



TB News Update

There has obviously been a recent surge in the publicity surrounding TB due to the additional culling areas and recent research findings regarding infection routes.

New Research Findings

Scientists at Imperial College and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) attached GPS collars to hundreds of badgers and cows and monitored how close they came to each other at 20 farms in Devon and Cornwall. Over a course of 18 months the badgers and cows did not come within 16 feet (five metres) of each other. It is thought the animals would need to be within five feet for disease to be spread. The researchers concluded that TB was being passed between the two populations through pasture contamination through bodily fluids on the ground or in feeding troughs and not direct contact.

It is always interesting how the same research can trigger two different sets of interpretation from different organisations. However, it is quite clear that the research reinforces the point that the wildlife reservoir of infection is a very significant component of the disease equation and that biosecurity measures are an absolutely crucial part of a successful control programme.

Control Measures

The research indicated that whilst direct badger to cow nose to nose contact may be less likely, transmission of infection definitely

occurs from an environment contaminated with infected badger faeces, urine and sputum. This obviously leads us to concentrate our biosecurity focus on aiming to avoid this route of transmission and reduce exposure to these infected materials.

Key biosecurity measures are outlined overleaf and can be found on DEFRA's TB hub (www.tbhub.co.uk).

TB Testing Facilities

It would also be pertinent in this article to once again emphasise how important the TB testing component of the programme is, alongside the other measures. Like anything in this world the accuracy of testing can only be as effective as it is allowed to be by the operator and the environment in which the test is performed. What this means is that it is absolutely crucial to allow the test to be performed effectively and safely by providing the correct handling facilities and assistance. It is not possible, right or indeed safe or legal to perform a diagnostic test which has such significant consequences behind gates, in a baler twine crush, or dark shed corners. We are grateful to



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those clients who conform to these requirements and therefore conduct tests in an efficient and safe manner. We will however refuse to carry out a test if facilities are inadequate, irrespective of testing window dates or financial consequences.

We need to work together to try and combat this disease and would urge that as well as the wildlife control measures being put in place you also ensure you apply the biosecurity measures outlined here and also allow testing to be carried out safely and effectively. This allows us to argue strongly and justifiably with the anti-culling lobby and people who have less knowledge of the effects of the disease and its consequences on the livestock industry.

If there are any problems in providing the facilities or being clear on the requirements please do not hesitate to contact us for further discussion, including provision of mobile handling facilities and assistance if required.



Andrew Davies

See over for KEY biosecurity measures

TB Biosecurity Measures (Continued from front page)

RESTRICT contact between badgers and cattle

- Introduce barriers to prevent badgers accessing cattle
- Limit access of cattle to badger latrines and setts

MANAGE cattle feed and water

- Restrict badger access to feed stores, troughs and mineral licks
- Don't put feed on the ground at pasture and clean up spillages
- Use clean, fresh water and restrict badger access to water troughs
- Only feed waste milk to calves if it has been boiled or pasteurised

MINIMISE infection from cattle manure

- Store manure for a long period before spreading on the farm
- Only spread manure on arable land or pasture that is not going to be grazed by cattle for at least 2 months
- Minimise aerosols and contamination of roadways when spreading
- Don't spread manure from other farms

Key biosecurity measures can be found on DEFRA's TB hub (www.tbhub.co.uk)

Use Water to maximise growth rates, health and production

Water is the single most essential nutrient needed by animals.

Improving the quality and palatability of the water you offer can have far-reaching health benefits and is key to maximising growth potential in young stock.

Let's face it, cleaning out water troughs can be a smelly and tedious job and often gets pushed to the bottom of the 'to do' list. But I promise you the effort will pay off. In the days when I used to rear calves, as well as milk-calves having clean water daily I was meticulous about keeping older animals' troughs cleaned at least fortnightly. (And I mean *properly* clean – without the luxury of tipping troughs a jumbo car sponge did the job of soaking up any dirt and residue from the bottom of the troughs). When weaned calves were past the ad-lib stage and scoffing their concentrate ration as soon as it was offered, I would know immediately if there was cake left uneaten that I would find that one of the little treasures had carefully deposited some dung in the water trough, putting them all off drinking it. That was always a stark demonstration to me of the link between truly uninhibited water consumption and optimum dry

matter intake.

Put simply, because of the need for water in the rumen to aid digestion of fibre, more water intake equals more dry matter intake!



Most people are aware of the benefits of free water intake to maximise milk yields – hardly surprising when you consider that milk is 90% water. But it is equally important in almost every other body function, and especially crucial if the animal is suffering from a condition which causes dehydration – eg scours, pneumonia (water lost through increased respiration) or any toxic infection. Immediate pre- and post- calving intakes are also critical to metabolic recovery. Extra clean, preferably warmed, water should be offered at all these times.

Cattle are put off drinking by:

- Bad odour and taste caused by

bacteria and their metabolic by-products

- High nitrate content, often from faecal contamination – this has also been shown to have negative effects on fertility through nitrite toxicity in blood
- Total Dissolvable Solids (depend on mineral content of water supply)
- Sulphates leading to toxic hydrogen sulphide gases, evident by 'rotten egg' smell.

Many of these increase if water is



left stale or contaminated.

Water supply costs still apply whether the water is clean or dirty, so providing clean water could reap large benefits for only a small increase in input!



Paula Hunt

Bluetongue Update

A reminder that Bluetongue is still a threat to the UK this summer. There have been no further cases reported on the DEFRA website up to going to press.

In terms of spotting the disease please be vigilant and call us if in any doubt. The following are the common symptoms to look for:

WE are pleased to give you some good news though and announce that there is a **new REDUCED PRICE** of **£1.20 per dose** and further reductions for larger volumes.

We strongly urge you to please talk to us as soon as possible about the use on your farm.

Zulvac 8 Bovis	100 ml	£60.00	Cattle	50 doses
Zulvac 8 Bovis	20 ml	£12.00	Cattle	10 doses
Zulvac 8 Ovis	100 ml	£60.00	Sheep	50 doses

There are some very informative short videos on BTV risk (<http://bit.ly/1T24Nfo>) and BTV transmission and clinical signs (<http://bit.ly/1WdzthR>). The latest Defra risk assessment is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualitative-risk-assessment-bluetongue-virus-btv-8-entry-into-the-uk>.

Main signs in sheep:

- ulcers in the mouth
- discharge of mucus and drooling from mouth and nose
- swelling of the mouth, head and neck and the coronary band (where the skin of the leg meets the horn of the foot)

Other clinical signs include:

- red skin as a result of blood collecting beneath the surface
- fever
- lameness
- breathing problems

Cattle are the main carriers of bluetongue. Infected cattle generally do not show any signs of the disease, but occasionally signs can include:

- swelling and ulcers in the mouth
- nasal discharge
- red skin and eyes as a result of blood collecting beneath the surface
- swollen teats
- tiredness

Interesting Case

The most common conditions we see in the eyes of cattle are New Forest Eye and Silage Eye. These are caused by two species of bacteria, with the main risk factors being large numbers of flies in the summer or mouldy forage in the winter. However, there is another condition of the eye that we occasionally come across, which is in fact a cancerous tumour. The technical name for this is 'Ocular Squamous Cell Carcinoma' and it often grows out of the third eyelid in older animals.

In this particular case such a tumour had been growing in the right eye of this dairy cow for several months. As a small lump it hadn't been causing a great problem, but over the last few weeks had grown to such a size that the eyelids couldn't be fully closed and the eyeball itself had become infected. At this point no medical treatment would really have been successful, so our only option was to remove the eye. With the animal

properly restrained (crush, halter and sedation) and plenty of local anaesthetic, the eye was carefully removed as shown in these pictures: the left-hand-side is the tumour before we started; the middle image shows the entire eyeball removed along with the conjunctiva and eyelashes; on the right is the end result with everything stitched back up. Cattle, like horses, seem to cope very well indeed with one eye missing, and this placid old cow has cruised on quite happily since this operation. Because the tumour was removed before it had started to grow into the bone, there shouldn't be any further complications from this disease.



Pete Siviter



Dorset Police have unveiled a new Rural Crime Team. For more information see our facebook page



www.cattlelamenessacademy.co.uk

Foot Bathing Workshop
Wednesday 21st September

2 Day Foot Trimming
26th & 27th September

News from our Rounds



Jon Reader

Many of our clients who were within the Kingfisher area will remember with great fondness Dr. Geoff Singleton who has now retired from his long distinguished career as a vet. Geoff qualified as a vet in 1981 from the University of Bristol having already gained a PhD from the University of Reading. It was no surprise when Geoff returned to his family home and started working for Wilkins and Partners in 1981.

Geoff was well known for his farmer friendly approach and his skill for communicating with farmers. He was also at the forefront of veterinary education and reproduction in cattle and was one of the first vets to complete the Diploma in Bovine Reproduction.

Geoff became a partner of Kingfisher in 1989 and was fundamental in setting up Martock's small animal presence. This originally took the guise of a small animal surgery at the back of Geoff and Marian's house and then Geoff renovated the current premises to a modern small animal clinic.

Many modern farm animal practices are beginning to realise the benefits of foot trimmers and para professionals. This is something that Synergy has continued to believe in from the days of both Kingfisher and Southfield. Geoff set the ball rolling for Kingfisher when in 1990 he took Roy Gray to Holland to learn the Dutch Foot Trimming method. Roy is still trimming feet to this day!

Geoff took on many positions within the veterinary 'political' world and these included being President of the Mid West Veterinary Association, a Director of the British Cattle Veterinary Association, a founding Director of XLvets as well as an examiner for many of the vet schools.

Geoff retired from Kingfisher in 2007 and joined DEFRA, working predominantly in supporting farmers through the rigours of TB. Geoff has been a huge support to many farmers as they have tried to tackle this ever growing problem and has always brought his common sense and farmer friendly approach to the situation. In the same way he has been very supportive of many of our vets who have had to try to find the way through difficult situations when dealing with the ministry.

Geoff inspired a generation of students and vets alike. All the Directors and staff at Synergy would like to wish Geoff and Marian



(still working for Kingfisher on the small animal side!) all the very best for a long and happy retirement which will be spent in Martock with his ever growing family!

Emily Gascoigne



It's has been a busy month in Dorset with harvest well under way, bulls coming out and the show season upon us. I helped man the stand at Gillingham and Shaftesbury and it was what one can only describe as a 'scorcher'. Lovely to see lots of faces there for our famous coffee cake and a Ploughmans! Success was seen in the show ring. Well done to all. Looking forward to Dorset County Show and my annual slot stewarding the Primitive Sheep. Practicing my banana loaf furiously for the home craft section. Watch this space!

On the clinical front- a couple of runs of pneumonia in calves- lungworm, shipping fever and likely weather contributions. On the sheep front - be vigilant for Haemonchus; pale lambs, sudden deaths and poor performance in animals of all ages. Our camelid and goat keepers should be vigilant too!

Gareth Foden



September is here and many of us are looking to the winter. I myself received a shock call from the family over the weekend to get my order for Christmas dinner. Unfortunately I am not working so cannot get out of it this year. Another reminder that summer is nearly at an end is the sudden exodus of all the cars from the roads, no longer can we use traffic as an excuse for being late. Clinically a sign of the changing season is that we have started to see some early signs of Liver Fluke in milk samples particularly across the moors. This means animals at grazing have likely already been exposed to some challenge, and preparations for treating should be considered or discussed with your vet.

EVENTS

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines
Friday 16th September

Organic Sheep Discussion Group
Wednesday 28th September

Calf Housing with Jamie Robertson
29th and 30th September

Visit our website for further details or email courses@synergyfarmhealth.com