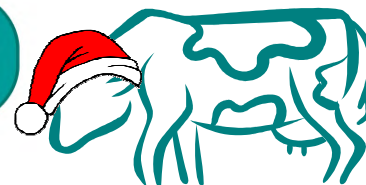




FarmVets

SOUTHWEST



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Newsletter December 2013

Scouring Dairy Cows

There has been an increase in the amount of loose or scouring dairy cows this year. This has usually coincided with being fed either this year's first cut or maize silage. This year, silages, both maize and grass, have come back as highly digestible with lower fibre than normal.

When we formulate diets we often use a target of 50% forage in the diet to avoid acidosis which works well. However, this year the silages are so good that the 50% target is easily met but there is still not enough forage fibre in the diet. This can lead to a poor "rumen mat" which is the tangled layer of fibre in the rumen that traps particles of concentrate so that they can be digested and turned into milk. If the rumen mat is not thick enough then all those bits of concentrate will pass out of the rumen and end up in a pile of runny muck.



There are those who suggest that straw reduces the amount of energy a cow can take in and so it should not go into dairy cow diets. On paper this is true but cows don't eat paper. Feeding the correct amount of scratchy fibre helps ensure that what goes into the cow gets digested - so ending up in the bulk tank as milk and not in slurry as expensive fertilizer.

As ever, we advise getting your silages tested regularly so that the cows can make best use of the good quality forages that are around this year. Please contact one of our offices if you would like further advice.



FLORKEM is an equivalent to KEFLORIL (both are generics of NUFLOR). The manufacturers of Kefloril, Vetoquinol, have increased their prices significantly. In order to prevent price rises to you we have moved from Kefloril to FLORKEM. Nuflor is still available but is considerably more expensive. All these contain the active ingredient florfenicol and have similar licenses.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OFFICE OPENING HOURS

Our offices are open as normal over the Christmas period except for the following:



Christmas Eve: Close at 3 pm

Christmas Day: Closed

Boxing Day: Closed

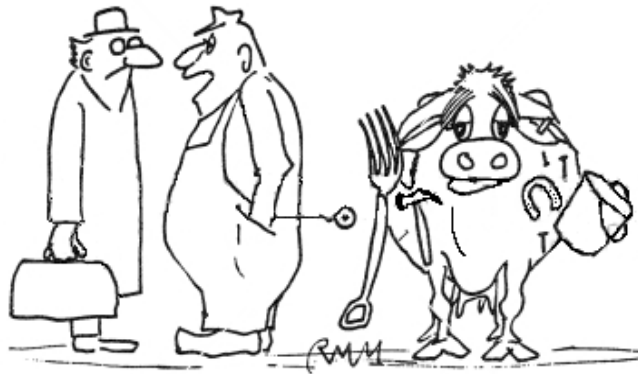
New Year's Day: Closed



Don't forget to order and collect medicines in good time

Tyre Wire Disease

Following on from the “Scouring Dairy Cows” article, when we sample silage we generally also have a casual glance at the state of the tyres on the clamp. It is quite alarming just how many broken tyres are around. The danger is that wires poke out from damaged rims and end up in the silage. Cattle, unlike sheep, are not fussy eaters and are more likely to eat the wires which then end up going through the gut wall very frequently resulting in death.



“I think the magnet you put in her stomach might have been just a little too strong”

This is still a very common diagnosis within the practice. An inexpensive rumen magnet can be given orally using a bolus gun. This attracts many wires and massively reduces the chance of any problems. However, the best starting point is to always check the state of tyres on your silage clamps.



For those of you who are closed up with TB, one of our clients has had a very positive experience with the South West TB Farm Advisory Service. Their email address info@southwest-tbadvice.co.uk.

On the subject of TB - most of our pre-movement TB test fees are based on time spent on the farm. Help us to keep costs down for both you and us by having animals ready and suitably restrained before the Vet turns up. Giving us as much notice as possible when booking in non-urgent works also helps enormously.

On our rounds.....Phil Kenward

I recently attended the International Lameness Conference in Bristol. Approximately 50 different countries were represented at the conference and one topic came up time and time again.Digital Dermatitis (DD):



- Every country represented at the Conference has a DD problem
- There is a strong link with CODD (Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis) in sheep which gives rise to issues on mixed farms
- DD prevents healing of standard foot lesions
- DD has attraction to metal so stringent cleansing of foot knives is essential
- Bad foot baths are worse than no foot bath at all
- DD has been seen in calves as young as two months of age
- In the long term a vaccine may be available (now that **IS** one vaccine that we will all embrace).