

Hello and welcome to the August Newsletter. I hope you and your families enjoyed the Royal Welsh Show last month – now we can look forward to the Vale Show. For those of you who don't know yet – we have decided to not take a stand to the Vale Show this year – and are sponsoring a livestock ring and are donating £1000 to the Velindre Cancer Centre, in recognition of the excellent care some of us and our families have received recently. Many of us will be there all day so I dare say we will see you there.

Later in the newsletter, Morgan talks about tick borne disease in stock. Tick bites in humans can also cause disease – Lyme disease. We have seen this in a few of our clients and it has proved difficult for the GP to diagnose as the symptoms are vague – headache, fatigue, aching, high temperature. An early sign of Lyme disease can be (but not always!) a 'bullseye' rash – an oval red area surrounded by another similar ring. Another one to bear in mind.....

This month, consider using a break dose of wormer in sheep – it's the right time of year to have the maximum effect on reducing wormer resistance. Both wormers, used also as quarantine wormers, the orange and purple ones, we have in stock – if you need individual doses for bought in animals, we can dispense these so that you do not need to buy a large quantity.

Fingers crossed for improved weather this month – a few consecutive days of no rain would be nice.

Mary

Upcoming meetings

This month we will be holding 2 afternoon meetings, free for Farming Connect registered clients.

Thursday 10th August: Maximising Suckler Cow Productivity

Tuesday 15th August: Understanding Johne's Disease

Places are limited and on a first come, first served basis so please contact the surgery to register your interest/book your place.



Babesiosis in Cattle

We have seen cases of Babesiosis (also known as Red water fever) in the Pencoed area recently so thought it useful to inform you about it. Babesiosis is a tick-borne disease that affects cattle, caused by a microscopic parasite; Babesia. A tick borne disease is one that is carried within a tick and is then passed onto animals/humans when the tick takes a blood feed and injects the pathogen into the individual. While it is more commonly associated with warmer regions, cases of babesiosis have been reported in the United Kingdom. High risk of disease can be seen where naïve adult cattle have access to tick habitats such as rough hill ground, forestry or heathland.

Clinical signs of the disease can vary but often include:

- Fever
- Anaemia and red urine; both caused by destruction of the red blood cells by the parasite leading to release of haemoglobin
- Jaundice
- Decreased appetite
- Diarrhoea (which can later lead into constipation)

Continued PTO

Directors:

PHONES UPDATE

South Wales Farm Vets

Mary Walters

We are switching phone provider on the afternoon of 24th August.

Ty Newydd

Rhian Matthew-Davies

During this process the practice number may become temporarily unavailable.

Groes Faen

Morgan Hanks

If this affects you please contact us on: 07715502853 on this date only

CF72 8NE

Tel: 01443 223751

- Abortion if the disease is severe
- Dehydration
- Death

Mainly adult cattle are affected as young animals appear to be fairly resistant and asymptomatic, with an immunity to the disease. If infected while young, it is likely that this immunity will be maintained. However, an absence of challenge while young/immune may lead to the development of susceptible animals. In older animals immunity is maintained by continuous challenge from infected ticks. Immunity is not lifelong and in the absence of challenge, it is possible for animals to develop disease on a subsequent occasion. Signs normally start after May/June when the tick that hosts this parasite starts to become active.



Blood samples are collected to identify the presence of Babesia parasites or antibodies against them. Microscopic examination of blood smears can reveal the presence of the parasites within red blood cells. A recent history of movement to pastures known to harbour ticks adds to the diagnosis.



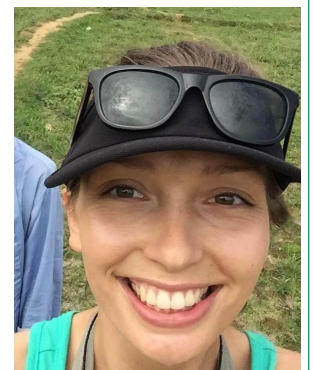
Treatment of babesiosis in cattle typically involves the administration of anti-protozoal drugs. Imidocarb dipropionate is one such drug that can be used to combat the infection. These medications work by targeting the Babesia parasites, reducing their numbers and allowing the animal's immune system to clear the infection. A drawback to their use is they tend to have a very long meat and milk withdrawal periods. Treatment protocols may involve multiple doses administered over a period of several days, depending on the severity of the infection and the response to treatment. It is thought to provide protection for 3-6 weeks whilst still allowing natural immunity to develop. Additional supportive care may also be necessary in severe cases.

Prevention of babesiosis in cattle is challenging in naïve adults as there is no available vaccine. It primarily focuses on tick control measures. Regular inspections of animals for ticks and the prompt removal of any ticks found can help reduce the risk of transmission. Additionally, implementing integrated pest management strategies can help control tick populations in the environment. This may involve the use of acaricides (tick control products) on cattle, however the effects of these can be short lived. Topical application of pyrethroid starting before, and re-application throughout the challenge period is the standard preventative treatment. Neither synthetic pyrethroids nor macrocyclic lactones (e.g ivermectin) are licenced for tick control in UK cattle, but they can be prescribed by your vet for tick control. Care with their use in youngstock as this may limit their exposure to babesia and subsequent immunity. Control of ticks on sheep in co-grazing systems is also important. This is because the tick population can be maintained within the sheep flock even if the cattle are treated. Ticks can also infest sheep where they cause tick-borne fever, tick pyaemia, and louping ill.

A key issue in tick control, is that the tick spends a relatively short part of their life cycle on the host, they shelter at the base of damp vegetation. Identification of risk areas can help with prophylactic treatment or avoidance of such areas if possible. Good husbandry practices, such as maintaining clean and well-drained housing areas, can also minimize tick habitats. This is however a long-term exercise requiring sustained effort and when alternative hosts such as deer are present population management is even more problematic.

If high risk areas cannot be avoided, ensuring youngstock have been exposed early on in life may help the herd to develop immunity and minimise disease seen as adults. Take care if you buy in adult stock, these may not have had exposure to the disease previously and so it is advisable to avoid grazing high risk areas with these animals. It is not known the age at which youngstock lose this ability to develop immunity but some studies have suggested as young as 9 months whilst others up to 2 years old.

This month's author, Morgan Hanks one of the practice directors.



Buying Sheep?

We know many of you will be looking to buy replacement breeding sheep, especially rams, in the coming months. Quarantine worm treatments with an orange or purple group of wormer are recommended for incoming stock to avoid buying in wormer resistance. We sell individual doses of these products so that you don't have to buy a whole pot in order to treat a small number of sheep, just contact the office and we'll be happy to help.



Office opening hours

Monday – Friday (Except Bank Holidays)

8.30am - 5.30pm

Emergency out of hours service

Weeknights 5.30pm - 8.30am

Saturday & Sunday all day