

## Upcoming Events

- **Beef Suckler Farmers** - Hopefully you've all received your invites to our upcoming farm walk to be held at Bridge Farm, Handforth by kind permission of C.W. Shenton. It's happening on **May 8th at 7:30pm** and will include talks on Trace Elements, Fertility and BVD. Please ring the office to book your place; we look forward to seeing you there.
- **The Beef Expo is happening on May 18th this year The NAEC, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire.** If you would like a lift to this event please contact the office as we have some spaces available. XL Vets will have a stand on the day, so if you are there do pop over to say hello.

## Product Focus... Rehydion Gel

Rehydion gel can be a useful product to aid with the recovery of young calves from an episode of diarrhoea. It is a soluble mineral and electrolyte gel which can be added to milk or water and is highly palatable. It can be particularly useful in aiding the transfer of recovering calves from electrolyte solutions back onto milk feeding as it allows you to still provide additional electrolytes. Rehydion gel is only licensed for use in calves; however some people have used it successfully in scouring lambs. For more information please contact any of the vets.

## Sudden Deaths in Lambs

It's that time of year again when unfortunately we always see a few flocks experiencing cases of sudden death in young lambs. There are a number of diseases that can present in this way including worms, coccidiosis and clostridial diseases. Of



particular concern is the gutworm *Nematodirus*, with this area currently classed as moderate to high risk on the SCOPS parasite forecast. Postmortem examination is the quickest & most effective way to reach a diagnosis if you are experiencing losses and will allow you to target your treatment at the exact cause of the problem.

## Drenching Lambs

In May and June 2016 the SAC reported 3 cases of multiple deaths in six-eight week old lambs following handling for multiple management tasks including vaccinations, tagging, worming and administration of mineral drenches. Investigations found that the lambs had died as a result of inhalation of copper.

Careful and patient technique really are essential when orally dosing sheep, but even more so when multiple tasks are being carried out on young lambs.

## BVD FREE

The BVD free England campaign continues to gather momentum and we would encourage everyone to support it and to work towards the eradication of BVD from their herd. Last week's workshop for Co-op producers was a great success and we look forward to hosting more workshops for both dairy and beef clients over the coming months.

A key message is that knowing your herd's BVD status is critical- the simplest way to begin assessing this is through blood samples taken from 5-10 calves aged 9-18 months. This can easily be carried out during TB testing or other routine visits. For more information about BVD eradication visit <https://bvdfree.org.uk/> or speak to any of the farm vets.

## Foot Trimmers Update

As more and more cows have been turned out Bryan has been kept busy making sure their feet are fit for the longer walk to pasture. Remember that white line disease can be caused by stones found on rough tracks. This is particularly the case if cows are rushed and not able to pick their own path so take your time bringing them up for milking! Bryan offers a comprehensive foot trimming service and can be booked via the Hollytree Office.

## Worm Control in Sheep

In the past, we have relied on the repeated use of anthelmintic wormers to control burdens in our sheep. However, with anthelmintic resistance increasing, we need to target treatments at the animals and groups which need it most.

Worms in Refugia are those worms not exposed to wormers – typically on the pasture and in untreated sheep – usually adult ewes. These worms can in-fact reduce the development of wormer resistance by diluting the resistant worms on ground. Adult ewes develop immunity to tolerate low levels of worms with no effects, ingesting worms off pasture and killing them off. As a result, we generally recommend that healthy adult ewes are only wormed in the spring, around lambing. Where adults do need to be wormed, a targeted approach is best, worming those showing signs such as scouring, or those which are thinnest. Any worms remaining post-treatment will be diluted by the untreated population.

Similarly, in lambs, treating only the poorest or scouring will reduce development of resistance, and allow the lambs to develop their own immunity. The exception to this rule is for prevention of Nematodirus. This worm kills lambs before any mucky backsides or poor condition is seen. We therefore recommend a wormer treatment based on the Nematodirus forecast published by SCOPS. (Found at [www.SCOPS.org.uk/nematodirus-forecast](http://www.SCOPS.org.uk/nematodirus-forecast))

If you feel that blanket treatment may be needed, lamb worm egg counts (WECs) can indicate if that is the case. A fresh pooled sample from a few lambs is all we need and we do these in house at Holly Tree. Results are usually returned within 1-2 working days, with advice about the best options. Costing only £10 + VAT per sample, it's a cheap way to monitor worm burden. Based on results we decide how regularly samples should be tested. It also allows us to check that the wormer is working, by testing before and after treatment. Speak to one of the vets if you would like to check your wormers effectiveness.



Some of you will be familiar with products like Zolvix and Startect, the newest classes of wormers. Zolvix has recently been removed as a prescription only product, meaning it can be bought in the same manner as the other wormers. Whilst it will form part of a good worm control plan, we would like to stress the importance of preserving this wormer's effectiveness. This product should not be used as a routine wormer, but as a part of a farm specific worm control plan. Please discuss use of this product with one of the vets so we can be sure it will work at it's best for you, and to prevent development of resistance.

## Coccidiosis Update... Calves

Of the twelve species of coccidia recognised in calves only three are known to cause disease. The commonest of these are Eimeria bovis and E. zuernii which frequently lead to diarrhoea in young housed calves. However, at this time of year we also see outbreaks caused by E. alabamensis. This species is rarely found in housed calves but can survive for long periods of time on pasture.

Immunity to coccidiosis is specific to the species of coccidia calves have been exposed to meaning that animals being turned out for the first time are unlikely to have any immunity to E. alabamensis. Infection leads to severe watery diarrhoea often within 1-2 weeks of turnout, animals lose condition rapidly and although deaths are rare weight loss is rapid and calves can take a long time to regain condition. Make sure that you watch your calves closely after turnout and if you have any concerns please speak to any of the vets.



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