



Six monthly TB Testing

You will be aware that the majority of cattle herds in the high risk area (HRA) of England will be moving to 6 monthly rather than annual government TB testing from 2020 as part of nationwide efforts to achieve TB eradication. The HRA includes most of the west of the UK, including all of Somerset, Dorset and Devon. Such testing will bring considerable logistical challenges for all parties involved, particularly when herd tests fall in the summer months and stock are out at grass.

Please be aware there are two types of herd that will be exempt from this:

- Herds which have not had a TB breakdown in the last 6 or more years
- Herds participating in a CheCS TB accreditation health scheme for one year or more

If you are running a mainly homebred herd then CheCS accreditation for TB is worth exploring, both to improve herd biosecurity and to avoid the requirement for 6 monthly testing. CheCS provide a clear template from which you can work, in conjunction with your vet, to reduce the risk of TB and other infectious diseases entering your herd. The fees to join the scheme are small, and the requirements not excessive, but you must embark on this process before the new testing regime commences.

We are holding three regional meetings in August for all those who wish to learn more about the scheme and to enrol. We encourage all clients to attend so please join us at one of the following venues to learn more:

East:
Tuesday 14th August, 12pm,
Red Lion, Winfrith Newburgh

South:
Wednesday 8th August, 12pm,
Ridgeway Inn, Smallridge nr Axminster

North:
Wednesday 15th August, 11am,
Barrington village hall, nr Ilminster

July 2018

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Ed Powell-Jackson
Regional Vet Lead



Blocks

Probably the best invention ever for lame cows!! Both blocks and glue have come a long way in the 19 years that I've been trimming. Back then when I first started, we only tended to use the shoe type of blocks and some vets even used the dreaded nail on ones!

We have a much larger variety of blocks available in our arsenal at Synergy now. We mainly use Wooden



blocks, stuck on using a 2 part glue which mixes together as it is applied. The blocks are made of hardwood and come in different sizes that we can use depending on the length and width of the foot. We also carry tapered blocks which can help to keep the foot at a better angle as it heals. You can expect a wooden block to last 4 to 6 weeks before it will usually wear down and fall off- we would tend to use these on the less serious lesions we come across.

We have recently started using TP blocks from Italy- these come in 2 different plastic/rubber compounds. The blue ones are softer and a bit more forgiving on the sole of the hoof and the orange ones are a lot harder and are designed not to wear very

quickly- good for the more complicated lesions that need longer to heal.

It is imperative however that rechecks are carried out on these blocked cows- obviously the hoof will continue to grow underneath so the block may need repositioning/ removing. A block that stays on too long can sometimes cause more harm to the healthy claw due to the added pressure so please do make sure you put up your blocked cows for a recheck by yourselves or your trimmer. As trimmers it's good for us to get to see how well a lesion is healing and if any further work is needed to get the animal back to 100%. We normally recommend a check-up after around 4 weeks if possible.

Colin Hayden
Vet Tech

Final Call

As you may have seen in the local press Synergy are delivering a level 3 **Dairy apprenticeship programme** in conjunction with Bicton College, starting in September 2018. We encourage all employers or employees to consider the programme as we believe this course will offer great learning opportunities. We are delighted to be involved in training the next generation of dairy professionals. For all enquiries please contact Peter Reed, course supervisor directly on 07976 328155, or alternatively Bicton College on apprenticeships@duchy.ac.uk

Our Responsibilities to our Industry

In the words of my hero Bob Dylan 'the times they are a 'changin' and whilst change can be difficult it is not all bad. Much of it may be consumer driven but nobody would be making garden gnomes if someone out there wasn't buying them; however much we like it we are in a supply and demand market.

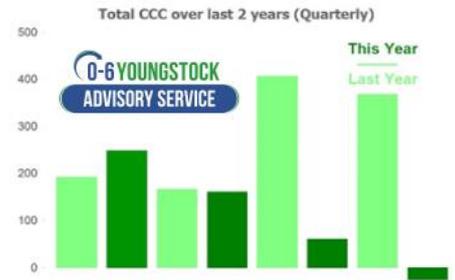
In the area we inhabit of animal health what are the challenges we (and that is you and us) are facing? I am sure we can create a great long list but here's a sample - improving animal welfare through a reduction of disease, alongside reduced antibiotic use and restriction of the 'critical antibiotics', often with the need for 'more welfare friendly' systems like calf grouping, compulsory access to grazing, leaving the calf with it's mother for longer etc all the latter of which may be better but are often contrary to what we are trying to achieve (good Johnes control, reduced calf disease etc) and sometimes not necessarily backed up with scientific evidence.

The recent announcement of the new Red Tractor requirements indicates a 'heightening of the bar' for dairy, beef and sheep producers and this is likely to continue which we should all agree is generally a good thing. As farmers you have a responsibility to contribute to the excellent standards of 'UK Farming plc', for auditors that there is a level playing field for the farmers and we as the vets a responsibility to offer and encourage uptake of quality advice for the improvement of animal health and production as well as helping safe guard human health.....but at the same time taking a stand when we see this compromised.

At Synergy we are working hard to help provide solutions either through practice initiatives such as

- ◆ antibiotic bench marking
- ◆ lameness and mastitis control packages
- ◆ beef suckler herd benchmarking
- ◆ 0-6 Youngstock Scheme

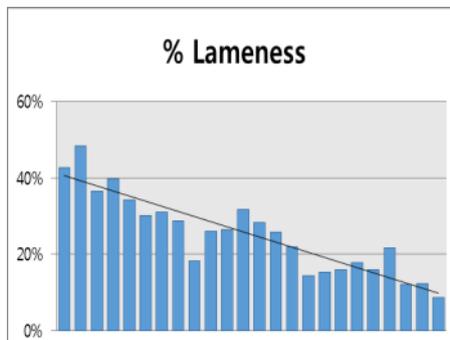
or industry led schemes such as Action Johnes, BVD Free, Milk Sure and the recently launched TB Accreditation scheme. Whilst we cannot guarantee a total solution to all problems we are confident that working with you the producers we *can* bring about real change on your farms if needed. On the flip side servicing farms that are below standard and unwilling to improve runs the risk of sending out a message about our level of care that we would not be proud of.



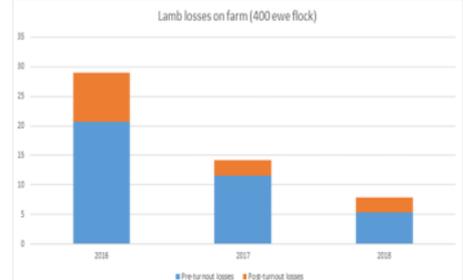
Antibiotic use reduction following engagement with our 0-6 Youngstock scheme (the 'negative bar indicates returned antibiotic!')



Reduction in Johnes cows following engagement with the Action Johnes scheme



Reduction in lameness on dairy a farm after signing up to the Lane Cow Contract



Reduction in lamb losses after engagement in proper Flock Health planning



Reduction in mastitis cases on dairy a farm after engagement with the practice Mastitis Control Package

I would encourage you all to talk to your regular vet at the next visit or health planning meeting, highlight areas of concern if there are any and discuss a strategy - I am confident the team can help. The future for sure is uncertain but we can probably all agree that good businesses will continue to prosper.

Mark Burnell
Director



Making the most of our grass!

I'm not sure how many more challenges this year is going to throw at us, but with the recent long period of hot, dry weather I'm sure many of us are in the same boat with grass growth rapidly coming to halt.



Naturally, grass growth rates are steadily on the decline this time of the year, however, the weather is certainly exacerbating this situation, and we should certainly be thinking about managing our pastures efficiently so that we get the most out of them for the rest of the grazing season!

When referring to Ryegrass, the optimum time for cattle to enter a paddock is when covers reach 2700kg DM/Ha, which, in welly boot

terminology, is somewhere in between covering the toe of the boot to half way up and when the majority of grass is in the 'three leaf stage'. Entering a paddock earlier than this stage will risk stunting future grass growth, any later will risk wastage due to decreased digestibility of the pasture and in both situations you won't reap the benefits of utilising the grass when it reaches optimum energy content when the grass is in the 'three leaf stage'. The optimum time to leave a paddock is when residuals hit close to 1500kg DM/Ha (at the toe of your welly boot) depending on your yields and feed management system, grazing right down is a critical aspect of grassland management, as failure to do this will result in regrowth that may be slower and has lower digestibility.

With experience, visual assessment can suffice, but having spent a bit of time comparing the "welly boot measure" with actual plate meter readings, it would seem like a plate meter is a worthwhile investment. Having said this, from looking at a number of pastures over the past couple of weeks, it's pretty obvious,

even to the untrained eye, that grass across the board is somewhat lacking!

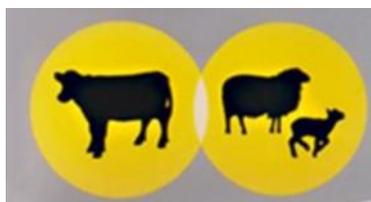
Whilst grass growth slows and no longer meets cow demand, instead of speeding up the rate at which we rotate the pasture, we should be opening up pastures, where possible, and slowing the rotation rate giving time for previously grazed pasture to replenish to the 'three leaf stage' before allowing cattle to go back into the paddock. During this time, we should definitely be thinking about increasing access to supplementary feed for the cows to buffer their intakes and reduce their dependency on the pasture.

Grass is the cheapest form of feed around, so it seems like a no brainer to invest the time in managing it efficiently and getting the most out of it. Monitoring grass growth and managing grazing is key in order to preserve pastures, and maximise availability of quality grass grown and utilised throughout the grazing season!

Abi Charlesworth
Veterinary Surgeon



Dispensary News



Spotinor

2.5 Litres	£165 + VAT	Plus FREE Gun
2 x 2.5 Litres	£305 + VAT	61p per cattle dose
4 x 2.5 Litres	£595 + VAT	60p per cattle dose

Please make sure your medicine order has been placed by 10am for all of our centre deliveries and no later than 2:30pm the day before your direct to farm deliveries. This enables the dispensary team to organise and dispense your medication efficiently.

Place your orders with the Dispensary now

Prices correct 01/07/2018 Ex VAT Offers end 30/09/2018

Meet the Team-Karen Edwards, Dispenser



I started on the day Synergy opened as a van driver.....and soon after progressed to the dispensary team.

Working three days a week my job entails taking orders from clients, processing them

and sending the vans out. Over the years the job just keeps getting busier, we no longer have a quiet time of day or year!

Most evenings I can be found in the gym spinning or stretching in pilates. Every other spare moment sees us three years into a five year house rebuild.....

News from our Rounds

East

Andy Adler



It seems that I have been talking about mastitis and cell counts a lot recently. I worry at this time of year when it gets hot and dry that cows often will lie under a favourite tree and that this become a contaminated bed with a very high stocking rate. However with the sun beating down you cannot blame the cows for wanting to find shade. If your cell count has gone up then start taking samples from clinical cases and review your mastitis treatments. If there is one particular lying area then consider fencing it off.

It is obviously incredibly dry with little rain since April. Some Maize is doing great however some looks very sick. When I worked in New Zealand and we had a dry summer we discussed drying cows off early and making sure any cull cows were off farm so there would be less mouths to feed. I know some farms have plenty of silage in stock from last year however for those of you who do not have a stock of forage I would encourage you to think about stocking rates and alternative forage crops.

North

Gareth Foden



Hot hot! Too hot, for fair haired vets, and even worse when wearing waterproofs. Like me I think many of you are struggling for grass and this is when the moor ground comes into its own. Most people I speak to are having to buffer feed more than normal and those that aren't are struggling with milk constituents, with low milk proteins being a common issue. Hot cows are spending less time eating and more time sulking in the shade if they can find it, hopefully close to water. I have also seen a rise in somatic cell counts and mastitis possibly due to congregation in shady areas and increased lying times.

We were delighted at the turnout for our young farmer's pub quiz where Ilminster took the victory with their impressive knowledge. Yeovil did well despite reduced numbers, Crewkerne turned up in force and stole the special prize despite there being debate of how to spell "Crewkern". Langport made a solid performance.



South

Clare Eames



As I write this, in the middle of June, we are a week away from shearing at home and are hoping that the flies will hold off a little longer. We use shearing time to apply Klik to the lambs to protect against fly strike. We are fortunate that the sheep ground is mainly on top of a hill so we don't tend to get fly issues too early on but we could have done with shearing not being 2 weeks later than normal as we have had a couple of lambs with strike.

Shearing is also when we give the lambs their first dose of Ovivac P Plus to protect against clostridial diseases and pasteurilla pneumonia. Protection provided via colostrum from vaccinating the ewes with Heptavac P starts to wane at around 5 weeks of age and these diseases can cause severe losses in growing lambs so it is important to continue to protect them by vaccination.

Many farms are down on yield for 1st cut silage this year but hopefully it will prove to be good quality. Some of you may have done a second cut if we get a decent drop of rain before June is out although this doesn't look hopeful at the moment. At home we are now looking to make some hay and hence the household is on constant weather watch...

EVENTS

We will be at the Yeovil Show on 14th & 15th July.
Visit us in row G for refreshments and a chat

Heifer Fertility



9th July
At Knott
Oak
Dairy

*courtesy of
Dillington Estates*

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines for Commercial Sheep Flocks

11th July
at Evershot

Faecal Egg Counting Course

17th July
at Evershot

Coming in August

MilkSure Training
7th August

2 Day Foot Trimming
13 & 14th August

Safe Use of Veterinary
Medicines
21st August

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