Farm Newsletter

Endell Veterinary Group, 49 Endless Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 3UH • 01722–333291

February 2009

Lice and Mange

With winter well and truly set in and many cattle, both beef and dairy, housed for the next few months, it seems a pertinent time to have a reminder about mites and lice. These tend to be more of a problem during the winter housing period due to the close contact between animals, as well as warm, humid conditions beneath thick winter coats. These external parasites cause loss of hair coat as well as itching and scaly skin. Lice can be seen easily with the naked eye whereas mange mites are microscopic. Certain types of lice suck blood and, if a very heavy burden is found on a young animal it can cause severe, life threatening anaemia. All external parasites however cause a check in growth rates as well as being a welfare issue. For these reasons it is important to treat your animals if you think they may be infested. Bimectin is a pour on ivermectin-based product that kills mange mites and lice, as well as ticks, gastrointestinal worms and lungworms. We also stock Coopers Spot-on which treats lice and flies but not mange. Please contact Daniel in dispensary to place your order now.

Louse

Mange mite

For more advice on these often forgotten parasites, please contact the practice on 01722 333291.

Thin Cows

The grass over the summer has been of considerable quantity but relatively poor quality. For this reason animals have not had the usual nutritional boost over the summer period to last them through the winter. We have spotted a few more thin cows on our rounds than you would expect and for this reason would urge you to get that extra feed into the cows sooner rather than later. Nutritional problems and the associated complications in both dairy and beef cows are much easier to prevent by pre-empting any deficits than they are to fix when trouble arises. Please contact one of our vets to discuss any concerns you may have regarding this issue.

New Year - Same Old Prices

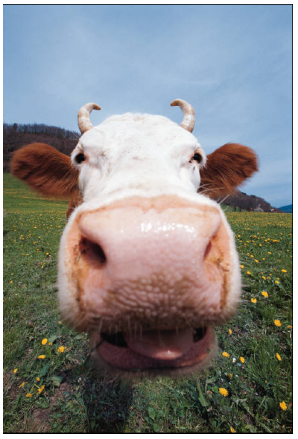
January is usually the time we review our charges. This year, in view of the 'credit crunch' and the difficult financial times, we have made a decision to try to help our clients by not implementing any increase in our professional fees at this time.

Happy New Year!

Pneumonia

With the cold snap finally upon us we hope to see a reduction in the pneumonia cases that seem to have plagued a lot of our clients over the last couple of months. However, whilst weather is certainly a factor in pneumonia outbreaks, it is by no means the most important, with stock sourcing, housing and management some of the major considerations. If you have had a problem with pneumonia this year you will be all too aware of the cost implications of just one case, let alone a whole shed full of coughing calves. As the old saying goes, prevention is better than cure, and there are some excellent vaccines on the market to help you reduce the risks of a pneumonia outbreak. Again planning is important as you want the vaccine to have been given, and immunity established before the risk period begins (ie: winter housing). Plan ahead for next year by consulting your vet for advice on which vaccines might be appropriate for use on your farm. In the meantime, if you are currently trying to deal with a pneumonia outbreak contact a vet for advice on the most effective and economic treatment strategy.

Digital Dermatitis and Foot Bathing



Digital dermatitis was first identified in Italy in 1972 and arrived here in the UK in the mid 1980s. Despite the long period that we have been aware of the disease, there is still some dispute over the exact bacteria which cause the disease.

Initially lameness is mild, but will become more severe if left untreated. Lesions appear as roughly circular areas between the bulbs of the heel. Digital dermatitis will not respond to injectable antibiotics, with topical application being necessary. Treatment of individual cows involves cleaning and drying the lesion followed by two applications of Engemycin spray. The first application should be allowed to dry before the second is applied. If the prevalence of the disease is high, herd treatment by way of foot bathing should be initiated.

The foot bath should contain an appropriate antibiotic such as Lincospectin or Deneguard and the cows should be bathed for three consecutive milkings. Copper sulphate or formalin are not appropriate for the treatment of a herd problem.

There are many footbath options available, from plastic movable baths to fixed baths with automated filling and water changes. It is advisable that feet are clean on entry to a medicated foot bath to reduce contamination, so it is recommended that either two baths are used, with the first as a rinse bath or that the water is changed to reduce the build up of contamination. Regular scraping up of yards and the elimination of slurry pooling will aid in the prevention of digital dermatitis.

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Bluetongue Vaccination Reminder

It may only be January but spring, a busy time on farm at the best of times, will be on us again before we know it. For this reason, this month may be a good time to start thinking about Bluetongue vaccination again. Planning ahead will ensure that the vaccine is delivered to the animals prior to the risk period providing good protection of your stock. Remember that, whilst vaccination is still voluntary, vaccinating your animals not only protects your stock but also the national herd, preventing the disease becoming established in this country. Contact the dispensary to order your vaccine. Please also bear in mind that whilst animals that were vaccinated last year will require a single booster injection, animals that have not been vaccinated previously will require two doses two weeks apart.

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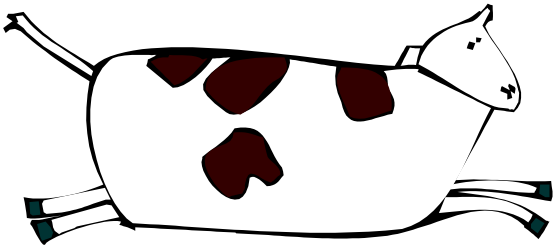

To Text Or Not to Text…

Please could we make a plea for clients **not** to request visits by text message, no matter how well you know your vet. If that vet is TB testing all day, away on holiday or has mislaid or even changed their mobile phone, no one will know that you require a visit. If you need a vet to visit your farm, the best way to ensure you get the best service possible is to contact the practice on **01722 333291** where you can leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as a vet becomes available.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.