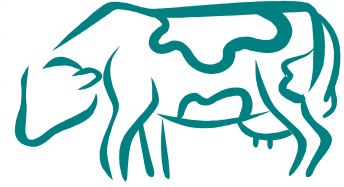


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Newsletter August 2013

SPOT CHECKS AT TB TESTS

DEFRA have announced that they will be carrying out an audit on TB testing. These "spot checks" will be unannounced and may happen on the first or second day of testing. The testing procedure, tag numbers etc will be scrutinized. If the test is not to DEFRA's satisfaction there may be sanctions and the test will be invalidated and cannot be repeated for 60 days. DEFRA has also re-emphasised that routine vaccination and treatment of cattle on day one of the TB test is prohibited. These treatments must be done at the reading of the test.



HEAT STRESS IN DAIRY COWS



It's not often that we consider ambient temperatures as a limiting factor in UK summer milk production. However, the dairy cow has an upper critical temperature above 25°C. If heat stressed, she will reduce her Dry Matter Intake (DMI) by 10-30% which will reduce milk yield. There will also be a reduction in fertility and potentially embryonic loss. Whilst changes can be made to diets, and investment made with respect to buildings, the following short term management changes will help:

1. Provision of adequate water is critical. Cows are unlikely to walk more than 250 metres so provide extra troughs if necessary and check the water pressure is sufficient.
2. Providing shade will probably mean that you end up using the winter housing. Make sure cubicles and bedding are of the usual high standard to prevent mastitis. Open the housing up and provide fans if necessary. Spraying the cows with water, especially in the collecting yards, would also be of benefit, as well as wetting the concrete. Beware of wetting concrete next to beds which could increase mastitis levels.
3. Feed twice a day to stop the TMR drying out. Giving 60% of the feed after 8pm will assist intakes. The ration could be reformulated to account for the reduced DMI. This would require increasing energy density of the diet, using high quality forages and feeding more concentrates which should help the cow maintain her energy requirements. However, care should be taken to balance diets properly to avoid digestive disorders.

HERDSMAN OF THE YEAR 2013



Well done Mike!

Many congratulations to Mike Peach of F.E. Hill & Sons, Stockland Lovell, Fiddington on being awarded National Herdsman of the Year. Mike was presented with the cup at the Livestock Event at the NEC in Birmingham.

Mike's award is richly deserved and is recognition of his excellent skills and dedication to his profession. He is ably assisted in his work by his wife Annette and has a weekly routine with FVSW.

TIME TO VACCINATE AGAINST TOXOPLASMOSIS & ENZOOTIC ABORTION

If you haven't already done now is the time to get on and vaccinate against toxoplasmosis and enzootic abortion.

Toxoplasma gondii is a parasite which causes at least 25% of diagnosed infectious abortions in sheep in the UK. Losses caused by toxoplasmosis include increased barrenness, abortions, mummifications, stillbirths and weakly lambs. Vaccination of ewes with a single 2ml dose of **Toxovax** at least 3 weeks before tugging helps protect against the losses caused by the disease.



Enzootic abortion is responsible for around 50% of infectious abortions diagnosed in sheep in the UK. Infection with *Chlamydophila abortus* results in abortions which typically occur in the last few weeks of pregnancy. Ewes become infected through contact with aborted material or discharges at lambing time and will go on to abort the next time they become pregnant themselves. The infection will then spread to other ewes in the flock. A single 2ml dose of **Enzovax** at least four weeks before tugging helps prevent enzootic abortion in uninfected ewes and also reduces the spread of the disease within the flock. A single 2ml dose of vaccine is required at least 4 weeks before tugging.



AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY OPENING HOURS

Our offices will be closed on Monday, August 26th. Drugs can be collected at our North Petherton office **by appointment only**.