

# FarmVets

S O U T H W E S T



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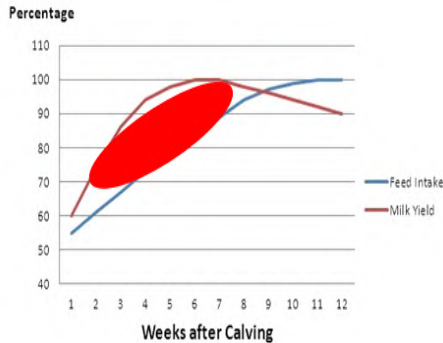
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## Newsletter August 2015

### Ketosis Part 1



Ketosis is an important metabolic disease in dairy cows. It's caused by the "energy gap" (see left) after calving, when increased energy demands for milk production cannot be met through intake from feed alone. To provide more energy to narrow this gap, body fat is mobilised and released into the blood. This is OK, it's what cows are meant to do but if it becomes excessive, then instead of being efficiently "burnt" for energy, something called "ketone bodies" are formed. We can detect these ketone bodies in milk, urine and blood. A small amount is OK but if too many are formed they cause a problem we know as ketosis/acetonaemia.

The transition period is the critical time with regard to ketosis. This is defined as the 30 days pre- to 30 days post-calving, although recent evidence suggests we should consider ketosis risk as from late lactation. The aims of the transition period are to maximise revenue, minimise risk and reduce both direct and indirect losses. With careful management you can greatly reduce the incidence of ketosis and other associated diseases.

Ketosis exists in two forms:

- Type 1/clinical – visible symptoms, very few cows
- Type 2/subclinical – this is "hidden," with no clear symptoms but is very common. It is regularly reported that an average of 30% of the cows within UK herds are affected, although there is significant herd variation.

Country	Clinical Ketosis (% of all cows tested)	Subclinical Ketosis (% of all cows tested)
UK	0.5	30
France	0.5	58
Germany	2.4	45
Italy	0.5	29
Netherlands	0	38

Cows at the greatest risk of developing ketosis are those with a body condition score (BCS) of  $\geq 3.5$  at the late dry period because these animals have a low DMI before and after calving. This promotes excessive mobilisation of fat and therefore an increased risk of ketosis and also fatty liver. Other risk factors include:

- Heifers with a BCS  $\geq 3$
- A dry period of  $>2$  mths
- Loss of BCS in the dry period
- History of energy related diseases;
- First calving  $>27$  mths old
- Milk fat:protein ratio  $>1.5$  in previous lactations
- Twins

In next month's newsletter we will discuss the consequences of ketosis and ways to reduce the incidence of the disease. Please feel free to speak to any of the vets if you have any questions regarding ketosis, or if you are concerned you may have a problem in your herd.

## BVD Testing Through Milk Buyers



There has been much focus on BVD in the cattle industry over the last 2 years with the “BVD Free” campaign supporting eradication of BVD through practical on-farm control measures.

Despite widespread vaccination BVD still remains an extremely costly disease to the industry due to the spread by Persistently Infected (PI) animals. These are calves born from cows which are already infected with BVD. These PI animals can live for a number of years and are a major source of BVD spread to other cattle around them - this remains a potential problem even if you vaccinate your herd.

These PI animals need to be identified and removed. Some of you will have recently received letters from your milk buyers offering subsidised testing for BVD on your farm in the form of bulk milk testing and youngstock blood testing. We encourage you all to take advantage of this. For those that haven't received such letters, FarmVets SouthWest offer BVD testing in the form of our IDM scheme (Infectious Disease Monitoring) which can remotely test your bulk milk tank without the need for manual sampling. If you would like further details about our IDM scheme please contact any of our vets.

## Pasteurella in Sheep and Lambs

The summer months of May through to August present a serious risk of Pasteurella to both sheep and lambs. Pasteurella is caused by M.Haemolytica which is the most common bacteria involved in pneumonia. This is a very damaging and costly disease resulting in not only significant losses but also decreased growth rates and performance. Pasteurella can also cause septicaemia which often results in unexplained sudden deaths in growing lambs at this time of year.



The signs of pasteurella pneumonia can vary from eye or nasal discharges to coughs and laboured breathing. These signs may only initially be seen in a few sheep or lambs so outbreaks can be subtle unless sudden deaths occur. Pasteurella outbreaks are difficult to predict as the predisposing factors can be anything from sudden changes in the weather to stressful events, such as moving or handling. In addition to this, M. Haemolytica is often found in normal healthy sheep, so avoiding the bacteria is almost impossible. If outbreaks do occur then treatment of the flock with long acting antibiotic will help reduce losses. However, by far the most effective control is preventative vaccination with combined clostridial and pasteurella vaccines.



The vaccine we recommend is Heptavac-P Plus which can be given from 3 weeks of age. For sheep receiving vaccination for the first time, it's important to note that they will not be fully protected until they have received their second injection 4-6 weeks after their first. It's also important to ensure the annual booster is given within 12 months in order to maintain full protection.

## Honiton Show

We look forward to seeing you at **Stand 131 Avenue B** on Thursday, August 6th.

**Please be aware that the Yarcombe office will not be open until 11:00 a.m on 6th August.**