



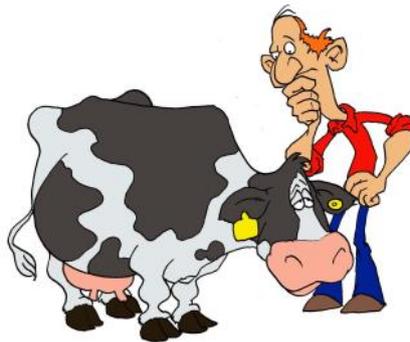
Antibiotics — As little as possible, as much as necessary

You may have noticed that there has been a lot of focus, and much more to come, on the levels of antibiotic use in the farming sector. This attention has stemmed from the crisis facing the medical profession (and all of us) due to the development of antibiotic resistance. A drive to reduce antibiotic use in the agricultural sector if managed so that welfare is not compromised, good for all parties. Less disease means better welfare, for animal and farmer, and more profit, but it is only half the story in terms of good governance of antibiotic use.

The frequently forgotten half is the need to ensure, that when we use antibiotics, they are used correctly. One of the possible drivers for the development of resistance in the human sector is a failure by people on antibiotics to fulfil their prescribed course, and the same applies to farming.

There are many ways why antibiotics may not be used in the manner that was prescribed. These include, using an inappropriate dose –

e.g. the weight of the animal is under or over-estimated, wrong dose route, too short a treatment course, too long a course, having breaks in treatment e.g. weekends and use of out of date/shelf life products – the open bottle in the glove compartment of the Landrover!!!



There are a number of potential serious consequences to not treating an animal correctly. Deviations may lead to antibiotic residues in the milk or meat, can predispose to the development of resistance, and can lead to a failure to cure the animal either entirely or as quickly as it could have been.

The good news is that these problems are easily averted if we can ensure that everyone understands what is required. We hope that you all have

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protocols for the treatment of the common conditions that you face in your health plan; but clearly this is of little value, if the team faced with administering such protocols are unaware of them. Protocols therefore should be on display or easily accessed for reference by those responsible for administering treatments.

Several members of Synergy have been involved in producing materials which will become available nationwide for training in the rational use of medicines. Closer to home we run some excellent training courses on the Safe Use of Medicines, and also the Milksure course for dairy producers. Make sure you have a place booked on the next one!



Rachel Hayton

Know the score on Castrating and Disbudding Calves

Are you acting within the law, and up to date with the regulations and advice, when castrating and disbudding calves?

The British Cattle veterinary society (BCVA) advocates the use of analgesia (pain relief) as well as anaesthetic for these procedures, to address pain that might continue after an anaesthetic has worn off.

They also recommend adopting the '3 Rs' approach to routine procedures - **Replace, Reduce or Refine** - e.g.

- select polled sires to replace the need for disbudding,
- use sexed semen to reduce unwanted bull calves,
- use analgesia to refine the procedures where they cannot be avoided.



Paula Hunt

Beef Suckler Meetings

Many thanks to our colleague Ben Barber who recently led two very well attended beef suckler meetings, which presented the results of our annual suckler herd survey. Particularly striking was the variation in barren rates between herds, varying from 0% to 66%.



Quite an alarming difference in productivity and hence profitability!!

Ben also led a discussion on genetic progression in the national suckler herd and the use of AI to introduce new genetics. There was a focus on making more use of maternal traits, encouraging people to consider both the male and female aspects of their herd when attempting to further their genetic progress. There was particular interest in the AHDB funding for AI courses for suckler farmers, details of which are as follows....

Who can legally carry out a disbudding procedure?

A vet or farmer/stock keeper

Is it an offence to disbud without a local anaesthetic?

Yes

Is it an offence to disbud without analgesia (pain relief)?

No, but it is best practice to use analgesia

Who can legally carry out a calf castration?

Up until 2 months old: trained and competent stock keeper,
After 2 months old: only a vet

Can you legally carry out a castration without anaesthetic?

Yes, but only on calves up to two months

Can you legally carry out a castration without analgesia (pain relief)?

Yes, but using analgesia it is considered best practice

What methods of castration are legal without anaesthesia?

It is possible to use a rubber ring, or other device, to restrict the flow of blood to the scrotum, if the device is applied during the **first week of life**. Bloodless castration can be carried out by a trained and competent stock keeper, by crushing the spermatic cords of calves less than two months old with a Burdizzo.

What is the relevant legislation?

The Protection of Animals (Anaesthetics) Act 1954
Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966

Who can prescribe local anaesthetics and analgesia?

Licensed local anaesthetics are POM-VPS, and so can be prescribed by vets, pharmacists and suitably qualified persons. Pain relief products (Analgesics) sometimes referred to as NSAIDS (Non steroidal anti-inflammatories) that we as vets can prescribe include Metacam, Dinalgen and Allewinix. Metacam is licenced and advocated for use for pain relief at all disbuddings, dehornings and castrations in Bovines.

AI is not commonly used on suckler farms, however it can be an excellent way of improving herd genetics without the cost of buying and keeping a bull on farm.



AHDB Beef & Lamb is providing 50 per cent funding towards DIY artificial insemination (AI) courses for sucker producers with over 30 breeding females. Funding has been extended until March 2020, with a further 250 course places available.

XL Vets Training Services and Westpoint Farm Vets will be delivering courses on a regional basis across the country

For more information including how to book on a course visit <http://beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk/returns/diy-ai-course/>

Bovine Leptospirosis

Bovine Leptospirosis is a highly infectious disease and is widespread in the UK. Our bulk tank surveillance shows the majority of our clients herds to be infected. If Leptospirosis gets into your herd when previously it has been absent there can be serious effects on productivity and profitability.

The disease is spread by infected cattle and by other carriers such as sheep and rodents. Infected animals excrete the Leptospire in their urine so contaminating both pasture and watercourses posing a risk to other cattle. They are absorbed through the nose, throat and reproductive tract and once infected cattle may shed the organisms for life.

What makes Leptospirosis an even greater threat is that many infected animals show no obvious symptoms; bought in animals including stock bulls may introduce the disease. Co-grazing with sheep or allowing access to a shared watercourse, may also allow infection into your herd from elsewhere.

Leptospirosis isn't just a threat to your herd – you, your family and your staff can also catch the

disease, urine splash in the parlour is the likely route of transfer.



Infection in humans presents as tiredness and flu like symptoms with aching joints and low mood. Clearly this is of great potential concern and also therefore for public health reasons I will advocate Vaccination of cattle with Spirovac to reduce the risk of Leptospirosis.

Why worry about Leptospirosis?

Acute Leptospirosis

Sudden onset disease occurs usually when an infected animal is brought into a 'clean' herd, milk drop across the herd ('flabby bag' syndrome) is the first sign and may be accompanied by a change in the colour and character in the milk. Abortion storms and/or fetal resorption in cows up to 5 months pregnant can occur. Such outbreaks are

thankfully not common but do occur each year in the practice.

Endemic Leptospirosis

Grumbling infection within a herd results in much milder symptoms but the infection may still cause abortions. Cows are likely to be less fertile with reduced conception rates and increased risk of re-absorption.

Ed Powell-Jackson



We have recently changed our recommended Leptospira vaccine to **Spirovac** for the reasons discussed in the last newsletter and to achieve a more competitive price of **£1.65 per dose.**



**£41.25 per
25 dose pack (50ml)**

Contact the Dispensary to discuss large volume or multi dose discounts

Medicine Prices

It is that time of year when the majority of pharmaceutical companies seem to have their price reviews. We are pleased that we continue to successfully negotiate special offers e.g. Spirovac, Orbeseal, VPS products to name a few, and maintain competitive prices on the whole range of our recommended animal health medicines. However we have to inform you that there have been inflationary price increases applied by the suppliers to some products which has resulted in a number of price increases during February.



Meet the Team — Jo Masters

Jo has been working in the Veterinary industry for longer than she wishes to admit and joined Synergy in 2012 with the farm clients from Langport Veterinary Centre. She likens the role of Practice Manager to one of 'herding

cats' as she is responsible for the smooth day to day running of the service from veterinary attendance on farm to administrative support. When not at work Jo can be found 'standing in the gap' (usually in the wrong place – farmers' partners will recognise this !) or going for long walks with her dog – this is when most of the practice planning happens !

News from our Rounds

South

Jon Reader



The weeks after Christmas always seem to be the most challenging to rear calves, with outbreaks of scouring and pneumonia proving to be common. In several cases we have put these calves on a drip almost straight away. These calves are also acidotic so we add bicarbonate to the drip. It is amazing how these IV fluids provide a miracle cure to many of these calves. With good TLC, warmth and this rehydration you will often see a completely 'different' calf within a few hours. The key to all these cases is to act quickly and remember we would advise you not to tube calves with milk unless they are new born.

We have been busy finalising plans for our second Cattle Lameness Academy Seminar to be held at Haselbury Mill at the end of March. We have organised some of the top lameness experts from the UK to come and speak at what we hope will be a memorable event. The event is open to any of our clients with an interest in lameness. Please see the enclosed flier for more details.

As many of you know there is a national campaign originating from social media highlighting the benefits of Dairy products and the good work of our dairy farmers called #februdairy. We are very pleased to support this campaign and hopefully highlight to the population as a whole the massive contribution that dairy farmers make to our local economy as well as the benefits of consuming dairy products. Look out for our tweets and comments on Facebook!

Cattle Lameness
ACADEMY

Cattle Lameness Academy Seminar
New ideas, new approaches, a new generation
28th March 2018
Tithe Barn, Haselbury Mill

Lamb Post Mortems 13th February 2018
With Emily Gascoigne at Evershot

North

Graeme McPherson



We are now hopefully getting to the end of a winter which is one of the worst I have known for pneumonia. I suspect that the severity of the outbreaks could be related to the wildly fluctuating temperatures and humidity. The constant changes are clearly a stress factor for the animals. Much can be done to prevent pneumonia in cattle and I would urge clients to have a chat with us about prevention before we are into pneumonia season next winter.

Spring is a great time of year as our work becomes more varied. Many farmers are already well into lambing and there will be plenty more to come. Spring calving is also beginning so our days are never the same day to day. But when it all settles down – after lambing and calving, is a good time to review performance. Will you be happy with this year's lambing or calving results or will you give yourself a 'Could do better' report? If you are in the 'could do better' category, it would be well worth planning to do better next year. We at Synergy enjoy our jobs the most when we can sit down with farmers to make plans for better production and then see you achieve it. So when the Spring craziness settles down give us a call and we can have a review and help you plan to do better next year

East

Claire Rudd



Dorset January gave us intermittent periods of wet and cold weather, all a bit dreary after the excitement of Christmas!

This was reflected in our caseload this month – respiratory disease featured but also outbreaks of coccidiosis in youngstock and toxic mastitis in housed cattle. Mid-winter will often bring clinical signs of disease as straw yards build up with increasing numbers of pathogens (increasing infection pressure). Add in some rain and humidity, and it's a perfect storm (pun intended). Key areas to focus on are cleaning out of buildings as often as possible, avoiding overstocking and mixing of age groups, and disinfection of buildings / equipment where feasible. Despite the high straw price this year bedding up properly and frequently enough is vital in controlling this infection pressure in buildings.

On a brighter note the first daffodils are out – a sign that spring (and turnout!) is on its way. I for one am looking forward to ditching the woolly hat...

EVENTS

DIY AI 20th –22nd February
At Evershot with Andre Northey

Milk Feeding Calves Workshop
22nd February at Evershot



Practical Lambing 27th February 2018
With Charlotte Mouland at Evershot

Coming in March

Organic Flock Discussion Group 7th March

Lamb Post Mortems 13th March

Safe use of Veterinary Medicines in Sheep Flocks 20th March

Practical Calving 22nd March

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines 23rd March

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

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