



FARM NEWSLETTER – JULY 2015

Summer has finally come, it is good to see stock finally out in the fields despite the lack of grass in some places. It is not too late to get cows' feet trimmed, and remember to keep watching cows that are with the bull to make sure they do not keep coming into season, which may indicate a problem with the bull. Please also try to remember to contact us prior to coming in to collect drugs. Preferably 24 hours notice but if that is not possible then a phone call before you set off would be appreciated.

Fly Strike in Sheep:



It is important during the summer to keep sheep, especially lambs, with clean back ends. Dagging of dirty lambs helps keep them clean along with good worming protocols to reduce scour problems – discuss this with a vet before ploughing ahead with wormer products. Adult blowflies are attracted to the warmth and moisture of faecal or urine stained sheep fleece, beside which they lay their eggs. The eggs hatch into maggots, which live off the sheep's flesh. Eating deep into the skin and muscles the maggots cause pain and deep-seated infections, characterised by the putrid

smell, which must be treated. Affected sheep are often isolated from the flock and dull, with blackened fleece and skin around the affected area. Not only is fly strike a welfare issue but it causes reduced growth rates and lambs which need a lot of treatment and increased feeding to get them fat, thereby reducing farm profits. As well as daily checking of sheep, using fly treatments such as **Crovector Klik** also helps to prevent fly strike. **CLIK** will last for 16 weeks but has a withdrawal period of 40 days, **CLIKZIN** lasts for 8 weeks and has a withdrawal of 7 days, ideally applied within 3 weeks of clipping if used on adult sheep. **Crovect** protects from blowfly for 8-10 week and also gives protection from ticks for 8-12 weeks, this has a withdrawal of 40 days. Discuss options for treatment with a vet, and most importantly strive to keep lambs clean and keep checking sheep carefully daily throughout the summer.

Summer Mastitis in Cattle:

Summer Mastitis in cattle is caused by a combination of bacteria including *Arcanobacterium pyogenes* and *Streptococcus dysgalactiae*, and is spread by head flies. It is particularly seen in heifers over the summer months but also in adult beef cows, especially dry cows left without a calf. Often an affected animal is isolated



and has quite an obviously swollen and reddened quarter(s) of the udder. Sometimes an animal will show signs of stiffness through the hind legs. They can become dehydrated and toxic if not treated promptly, and in calf cows can abort. Commonly one or two quarters are affected, but it is possible for the entire udder to become infected. When milk is drawn off the affected quarter it is thick and pussy, commonly with a strong smell, and the udder is very hard and hot to touch. Summer mastitis is contagious and can cause the complete loss of the affected quarters. Summer mastitis is spread between cattle by flies. For cows with damaged teats flies landing on the broken skin can introduce infection and then flies passing from infected cattle to uninfected can cause the spread through several animals. This is particularly important in heifers as damage at an early stage to the udder by summer mastitis can lead to the loss of quarters which will immediately reduce the longevity of the animal as their production will be sub-optimal throughout their lifetime. Fly-repellent ear tags are available or products such as **Swish** and **Spot-on** can be used to reduce flies around cattle throughout the summer, and avoidance if possible of pastures with a lot of trees and water courses will also help reduce the fly burden.

Infectious Bovine Keratoconjunctivitis (New Forest Eye):

Similar to Summer Mastitis in cattle 'New Forest Eye' is another infectious disease of both cattle and sheep that is spread by flies and made worse with dust and sunlight. *Moraxella bovis* bacteria are introduced to the eyes by flies, initially causing conjunctivitis. This stage of disease can be noticed by checking animals carefully for signs of squinted (painful) eyes and lots of tears running from the eye. The conjunctivitis quickly becomes severe and inflammation spreads to the surface layer of the eye. Damage to the surface layer of the eye (the cornea) causes corneal ulceration and increased fluid around that area of the eye (corneal oedema). Often this is the stage that the disease process is picked up on as people see animals with one or both eyes with a white area in the middle of the eye surrounded by a blueish area. The sooner New Forest Eye is treated the better as the ulcers will continue to progress until eventually they become deep ulcers which rupture completely. Once the eye is ruptured the eye is of no use at all and will eventually shrivel up. Sometimes when eyes have ruptured if they are causing unnecessary pain to the animal they can be removed with good success. Catching New Forest Eye early means it can be treated by injection by the vet underneath the conjunctiva around the eye itself. Sometimes it is necessary to stitch the eye closed to act as a natural 'bandage' effect and enable healing. If the disease is spreading rapidly through animals, mainly in sheep, long acting Oxytetracycline can be used to control the spread. In both cattle and sheep this disease is another reason for the importance of using ongoing fly control throughout the summer months.

