



Action Johnes: Phase II

March 2017

Phase II of the Action Johnes Initiative kicked off at a National Conference in Worcester on 7th February. This aims to move industry activity up a gear by enrolling milk purchasers to require their suppliers to put a plan in place. Currently purchasers representing 78% of UK milk production have signed up. Vets have to undergo specific training in order to be "approved": currently 14 Synergy vets are signed up and counting!

Johnes Disease is a chronic, debilitating disease of cattle, sheep and goats with a very long incubation period and imperfect diagnostic tests. This makes control a challenge and means that many farmers have a tendency to stick their head in the sand and hope they don't have it, or that it will go away. With current figures suggesting that 80% of farms are infected, it won't go away and really needs addressing head on with our help, to set up a control plan. Such plans usually focus on biosecurity (avoid buying in the disease), testing (identify high risk and infectious animals), and improved farm management

(protecting replacement stock born on farm). This might not sound very glamorous, but might make the difference between control and catastrophe a few years down the line. Over the years, the disease has probably been at least partly to blame for many dispersal sales up and down the country. This then leads to infected animals spreading the disease still further....

The Johnes Conference attracted a wide variety of stakeholders, including farmers, vets, milk processors, recording companies and laboratories. Speakers included Anthony Barber, of Barber's Farmhouse Cheesemakers, who talked about their commitment to Johnes control amongst their supplying farms. There were also contributions from Tesco's and an interesting look at Johnes around the world; it is a global problem!



The highlights of the day were the farmer/vet case studies which showed how different strategies

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have been successfully applied in varying situations. I gave a joint presentation with Synergy client Dave Hiscock, who shared his experiences of controlling Johnes Disease at West Hayes Farm. Thanks to Dave's refreshing style, it was probably the best received talk of the day, and certainly generated a lot of interest and discussion!



Dave Hiscock

If you would like to find out how Johnes Disease could be affecting your stock, or are worried that you don't have a control plan in place: call the office on 01935 83682 or speak to your regular vet.



Rachel Hayton

New Collection Centre Opening



From 3rd April 2017 Synergy Farm Health will be opening a new medicine collection centre for our East clients. This will be based at the Dorset Equine practice situated in Whitcombe Racing Stables, nr Dorchester, DT2 8NY. Easy parking available.

Deliveries will be made once a day with medicines arriving at 11.30am. If you would like a delivery to Dorset Equine please ensure all orders are placed with Dispensary by 10am that day.

Opening times for this collection point are 8.30-5.30, Monday to Friday.

REMINDER

Report **ALL** Bovine Abortions by ringing Synergy Farm Health on **01932 83682**

Vet Tech Services Update

Yesterday afternoon all of the Vet Tech team assembled for their monthly meeting. Getting the whole team together in one room is a rare occurrence as we all work alone and like the proverbial 'Ships That Pass in the Night' we can go weeks without seeing our other team mates.

Previous meetings have been chaired by a different vet tech who has given a short presentation about a topic of their choice. Interesting subjects have included Digital Dermatitis and Chronic Claw Lesions.

Yesterday it was my turn with the Power Point controls. I decided my subject should be Cattle Handling and Cow Flow. As I drive the only LWB Land Rover in the Synergy fleet I pick up the majority of jobs with our large mobile handling unit. Most of the work with this useful bit of equipment is either TB testing or heifer weighing which can mean large numbers of cattle are going through it so good cow flow is essential for a smooth, efficient and most importantly safe day.

Even after 7 years of setting up the crush, if I'm on a farm for the first time I will always take time before starting to think about where and how it might be best placed to ensure good cow flow. If it's set up in the wrong place it could be a long, frustrating and potentially dangerous day.



Cow flow is almost a science in itself now. Animal behaviourists and consultants offer advice on designing handling facilities in abattoirs and on large farms. One of the most well-known consultants is an American lady called Temple Grandin, a very charismatic speaker who is instantly

recognisable in her trademark Cowgirl outfit!

Research conducted by Temple and her peers has revealed some interesting facts about cattle flow and handling: For instance, during trials almost 90% of 7000 cattle opted to turn left when faced with an obstacle to negotiate around.

Perhaps we could learn more about cattle handling from Temple and Co. and what makes for an efficient system that's stress free and safe for both human and bovine. On larger units with staff that possibly may have little or no experience working with stock a course in cattle handling may be useful..... watch this Synergy space.

Finally, I wonder what the collective noun might be for a room full of foot trimmers? Answers on a postcard, please.



Matt Board

Interesting Case — A warty issue

Warts (fibropapillomas) in youngstock are very common, but this yearling presented with a particularly impressive case. She was the only animal so severely affected in the group, with only a couple of others having the odd small lesion.



Caused by a papillomavirus, warts are benign growths usually affecting the head but which may also appear elsewhere. The virus is spread by contact with an infected animal and also by contaminated equipment or surfaces.

Warts usually resolve on their own within a year as the animal mounts an immune response but occasionally we would remove them if they were causing a problem due to their location (for example on an eyelid or teat). An autogenous vaccine made up from samples collected on-farm can also help when large numbers of animals are affected.

In this heifer's case we removed the large main mass, along with the skin beneath, as it was also infected and would be at risk of fly strike come the spring. The lesion



was made up of several smaller pedunculated masses (growing from 'stalks') so removal was fairly simple and after a hefty dose of blue spray she walked away a fair bit lighter! A topical salicylic acid solution is also available and will be our next step should the remaining warts not resolve.

Claire Rudd

Rotavirus /
Coronavirus /
E.coli in
Young Calves
**A New
Vaccination
Protocol**

We are now stocking **Bovigen Scour** as an alternative to Rotavec Corona.

We are recommending this for boosters only as two doses are required for primary course. There are considerable savings to be had at £7.20 per dose for 5 doses and £6.90 per dose for 30 doses.

FREE vaccination guns (3ml dose) also available—
please ask when ordering

Don't miss our Spring
Vaccination Deal
Details on back page

Grass Staggers

Turn-out

The arrival of spring can bring with it a sigh of relief for some of our farmers... fewer hours each day spent feeding and bedding up. However, turn-out also puts us all on high alert for grass staggers (hypomagnesaemia), a true veterinary emergency, where time really is of the essence in saving lives. The average annual incidence of grass staggers in the UK is reported at less than 1% and recently calved beef animals make up a large proportion of those cases. However other ruminants are at high risk of developing the disease and reasonable steps should be taken to reduce that risk.

What is hypomagnesaemia?

Hypomagnesaemia literally means low blood magnesium levels. Magnesium is involved in many metabolic processes in the body, including energy production and muscle and nerve functions. Unlike most other minerals, magnesium is not released very easily from body tissues in times of high demand, so ruminants require a daily intake in their diet.

If this daily intake is not met, cattle and sheep can develop neurological signs: high head carriage, twitching muscles, staggering and paddling. However, more often than not, finding one dead animal or indeed multiple dead animals, is the first sign you'll see. Remember, all cases of sudden death should be reported to the APHA in order to comply with Anthrax Legislation.



Meet the Team



Anna Walters

Anna comes from a farming background and lives in the North region of the practice. She has been working as a dispenser in

our pharmacy full time for the past year, and has also been studying to become an Animal Health Advisor (SQP). This will mean that Anna is able to give advice on and prescribe medication for worming, fly control as well as some vaccinations.

When are the risk periods?

Anything that reduces daily feed intake will pose a risk, for example bad weather or transport.

Fast growing grass, predominantly spring and autumn grass, contains low levels of magnesium. It is also low in fibre, so passes quickly through the gut, reducing time for the absorption of nutrients. Young grass leys are high risk pastures compared with mixed plant species pastures.

High levels of potassium and ammonia in the forage will also disrupt magnesium uptake from the diet, which can be a result of fertiliser application.

Individuals will be more or less at risk of developing hypomagnesaemia depending on their stage of production. Milk contains 0.12 g of magnesium per litre, which explains why pregnant and lactating animals are at greatest risk of developing grass staggers.

Treatment

Staggering, seizing cattle (and sheep for that matter) are a real health and safety risk, so first and foremost do not put yourself or others in danger when trying to treat these animals.

Contact a vet ASAP. Injectable magnesium can be given under the skin to affected animals, only if safe to do so, whilst waiting for veterinary assistance.

Prevention

Grass staggers is what we call an 'iceberg disease'. For every clinical case we see (the top of the iceberg) there are likely to be lots more animals at high risk. The key to prevention of hypomagnesaemia at grazing is to ensure that daily intake of magnesium is met.

When medicine orders are placed in the pharmacy we first ensure they are in stock before obtaining clearance from the vet associated with the farm. No product will ever leave the pharmacy without vet or SQP approval – this is a legal requirement. We run a prescription system in our dispensary with vets writing a pre-approved list detailing medicines prescribed for each farm, these are in line with your flock or herd health plans. Anything ordered not on



Various methods of supplementation are used:

- * feeding mineralised concentrates
- * adding magnesium to water supplies
- * dusting pastures with magnesium oxide
- * administration of magnesium bullets
- * mineral licks

Licks are generally less desirable as it is difficult to ensure that all animals have taken in enough magnesium. Buffer feeding with extra roughage, such as straw or hay can be helpful, particularly during periods of bad weather, as this will help to slow gut transit.

Longer term prevention strategies include development of fertiliser policies that avoid creating pastures high in potassium or ammonia at key periods during the grazing season and also consideration of using mixed species leys for grazing at-risk livestock.

Prevention is always better than cure and lots of these strategies are relatively inexpensive to introduce. Have a chat with your vet about your grass staggers prevention strategies.

Charlotte Moulard



the prescription list needs clearance from your vet before leaving us. Your order will then leave the pharmacy at 10:30am and arrive at your nearest centre later that day.

Anna enjoys working in the busy pharmacy environment where teamwork and attention to detail are key attributes and looks forward to speaking to you soon!

News from our Rounds

Esme Moffett South



Due to my expanding circumference, I have not been doing a lot of clinical work in the last month, so can't really comment on particular disease trends. Having said that I have been dealing with lots of advice phone calls and it is apparent that pneumonia is still causing an issue on some farms. The changeable weather will continue to make this a high risk disease until we see some spring sunshine and are able to turn cattle out. Prompt treatment is essential, but there are other things such as keeping calves warm and dry, reducing stress and keeping them well fed which will massively help to keep disease at bay.

The small amount of 'on farm' work that I have done has mainly consisted of consultancy visits as part of the 0-6 Youngstock Advisory Service and it is great to see farms progressing well with their heifer rearing. I have also done several Herd Health Plan visits – a good time of year to review what happened last year and also to assess infectious disease levels. We have subsidised testing available, so take the opportunity to sample at your next TB test or Herd Health visit as it can be crucial to review this, even if you think there isn't a problem.

The 0-6 Youngstock Advisory Service held a very well attended Colostrum Workshop last month, it was a practical based event where attendees rotated around 3 stations covering the main topics of collection, storage and administration. It was very well received and everyone went home with fresh ideas for colostrum management on their farm.

Finally, the 0-6 Youngstock Advisory Service are running a Calf Mortality Survey for dairy farms for 2016. Your routine vet may approach you about this, please consider taking part as it will reveal very interesting information about mortality rates within the practice. The deadline is the end of March.

Erich Leitgeb North



Soon calving season for our spring block calving herds will start and farmers will be having to negotiate some tricky deliveries. One of the reasons that calving may not be progressing is because the dam is carrying twins. The 'water bags' do not always show or burst and you might miss the fact that your cow needs help.

There may be two or more calves in a queue. On examining the cow (with a clean, gloved hand) you might feel a whole range of presentations including more than two legs, front and back legs mixed up, no head and only front legs or just a tail (breach is a very common presentation for twins). Due to the lack of obvious calving signs, twins are often dead at delivery, therefore it is important to check early if you are not sure what's going on. If you can sort it easily, then great – but don't hesitate to call for veterinary assistance as it will greatly increase the chances of a successful outcome. Last week I was called to a twin calving and we were still in time, so we delivered two healthy calves.



For those that don't know, I am part of a Somerset opera. In the coming weeks I will be performing as 'Danilo' in the operetta "The Merry Widow", which is showing at some venues in the practice area.

The Merry Widow (German: Die lustige Witwe) is an operetta by the Austro-Hungarian composer Franz Lehár. The librettists, Viktor Léon and Leo Stein, based the story – concerning a rich widow, and her countrymen's attempt to keep her money in the principality by finding her the right husband – on an 1861 comedy play, L'attaché d'ambassade (The Embassy Attaché) by Henri Meilhac.

Spring Vaccination Deal

Reduced Prices

LEPTAVOID-H		Offer available on 25 dose packs only and must end 31st March 2017
1- 7 packs (25-175 doses)	£1.70 per dose	
8+ packs (200 doses +)	£1.62 per dose	
8+ packs (200 doses +) & commit to purchasing Bovilis BVD	£1.53 per dose	All prices ex VAT

Andre Northey East



Besides the normal routine clinical work and student teaching, February seemed to have been my "small ruminant month". I certainly haven't seen so many individual sheep and goat patients for a long time.

Particularly interesting were several separate cases of urolithiasis, the formation of "stones" or concretions of mucus, protein, and minerals in the urinary tract, in pet rams who had all been castrated far too young. In general, a high grain and low roughage diet increases the risk of developing this painful and life threatening condition.

Also several cases with a seriously high endoparasitic burden in sheep and goats were presented to me, which should be a strong reminder of how important it is to have a farm specific worming strategy in place. Additionally, keep a close eye on how "clean" your animals look and check their body condition regularly.

On the cattle side it is worth mentioning that more and more herds are engaging with "disease free - accreditation schemes". I sampled quite a few animals in February for BVD, IBR, Leptospirosis, Johnes and Neospora caninum accreditation. Especially for beef herds, commercial or pedigree, it becomes increasingly desirable to have an accredited disease free status as a very valid sign of quality towards consumers and buyers.

EVENTS

DIY AI - 8th-10th March

Spaces left

Genomics Meetings

Monday 20th March 11am -3pm
At Bineham City Farm, Langport
Or
Wednesday 29th March 11am-3pm
At Lodgehouse Farm, Whitchurch, Bridport

Practical Calving

Wednesday 10th May at Evershot

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