

# FarmVets

S O U T H W E S T



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## Newsletter July 2013

### SCHMALLEMBERG VACCINE

#### What we know.....

In August 2011, the first cases of a new disease were reported in Germany in dairy cows. By the end of 2011 the disease was confirmed as Schmallenberg virus and midges were found to spread the virus. From 2012 onwards the disease has been seen in the UK and the majority of Western Europe.

Schmallenberg virus causes a drop in milk yield, diarrhoea, fever and a loss of appetite in adult cows. Clinical signs in sheep are generally not observed.

Once pregnant animals have been infected the foetus will also become infected. Depending on the time of infection, the virus will cause either abortion or severe congenital malformations. Schmallenberg is widespread across the practice area but without sampling it is impossible to know if your farm is affected. Even if your farm has had infections in the past, it is unlikely that all of your animals have been infected and have developed natural immunity against SBV.



#### What has happened since.....



Pharmaceutical company MSD have acted speedily and licensed a vaccine targeting Schmallenberg virus: **Bovilis@SBV**. In a very short time trials have been performed to try to evaluate safety and efficacy of the vaccine in sheep and cattle.

The vaccine is licensed to prevent viraemia in cattle and to reduce viraemia in sheep, in layman's terms this means it is meant to stop the virus from circulating in the bloodstream of the animal. It is very important to vaccinate animals before they get pregnant to achieve optimal protection. The vaccination is now available from all our branches. Please contact us if you require further information.

### Honiton Show Thursday 1st August 2013

Visit us at **STAND 132 AVENUE B** at Honiton Show for a chat and a bite to eat....let's hope there's a lot more sun and a lot less mud this year!



## Grass Silage and Milk Fever



Many people are eagerly waiting on first cut silage being ready because current silage stocks are dwindling (some may have already run out). Grass silage should be left to ferment for more than 6 weeks before feeding; 4-6 weeks is OK, but not ideal if an additive has been used. Potassium (potash) is the driver of milk fever in grass silage and it is high in first cut silage, particularly so in new lays following on from maize.

If your first cut silage is to be fed to dry cows it is an absolute “must-do” to get it tested for minerals, specifically potassium. This year it will be especially important because the feeds we use to dilute the milk fever effects of grass silage (e.g. maize, whole-crop and straw) are in short supply. Generally, when feeding dry cows, it is better to feed big bale rather than second cut, and second cut rather than first cut. Older lays tend to have more invader grasses (e.g. meadow fescue and timothy) and these tend to have lower potassium levels than ryegrass. Two farms can both feed silage alone to dry cows yet have two vastly different levels of milk fever due to differing levels of potassium.

Please contact us for advice; we are able take silage samples ourselves. To see how silage should be sampled go to <http://www.faagroup.co.uk/Video.html>. We can also advise you on avoiding milk fever in grazing cows.

## On our rounds.....Eoghan McAlonan

### IBR Outbreak



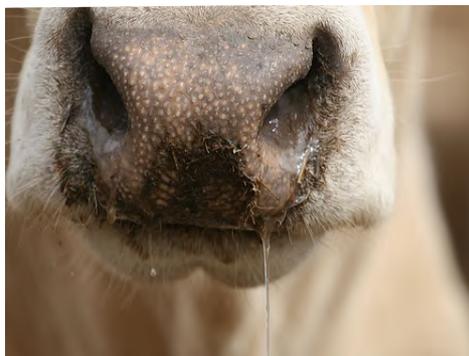
Recently we have been dealing with major outbreaks of IBR in unvaccinated herds across the practice. IBR (infectious bovine rhinotracheitis) causes severe respiratory problems in cattle of all ages. Common signs include high temperatures, laboured breathing, runny eyes, abortions and in dairy cows; milk drop. Losses can be massive and despite aggressive treatments death can ensue.

#### What can you do about it?

Speak to any of the vets about how best to protect your herd. Essentially any unvaccinated herd (both suckler and dairy) is at risk, although the relative risk for a truly closed herd with effective biosecurity can be less.

#### Already vaccinating?

Remember the duration of protection afforded by the vaccine is only six months so please keep up to date with boosters.



## RINGVAC Manufacturing Delay

Due to a manufacturing problem RINGVAC will not be available until this September at the earliest. We apologise for this delay, which is beyond our control, and will let you know as soon as it is back in stock.