



Wright & Morten Farm Newsletter

www.wmvets.co.uk

January 2018

Wright & Morten would like to wish all of our clients a very Happy New Year, we look forward to continuing to work with you all in 2018.



Itchy cattle...

We always see a peak in outbreaks of skin disease in cattle throughout the winter months. It is worth bearing in mind that there are a wide range of causes of this including five different species of lice, three species of mites and ringworm. Whilst some cattle will develop characteristic lesions making diagnosis easy there are other cases where lesions caused by different diseases can look very similar. If you unsure as to what is causing skin disease in your cattle then please ring the surgery and speak to any of the farm vets.

How cow behaviour and handling can influence lameness on farm

There are numerous factors that can contribute to lameness on farm. Here we look at some that may seem obvious but are worth thinking about.

Pushing cattle too hard along tracks or into the collecting yard can lead to an increase in lameness caused by white line disease. It is easy to tell if cows are being pushed too hard as they will all have their heads up in the air. They may also bunch at the back to avoid pushing past a cow of higher dominance. In contrast a cow allowed to walk at her own pace will look where to place her front feet and her back feet will land in the same place.

If a cow stands on a sharp object with a front foot she instinctively throws her head up to shift weight off of the foot. She cannot do this if she already has her head up. If a cow stands on a sharp object with her back foot she instinctively lowers her head to shift her weight forward off the foot. Again if her head is up and she is crammed up to the next cow she cannot do this.

Spooking cows is also a recipe for disaster. Apart from slipping and possibly doing the splits, when cows "scrabble" on concrete it causes a lot of shearing forces on the foot which can lead to white line lesions.

National Johnes Management Plan. What does it mean to me?

We will be hosting an evening meeting for all dairy farmers on **January 17th at 7pm at Macclesfield Rugby Club**. The meeting will introduce the National Johnes Management Plan and provide you with the information you need to be able to implement it on your farm. **To book your place please contact the office on 08548 330034 by Monday January 15th.**

Lambing courses 2018

Matt and Jennie will be running our 2018 lambing courses on **Wednesday 7th February & Wednesday 21st February at Holly Tree Farm.**

The course is packed with handy tips including preparation for lambing, practical lambing skills and care of the newborn lamb. The course runs from 10:30am to 2:30pm and costs £65 (excluding VAT) per person.

For more information or to book a place please contact the office on 08548 330034 and ask for Vicky.



Wright & Morten Calendar 2018

Thankyou to everyone who entered the Wright & Morten 2018 Calendar Competition. We were overwhelmed by the quality of the many photographs we received and had a hard time picking our final twelve. **Our winner was chosen by John Yarwood and David Morten and features on March 2018.** This beautiful photograph was submitted by Tatton Park- congratulations to them! If you haven't yet received your 2018 calendar then they can be collected from Holly Tree or please mention it when booking a visit so that the vet can bring a copy with them.



Have you heard about the National Johne's Management Plan (NJMP)?



From 31st October 2018 all milk producers in the UK must have an official Johnes control strategy in place to be able to sell milk. Your milk buyer will be

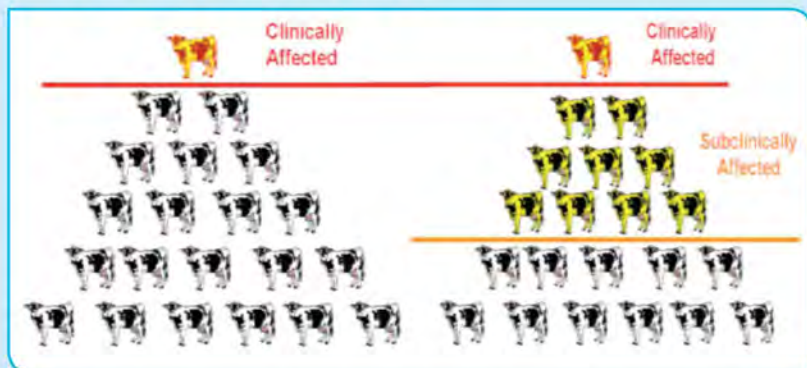
informing you of this soon - it is enforced by them. This is happening because there is some evidence of a link between Mycobacterium avium subspecies paratuberculosis (MAP - the bacteria that causes Johne's Disease) and Crohne's disease in people. The industry need to make efforts to reduce the risk to people through milk and it needs to be seen to be doing this. From November 2019 information will be made public about which milk buyers are selling 'Johne's-controlled' milk, for this reason it is likely that all milk buyers will be enforcing this.

What you need to do

By 1st October 2018 you need to:

1. Be monitoring Johne's Disease in your herd - this is done through milk samples.
2. Complete a risk assessment to establish your herd risk - this is done by completing a questionnaire with your vet on-farm.
3. Be assigned an official Johnes control strategy that is appropriate to your farm.
4. Send a signed veterinary declaration to your milk buyer that all the above is complete.
5. (This process is to be repeated annually.)

The benefits of Johnes Control



More is being discovered about the subclinical effects of Johne's all the time. It is well understood that infection causes immunosuppression (more mastitis, whites, etc.) and infertility long before the disease becomes visible. It is called an 'iceberg' disease - clinical Johnes cases being the tip of the iceberg with around 20x the number of animals incubating the infection sub-clinically.

Reducing Johnes revolves around reducing exposure in young calves. We believe animals can only become infected in the first 6 months of life - nearly always within the first few weeks. Reducing levels of Johne's is mainly achieved by managing high-risk cows and their calving environment and not pooling colostrum. Improved calf health is often the first observed improvement once a control plan is in place.

It takes years to reduce levels of Johne's in a herd as infected animals don't normally test positive until 2-5 years of age. For this reason the success of control plans need to be monitored annually and we aim for a reduction in levels over a period of 3-5 years.

Currently we are aiming to control the disease - not eradicate it.



Monitoring

It is estimated that up to 1/3rd of UK dairy farms are free of Johne's disease but this will vary based on region. Even herds currently monitoring for Johnes on milk samples need an official control plan and declaration. These herds will already know their herd Johnes level.

For herds of unknown status - you will need to conduct a 30-cow screen for Johnes - your farm vet will tell you how to do this. You can collect the samples yourself or we can get vet techs to do this for you. The results from this will dictate what you need to do next.

As an absolute minimum all herds will have to do a 30-cow screen twice a year - **even if Johnes is absent from your herd or you are operating a flying herd!**

Please contact your farm vet or the farm office on 08458 330034 to arrange sampling and risk assessments or with any other queries about the NJMP.

All of the Wright & Morten farm vets are registered Johnes advisors.



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