

Farm Newsletter

August 2009

What a difference a month makes! I was planning to write a newsletter at the end of June about diseases associated with the unusually warm weather. However July brought me back to reality with a jolt and sadly we don't have to worry this month about problems with overheating!

Despite the doom and gloom in the global economy the practice has been busy lately with a huge variety of work and some interesting cases. We thank all our customers for your continued support. We have been particularly pleased to have an increase in the number of clients joining the practice so welcome to all of you.

Staff news

David Craig our new vet has settled in well and he will already be familiar to some of you. David is very hard working and enthusiastic and has been a great asset to the practice this spring. Our other new member of the team, Lydia, our nurse, stud groom and part time receptionist, has also been working exceptionally hard keeping the yard running smoothly and caring for our visiting mares for stud and inpatients. Good luck to Lydia, who is getting married to James in September. It seems wedding bells are in the air this year so congratulations also to our South African vet Mark who is getting married in September to Susan, we wish them all the best of luck.

Linda continues to manage the reception and office with her usual cheerful calm efficiency, and all the rest of the practice are really grateful for the work she does, thank you.

Bluetongue Vaccination

Just when you thought you could relax bluetongue vaccination is still ongoing. Despite some muttering in the press about delaying vaccination until the winter, most of you will already be aware that all youngstock will have to be vaccinated against bluetongue virus before they reach 6 months of age. We are fully aware that this will pose difficulties for some farms but we will try and give as much help and support as we can.

There are a number of different vaccines on the market. Not surprisingly there has been an oversupply of the 100 dose bottles of subsidised vaccine from Merial. This has resulted in a price drop so now these are slightly cheaper than some unsubsidised 50 dose bottles! However the Merial vaccine can only be used in calves and lambs over 2 ½ months of age. There is a vaccine from Intervet which is available in 20 and 50 dose bottles which can be used in animals from one month of age. This may be much more convenient where there is a wide age range of stock or you need to move animals early. Also Fort Dodge have brought out a new sheep only vaccine! This is all quite confusing so I have summarised it in the table below. A 10% discount is still available if you pay on order or collection of vaccine and the

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administration fee no longer applies. The price varies between 40p and £1.00 per dose depending on the product and pack size. Cattle need 2 doses for the initial course.

Vaccine name	Manufacturer	Minimum age stock can be vaccinated at	Number of doses per bottle	10% discount Price per bottle
BOVILIS BTV8 20ML	Intervet SP	1 month	20	£18.10
BOVILIS BTV8 50ML	Intervet SP	1 month	50	£41.50
BTV PUR 8 50ML	Merial	2 ½ months	50	£38.83
BTV PUR 8 100ML	Merial	2 ½ months	100	£40.68
ZULVAC 8 BOVIS (Cattle only)	Fort Dodge	2 ½ months	10	£10.00
ZULVAC 8 BOVIS (Cattle only)	Fort Dodge	2 ½ months	50	£34.00
ZULVAC 8 OVIS (Sheep only)	Fort Dodge	2 ½ months	50	£22.60
ZULVAC 8 OVIS (Sheep only)	Fort Dodge	2 ½ months	120	£47.98

Sheep Vaccinations

On the subject of vaccination we had problems in a few flocks this year with Enzootic abortion. This is caused by an organism called Chlamydia and typically results in the birth of still born lambs a week or two premature and the placenta is often leathery. There are vaccines available which are very effective at preventing outbreaks. Vaccination should be done before the ewes go to the ram so think about this now!

With the price of sheep still being reasonable any losses are expensive. If you are losing a few ewes every winter with no apparent cause and some young healthy looking lambs, you may have a problem with clostridial diseases or pasturella. In vaccinated flocks a booster is usually given to ewes before lambing. In unvaccinated flocks now is also a good time to start so you can complete the two dose course before tugging.

Lung Worm becoming more prevalent

We never used to see clinical cases of lungworm, but over the last few years we have seen several cases each year typically in second season and older grazing cattle. Sadly by the time we see them the parasite damage is so extensive that many animals do not respond to treatment. However the rest of the group can be treated effectively. As with many other diseases prevention is better than cure. There is a vaccine called Dictol available which gives good immunity. The other important step is to worm grazing cattle at the first signs of coughing in a group to ensure the problem does not become serious. Contact any of the vets here for further advice.

Drugs availability

The practice now has to be registered to dispense and supply all medicines. We have just had an inspection from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate and happily passed it. One of the things we have to do is to use all medicines within 28 days of opening a bottle. This can present all sorts of practical problems, particularly when getting to the end of a particular treatment season. In future when we treat an individual animal we may have to supply bottles of drugs where these can be used on farm, rather than supplying one treatment dose at a time. We also cannot keep as large a range of products as we used to. If you want a particular product for your stock please order in advance.