

FarmVets

S O U T H W E S T



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Newsletter May 2015

New TB Service Provider

From 1st May 2015 the company providing TB services across Somerset, Devon and Cornwall will be XL Farmcare Wessex and XL Farmcare Devon & Cornwall. XL Farmcare will use FarmVets SouthWest to carry out TB tests to our clients. The new TB system is set up to automatically default to the last vets who carried out your test and therefore assumed to be FarmVets SouthWest - so you do not have to do anything.



Unfortunately, in their wisdom, Defra have introduced a penalty schedule and now TB tests which are submitted late are subject to a fine. In order to avoid this fine, please ensure that your paperwork, ear tag numbers etc are all in order on the first day of the test as the results have to be submitted within 24 hours of reading.



DairyCo

Jay Tunstall



Having just returned from the Cattle Lameness Conference, there were a couple of really important points that came out of it.

1. Lamé cows, even the more mild cases, tend to get feeding problems, fertility problems, a reduced yield and are at an increased risk of future lameness. High yielders are most prone to becoming lame. When the lameness causes a reduction in milk, the yield can remain within a normal range for the herd. So whilst we think she's milking okay, her yield is significantly below its potential.
2. Lamé cows cost time and money. Not only the direct costs of drugs, time and trimming, but also indirect health and disease costs (e.g. a cow with a sole ulcer will cost you on average £519 to resolve the problem).
3. We can all do more. Prevention is key, and so in our bid to help, I've spent a few days away with DairyCo, training to qualify as a Mobility Mentor, so I can deliver the DairyCo Healthy Feet Programme – get in touch for more info, and keep an eye out for next month's newsletter. Many of you have had your herds Mobility Scored by us and I'll also be looking at some of the data to identify areas where we can help reduce lameness on your farm.

Huskvac Reminder

2014 was a particularly bad year for lungworm and many of you may be considering preventative measures for the warmer months. Early clinical signs include pneumonia like symptoms and frequent coughing, but a burden on your farm could also be significantly affecting your growth rates. Lungworm prevention centres on the development of immunity. Whilst older cattle should have developed a natural immunity through exposure during grazing, first season grazers can only effectively achieve this through vaccination. For sufficient immunity two doses are required four weeks apart, with the second dose being given at least two weeks before turnout - so doses must be ordered as soon as possible.

Are you Sitting on a Johne's Time Bomb? Graeme Martin

Recently I have come across a considerable number of clinical cases of Johne's disease, leading me to consider if we are doing enough to keep this disease at bay. Johne's can be a frustrating disease to monitor because of false negative results and only being able to test adult animals. Despite this, it is definitely worth looking into for a number of reasons.

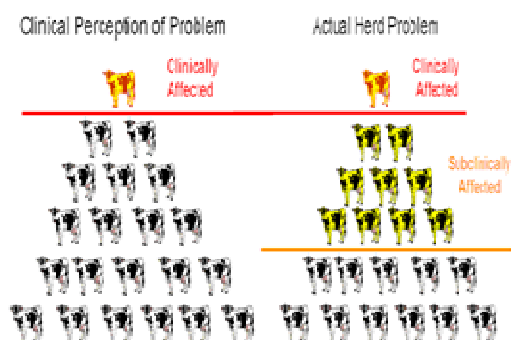
The economic impact of Johne's disease on your herd:

Even though animals only develop clinical disease at the age of 2 years or more, Johne's can still affect them sub-clinically in early life. This can be seen by the research carried out by NMR - at first calving, Johne's positive animals were, on average, 3 months older than their Johne's negative counterparts. They also had longer calving to conception rates (150 days) than Johne's negative cows (119 days). The research also showed that Johne's positive cows gave, on average, 4000kg less milk in their lifetime; with a dramatic comparative reduction in yield in the third lactation.

Johne's positive cows are five times more likely to develop lameness problems, twice as likely to have issues with high SCC/clinical mastitis and almost twice as likely to develop respiratory and/or digestive disease. Overall Johne's positive cows have a lifetime daily yield 3kg/day lower than Johne's negative cows. This is a considerable loss, which doesn't even account for treatment of the clinical diseases these animals will develop secondary to Johne's disease.

Johne's disease is a time bomb:

Since 2006, the VLA have found over 3,000 confirmed cases of Johne's every year. The trend is fairly constant with a slight increase in recent years with many more animals with Johne's, which either died or weren't sampled to confirm a diagnosis. NMR estimate that Johne's disease is present in 60-70% of UK dairy herds. If your herd is in this bracket then you are sitting on a ticking time bomb, especially if you have ever had a confirmed clinical case. This is because of the "iceberg phenomenon".



For every clinically affected cow, a number of animals will be sub-clinically affected - not showing signs of Johne's but shedding the infection to other animals in the herd. Eventually these sub-clinical animals will develop clinical Johne's. The number of sub-clinical animals will have increased, causing further herd-wide infection and creating a bigger and bigger issue. The sooner we start to monitor for this disease, the sooner we can begin to reduce the level of exposure within the herd.

Finding and getting rid of positive animals is the best course of action:

Even though a cow which tests positive for Johne's may not seem clinically ill, the best course of action is to get these animals out of the herd. This is because these animals are a source of infection to others in the herd, they are more prone to developing other problems, they will be less productive than a healthy cow and they will eventually develop clinical disease and end up being a considerable cost to the farm. Early removal of positive animals will, on average, save the farm £840 per confirmed case (see table for breakdown).

Early Identification and Removal	
Cull Value	+700
Replacement	-1500
Net Cost	£800
Removal of Johne's Casualty	
Carcase Removal	-140
Replacement	-1500
Net Cost	£1640

Public awareness of Johne's is on the increase and the alleged link with Crohn's disease in humans will eventually lead to an increase in the demand for Johne's free dairy herds. Initiating a monitoring programme is relatively simple, especially if you milk record, and we at FarmVets will be on hand throughout the whole process to offer interpretation and advice on the best way to manage the results we find. For further information please call any of the offices.



May Bank Holiday Opening Hours



Our offices will be shut on Bank Holiday Monday 4th & 25th May.
Drugs can be collected from our Sedgemoor Office *by appointment only*.