kicking. After a quick check for a third (one can never be too careful) and no damage inside mum, I headed back to the practice to share my unusual calving technique and see if the 'wiser' (older) members of the practice had done anything similar.

I've been with Synergy for almost a year now. Moving to Dorset to start my working life has been great and I couldn't have asked for a better bunch of colleagues and clients to work with. But like all good things, my time on the East is coming to an end and I'll be heading North, swapping the Jurassic coast for the Somerset levels. With that I wanted to say a big thank you to everybody I have met on my travels who has helped me with my transition from student-life to vet. I'm sure I will still see many of you around and I look forward to my next few months of driving about getting lost and meeting a new bunch of faces. Fingers crossed summer lasts a bit longer than spring!

Ben Barber



While the calvings appear to have gone down in number over the last month or so, they have by no means reduced in their intensity, my favourites so far being a two headed monster, a calf which smelt like it had been hanging around for close to a week (which was a similar amount of time the smell clung to me afterwards), and the 'blob' – a hairy sack of bones, organs and muscle that had no head or limbs to speak of.

The month of May also provided a slightly different intense experience. Young Farmers Nationals took place at the start of the month in Blackpool. A town well accustomed to young farmers, having hosted this event in previous years, and once again it did not disappoint. The hostel we stayed in was hardly plush; there are probably more upmarket places in rural Africa, but it was perfect for the occasion. It was a fantastic weekend with good people, it was great to meet other young famers from around the country and see the talent on show at the various finals which included theatre and ball room dancing! Rest assured though, all vets attending remained professional throughout. *(relieved to hear that!— Andrew Davies— Managing Director)*

Paula Hunt



This is without doubt my favourite time of year to be travelling around the region; with hedgerows blossoming and cows with their calves out at grass again, it's lovely. A question I am often asked is which cattle breeds I would recommend for temperament to be used in a beef suckler herd. I now have a new favourite – the Stabiliser! These are relatively new to the UK, having been introduced here in 1998 from an American initiative to achieve a composite of 4 breeds: Gelbvieh, Hereford, Red Angus and Simmental. Harnessing the hybrid vigour of these breeds produces the attributes of the Stabiliser, which include calving ease (calves are born small but grow quickly), early maturing with good food conversion efficiency, good fertility and mothering and above all a lovely docile temperament - which I can vouch for in the ones that I've seen. And to top it all they're polled as well!



So if you're considering an alternative to dehorning those wild Limousins....try the Stabiliser instead! *(other breed societies are available!)*

NSA South Sheep 7th June 2016

Tisbury, Salisbury

Emily looks forward to seeing you there!



EVENTS Visit our **NEW** website for further details on these events www.synergyfarmhealth.com

DIY AI Course — 15th-17th June with André Northey



How much does it cost to rear your heifers?

Two dates in June to be confirmed

Coming
Soon



Wednesday 20th July—Evershot

Join us for an evening of notifiable disease information to include quiz (with prizes!) a drink and mingling. Free to Synergy Smallholder Members, £10 to non-members.

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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