



Bluetongue

We wish to remind our clients about the need for responsible sourcing of animals after Defra and the Scottish Government announced that a number of cattle in a single consignment from France have been tested positive for Bluetongue virus BTV-8.

The animals entered the UK earlier this month destined for four farms in England (Preston and Kendal) and Scotland (Dumfries and Stirling). The virus was detected in some of the animals during

routine post-movement tests. All of the animals that have tested positive for the virus or that are at high risk of being infected will be humanely culled on farm, and restrictions have been placed on each of the four farms.

Signs of the disease include eye and nasal discharge, drooling, swelling around the head or mouth, lethargy and lameness. However, as this particular strain does not always show obvious clinical signs it is vital to remain vigilant

- ### November 2017
- Bluetongue
 - New UK targets for antibiotic use
 - New Red Tractor Rules
 - Calf Scour
 - Arla/Morrisons Contracts
 - Regional News
 - Events

for any suspicious signs of disease. BTV-8 does not pose a threat to human health. Any suspicion of Bluetongue should be reported to the APHA immediately on 03000 200 301

RUMA conference announces new UK agriculture targets for antibiotic use: Synergy farms ahead of the game...



In London this month we attended the RUMA conference on antibiotic use in the agricultural sector where sector specific (dairy/beef/sheep/pigs/poultry) targets for use were announced. This was very well attended and well publicised event marking how important this issue is to government, farmers, producers and consumers.

The good news story is that overall antibiotic use in UK agriculture has dropped by 27% and now below a government target of 50 mg/kg set following recommendations in the 2016 O'Neill Review on Antimicrobial Resistance. The unit mg/kg is a measurement of the number of milligrams of antibiotic used in one year per kg of animal in a given population. We include this figure in your Synergy antibiotic report in your health plan so ask your vet if you want to find out where you stand.

The sector specific targets have been created to make realistic reductions within that species system. The range in usage between species was huge: pigs right at the top end although improved significantly, dairy somewhere in the

middle and sheep at the bottom. Beef depends on the type of system with suckler herds low users but intensive calf rearing on the high end.

The dairy sector now has a target of reducing by a further 20% from current levels to 20mg/kg. Amongst Synergy's clients our current average is approximately 19 mg/kg so we are proud you are already ahead of the game! Positive changes on your farms to reduce disease levels are paying dividends your farms. There is variation between farms; some are still above national targets so we still have some work to do on a farm level.

CIA antibiotics have their own targets and a 50% reduction in the number of treatment courses by 2020 is what has been put forward. As a practice we want to drive CIA use down as low as possible and have already reduced use by 70% over the last 5 years so we should be well on the way to hitting this target with our farmers.

Both the beef and sheep sector are targeting 10 mg/kg use or a 10% drop in use by 2020. A sample of our sheep

flocks has demonstrated a usage level around 6 mg/kg which is already below target but again we see great variability between flocks in usage so make sure you talk with your vet about usage on your farm.

It should be remembered that none of these targets means that you can't or shouldn't treat any animal that truly needs an antibiotic as that would be a welfare issue! However, it does mean that if you repeatedly find it necessary to treat for the same condition and your overall antibiotic use is higher than average, then it is time to look at the systems, management or disease control that you have in place.

It is a pleasure to work with so many forward thinking farmers who have really embraced the idea of investing in better herd health infrastructure. It is clear that this is now leading to lower disease rates and antibiotic usage which will inevitably lead to higher outputs from your farms, be it more litres of milk, more lambs sold or bigger calves at weaning.

Tom Clarke





New Red Tractor Rules

From October 1st there have been new requirements for red tractor accreditation. Here is a brief overview of these changes to let you know that Synergy is aware of them and how we are able to help you achieve the new goals.

A farm antibiotic usage review is now required for audit. In all our herd health plans Synergy now routinely produce an antibiotic audit report which collates and breaks down the total antibiotics sold to your farm in the last 12 months and this will satisfy the requirements for the red tractor audit. Synergys aim is to drive a reduction in overall use of antibiotics by using the report to highlight areas of high usage on your farm and to work with you to come up with a plan to reduce the reliance on antibiotics in the future. As a practice we have already reduced overall usage by 25 % per cow in the last 5 years and the trend is continuing. Synergy is committed to working with you to improve the herds' overall health and advising on management improvements to achieve these goals. Selective dry cow therapy is an area that Red Tractor are encouraging you to discuss further with your vet and at Synergy we would see this as an obvious area where reductions can be made. Some management changes may need to occur for it to work smoothly but it will be appropriate in most circumstances.

Critically important antibiotics (CIAs) are families of antibiotics (fluoroquinolones and 3rd/4th gen cephalosporins) that the European and World Health Organisations have decreed are critical to human medicine and their use in agriculture should be minimal or stopped altogether. Red Tractor requires that you discuss with your vet the use of CIAs and aim to reduce their use. Example CIAs are Ceffect, Ceffimam, Cobactan, Marbocyl, Marbox, Forcyl, Naxel, Cevaxel.

As a veterinary practice we are committed to reducing the use of these medicines and over half of our 220 dairy farms no longer use them at all with **no detrimental effect on animal health.** As a practice we have reduced by 70%+ the usage of CIAs by swapping people to other equally effective non critical antibiotics and targeting reductions in the root causes of the illnesses (eg mastitis, dirty cows) where the CIAs were used. We will discuss options at your next health review to implement this.

“Safe use of medicines” workshops and certificates of competence. The new red tractor requirements recommend that *“at least one member of staff who is responsible for administering medicines undertakes training and holds a certificate of competence”* We regularly run courses on the safe use of medicines either as a bespoke on farm module direct to farm staff or as a workshop at Evershot, both of which will satisfy this requirement and you will receive certificates of attendance.

The next “Safe use of medicines” workshop is at Evershot on December 12th so book a place now or speak to your vet about running one for all your farm staff on your farm.

The workshops will give you a working knowledge of which medicines are appropriate for which condition, how to maximize the effectiveness of the medicines you give and how to administer medicines to ensure they work effectively. It is a highly practical session and suitable as a review of techniques and knowledge for experienced herdsmen and junior staff alike.

Withdrawal period declaration requirement – there is now a requirement that if any animal is sold off farm to market or privately that a declaration letter must accompany the animal/passport IF the animal is under any medicine milk or meat withhold period. A sample document is available on their website <https://assurance.redtractor.org.uk/tools-and-library/templates>

Colostrum policy requirement - Your Synergy Herd Health Plan already contains a colostrum policy. This outlines the importance of sufficient colostrum of decent quality being given in a timely manner after birth. Many farms are now using a Brix refractometer to assess the quality of colostrum. Red Tractor has also recommended you test the quality of the colostrum.



Tom Clarke

Vet Tech Services



We would like to take this opportunity to welcome and introduce the latest addition to our very busy vet tech team. **James Perrett** will be working mainly on the East side of the practice; and comes from a dairy farming background. Living in the Sturminster Newton area he is a keen rugby player and someone that many clients will already know.

Pregnancy diagnosis/scanning - with heifers being housed don't forget we have two fully trained vet techs (Dave Phillips & Daryl Foot) offering this cost effective and time saving service which can be organised in addition to your routine vet visit - PD negative animals can then be examined for treatment.

With Autumn well under way and heifers being housed now is an ideal time to consider **freeze branding**. Lifetime herd ID for easier identification of individuals within your herd for less than £5. Excellent value! Pre bulling heifers are best for optimum brands, but it is never too late even for the cows in your herds without clear ID. We have years of freeze branding experience in our team.



Dave Frecknall

For further information or quotes phone Dave Frecknall on 07500 626566 , contact our office 01935 83682 Or email dave.frecknall@synergyfarmhealth.com

Calf Scour – it’s all about the fluids

Scour is the most common cause of disease in calves in the UK and is responsible for 50% of all calf deaths nationally.

Sick calves with scour feel ill because they are dehydrated, painful, hungry, are deficient in salts and often have acidic blood (acidosis).

Out of all these effects, the most likely to cause a worsening of a calf’s condition (and even death) are dehydration, salt deficiency and acidosis.

This is why appropriate fluid therapy for scouring calves is so important as it addresses all of these most severe processes. Oral rehydration products contain various salts, bicarbonate or precursors to neutralise blood acid and are mixed with water to alleviate the dehydration.

Every sick calf is an individual, and although it is really useful to have standard operating procedures for treatment, good stockmanship involves tailoring treatment to an individual calf’s needs.

One area where this is important is giving variable amounts of fluids to scouring calves depending on their size and how dehydrated they are. For example a 40kg calf that is 5% dehydrated will require 2L of fluids per day on top of their normal milk intake.

A 60kg calf that is 10% dehydrated will require 6L of fluids per day on top of their normal milk requirements.

Therefore to work out how much fluid to give a scouring calf you need:-

- An accurate estimation of weight (weigh tapes are really useful for this)
- An accurate estimation of dehydration

A sick calf that is off its milk should also have extra fluids to compensate for this. E.g if the calf normally drinks 4L of milk per day but has only drunk 2L today it should be given an extra 2L of fluids in addition to the amount calculated above.

The fluid treatments should be broken down into small amounts spread throughout the day and given by stomach tube if the calf will not suck a teat.

Milk feeding should continue as normal- scouring calves are starving and need the nutrition even more than healthy calves.

However if a sick calf is refusing to drink its milk it is important to avoid giving that milk via stomach tube. This is because there is a real risk of that milk fermenting on the rumen- causing varying degrees of painful bloat.

Therefore one of the main aims of treatment is to make the calf feel better so it will drink of its own accord.

If a calf is more than 10% dehydrated it is unlikely to respond to oral fluids alone, and one of our vets can give fluids in the vein. As a general rule if a scouring calf cannot stand then intravenous fluids are warranted. We have a lot of success with this procedure and the transformation in a calf’s demeanour after IV fluids is often remarkable.

Apart from fluid therapy, other treatments are important. These involve alleviating pain, keeping the calf warm and talking to us about whether specific treatments and/or antibiotics are warranted.



Tom Shardlow

If you have any questions about the treatment or prevention of calf scour then please give us a ring and speak to one of our 0-6 Youngstock vets



Arla and Morrisons Contracts

Arla and Morrisons have recently announced a payment premium for a number of their producers in the Southwest. There are a number of new health scorings and recordings required to satisfy the contract.

Monthly Disease recording:

There are a number of key health outcomes that must be submitted online on a monthly basis such as mastitis cases, retained foetal membranes, downer cows and number and reason for culls to name a few examples. These results will be collated and presented back to you and your vets to help us monitor and identify problem health areas to work on with you.

Please make sure that Arla has Synergy’s email address to allow us to see a copy of the results—monthly Johnes testing, Monthly individual cow cell count recording (office@synergyfarmhealth.com)

Quarterly cow comfort scoring:

At a recent farmer ARLA/Morrisons meeting it was great to see how engaged everyone was with the new mobility, cow cleanliness/lesion and comfort scoring systems that you are required to complete on a quarterly basis to satisfy the contract. Working with your vets it will be a very useful tool to help objectively assess whether there are areas of cow comfort and mobility in your herds that need addressing. This needs to be submitted quarterly and once a year must be done by an independent person.

Antibiotic use:

You have to record every individual course of antibiotics used on farm every month. The use of critically important antibiotics must be restricted so that they are “only to be used when there are no alternative antimicrobials authorised for the respective target species or indication”. In practice this means that unless there is evidence (like culture and sensitivity testing) that proves no other antibiotic is effective then you must use alternatives. There are plenty of alternatives for routine first line use and our clinical experience is that there is NO detriment to herd health when moving away from these products. Please speak to your vet to discuss this further.

HOW CAN SYNERGY FARM HEALTH HELP?

We have extensive experience within our vet tech team of performing herd mobility and cow comfort scoring for a large number of farms with supermarket contracts. We have 5 qualified mobility scorers (you have to be on the nationally recognised register to officially be a mobility scorer) and we are keen to help you with your contract obligations. We can perform both the independent locomotion scoring and/or the quarterly comfort scoring with an objective set of eyes to score them!

Examples of Critically important antibiotics (CIAs): Ceffect, Ceffimam, Cobactan, Marbocyl, Marbox, Forcyl, Naxel, Cevaxel.



Tom Clarke

Please contact lead vet techs Dave Frecknall 07500 626566 or Dave Phillips 07500 626565 if you would like to know more about this service.

News from our Rounds

East

Tom Clarke

Worms and Pasturella with a side dish of Salmonella have been on the menu this month.

Gut worms have been a big issue on a number of farms in the past month with poor growth rates and some deaths. The very mild weather added to a good bit of moisture has meant the nematodes have been active later and in larger numbers than after a dry summer. However, as I write this we have finally now just had the first frost of the year which will begin to shut down the infection pressure from pasture. Fluke is also going to need to be managed carefully this winter as cows at grass on wet farms will have picked up significant burdens this summer/autumn.

The mild and damp weather may also be implicated in a cluster of cases of bacterial (Pasturella) pneumonia outbreaks. There is normally one or more stress factors involved in triggering this bacteria (also known as shipping fever) but having such a damp and warm environment has meant wet coats in the morning for calves in poorly ventilated sheds or exposed yards and this has been enough to trigger some nasty outbreaks of coughing and pneumonia on a number of units.

There have also been a number of Salmonella Dublin cases identified in the past few weeks. Most cases of this bacterial infection have involved sudden deaths and vague in calves with high temperatures. Prompt identification, isolation and treatment of cases is needed in the short term and vaccination either of the dams to provide protection via the colostrum or direct to calves is another key control measure.



North

Graeme McPherson

October was a month where I felt I didn't do much 'real work'. That doesn't mean I have been kicking my heels by any means. I have found myself spending quite a bit of time lately participating in various farmer training initiatives as well as new graduate and student vet training. So while I may have done less calvings and PD's than my colleagues, I have been working in an area that we see as a vital part of our service. We are passionate about information transfer and see it as one of our most important roles as a Farm Animal Health business. We believe that it is in our clients interest to continue to develop their knowledge just as we are compelled to as Veterinary Surgeons and Vet Techs. As farming becomes increasingly scientific and technical, it is essential to keep up-dated on new ideas and new found understanding of animal health and production to remain competitive.

We offer training for farm managers and farm workers in all kinds of areas and we are keen to expand this element of our business. We love to share the knowledge that we accumulate from engaging with the latest research. So keep an eye out for our various courses and meetings. I am sure you will find one that will benefit your business. Perhaps you would like to let us know about courses and training that you might like us to run for you and your staff.



South

Ben Barber

Changing weather with hints of both warm and wet has caused a flurry of flies that are causing problems with all of the species that we deal with. A sudden increased caseload of bad eyes in calves to flystrike in sheep has been a frustrating trend. Sheep checked only days before are found to be hopping lame with maggots causing life-threatening illness where before there was just a touch of scald. The current climate has even allowed liver fluke to start causing losses with reports coming back of livers being condemned as a result – no doubt with a reduction in weight gain or milk production occurring alongside.

Deciding when to treat can be a nightmare as diagnosis is difficult. It takes a long time for fluke eggs to be produced and become visible, and by then much of the damage may already be done. It may even be worth taking bloods to look for liver problems at an early stage, or perhaps test young animals in their first grazing season to see when they make initial contact with the parasite.



Taking spotting bulls to the next level...

Congratulations to BL Davies & Son, Higher Farm, Dowlish Wake for their success at recent shows; Reserve Champion at the Royal Welsh Show and Holstein UK Premier Breeder Award, Holstein UK Premier Exhibitor Award and Holstein Senior 3 year old in milk at UK Dairy Day.

Join us at
Agrifest South West
November 8th
in Exeter



EVENTS

Controlling Early Lactation Mastitis

Thursday 30th November

At Church Farm, Podimore, Yeovil
by kind permission of the Board family

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines

Tues 12th December at Evershot

Ham Hill Discussion Group

Tuesday 14th Nov—7.45 pm

Eagle Tavern, Nr Chard
Downer Cows led by Ben Barber

Lamb Loss Meetings—7.30pm

12th Dec - The Royal Oak, Bere Regis
13th Dec—Ridgeway Hotel, Axminster
14th Dec —The Rose & Crown, East Lambrook

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

WEST HILL BARNES, EVERSNOT, DORSET, DT2 0LD

office@synergyfarmhealth.com

01935 83682

www.synergyfarmhealth.com

[@SynergyFarmVets](https://twitter.com/SynergyFarmVets)

[@SFHCalfClub](https://twitter.com/SFHCalfClub)

Find us on
facebook