

Farm Animal Practice Newsletter:

Commercial clients edition—Summer 2011

Welcome to the Summer edition of our newsletter. This is the first edition designed specifically for our commercial clients with the aim to look in more depth at relevant topical issues. We look forward to hearing your feedback.

We've put together a wide range of topics that we think will interest you. We welcome Ian Glover to the practice from the middle August, who will be taking over John's role. He will be bringing his broad experience and enthusiasm for farm work to the table as we continue to develop the range of excellent quality services on offer from the practice. Margit provides you with an update on mobility scoring and David discusses the first of a series of three articles looking at the importance of uterine infections after calving.

Providing excellent and competitive veterinary service is what Langford Farm Animal Practice is about. To this end we have recently reviewed reduced many of our medicines prices, through negotiating better discounts from our suppliers

There's an update on the recent changes regarding bluetongue and Sarah discusses the current results of an investigation into the cause of Bleeding calf syndrome. Finally, in this packed issue, we say good bye to John, who has headed North to work at Nottingham University.

Meet Ian!

Ian Glover will be joining the practice from July. We hope to get him out to meet you all as soon as possible.

Ian qualified here at Langford in 2004 and began his career as a farm vet in rural mid-Devon, where he stayed until 2010. He then worked for a year as a dairy vet in Cheshire, picking up some valuable extra experience.

He enjoys all aspects of being a farm vet, but is especially interested in the health of beef and dairy herds. In his spare time he enjoys being outdoors walking or running, and devotes much of his time off to his wife and two dogs.

Next meeting ...

Respiratory disease in calves
Wednesday 28th September, 7pm
At Langford Farm Animal Practice

TB reactors DNA tags

From the May on, when a reactor has been identified on farm during a tb test, we will have to ear tag this animal. With the ear tag, a punch of the ear will be taken that DEFRA can then use to DNA test if required. This is put in place after people were found changing ear tags around in order to get compensation for more valuable animals.

It should not be much hassle to do this during a test but it will require (as always) good handling facilities on the second day!

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Uterine Infections in Dairy Cattle – Part 1 Background and Importance

Welcome to the first article in a three part series looking at the causes of uterine infections in cattle. The aim of the first is to understand the background to these diseases and the main differences between endometritis and metritis.

When cattle calve the reproductive tract will invariably be contaminated by bacteria from the cow's environment. In fact this is something that the uterus has very well developed mechanisms to deal with. Part of the normal reproductive function of the uterus in the immediate few days after calving is to clear up bacterial contamination, as part of a process known as uterine involution. A rapid return to normal the normal oestrus cycle is also key, with cows bulling for the first time at around two weeks after they calve.

When this goes wrong and a cow ends up with a uterine infection, then there is a significant cost associated with the disease, in terms of treatment and a poorer pregnancy rate leading to increased numbers

of services, a prolonged calving interval and an increased risk of culling. The average cost of endometritis has been estimated at **£165 per cow**.

The important question then, is why some cattle end up with uterine infections like metritis and endometritis, while others do not.

It useful to think about the risks for these conditions in three main groups. These risk factors will be discussed in more depth in over the coming articles.

Reduced immunity

Factors that suppress a cow's immune system around the time of calving will mean that she is unable to deal with a normal level of bacterial contamination.

Increased uterine contamination

If the level of bacterial challenge is increased, then even cattle that have good immune function may succumb.

Delayed uterine involution and return to cyclicity

If the uterus fails to involute normally after calving or the oestrus cycle does not resume, then bacteria will persist within the uterus and infections are more likely to establish.

Categories	Metritis	Endometritis (whites)
Timing	Occurs in the first 10 days in milk	Occurs after 21 days in milk
Clinical Signs	Red/brown, watery, foul-smelling vaginal discharge in a cow that may be systemically unwell (high temperature, off-feed, dull, depressed, milk drop etc)	White pus discharging from the vagina with variable quantities of mucus. The cow will be systemically well .
Which part of the uterus is affected?	All of the layers of the uterus are affected.	Only the lining of the uterus, the endometrium, is involved.
What sorts of bacteria are involved?	Toxin releasing bacteria are present, leading to the signs of systemic illness.	No toxin releasing bacteria are present.
How should it be treated?	Systemic Antibiotics, Anti-inflammatories and oral fluids in consultation with your vet.	Local antibiotics or Prostaglandins (the decision on which is most appropriate will need to be made by your vet).
Complications	Abomasal displacements (e.g. LDA) are strongly associated with metritis. Cows with metritis are more likely to develop endometritis.	Reduced pregnancy rate, increased services per conception, prolonged calving interval and greater chance of culling.

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Mobility scoring in dairy cattle, why do it?

Carrying out mobility scoring on a regular basis can be seen as a time consuming business and many farmers do not want to spend an afternoon watching their cows walk, when they see them walk every day.

Why do we recommend scoring then and how should the results be used?

When mobility scoring is carried out at regular intervals, say two weekly or monthly, progress of individual animals can be tracked. This will enable the farmer to pick out animals that have gotten lame for the first time or animals that have been treated and where the lameness reoccurs or the treatment isn't as satisfying as they would have liked. Doing the mobility scoring during milking gives the farmer a chance to assess every animal individually, forcing him to make a decision whether or not that animal is lame. When watching to the cows walking as you go around the yard doing other jobs or as they are going to the field makes it easy to miss lame animals or forget which one you thought was lame. It also gets very easy to underestimate the amount of time an animal has been lame for. When mobility scoring is carried out at set days during milking, good records can be set up in order to prevent animals slipping the net.

What information can mobility scoring offer you?





- Identify changes in each individual animal
- Pick out newly lame animals, requiring treatment
- Treat lesions while they are small and easy to cure
- Monitor response to lameness treatment

How may early identification and treatment help?

It is becoming clearer now that early treatment of lame cows will prevent those animals from getting worse lesions. It is far easier, quicker and welfare friendlier for the cow to trim a claw that just has a

small bruising than it is to trim sole or wall ulcers. Bruising will also heal a lot quicker than ulcerations will. We therefore would recommend to trim every animal that is found to be newly lame after the mobility scores. This might mean that lesions found on the feet will look very minor! This is a good thing; remember that what looks like a bruise now could easily be a sole ulcer in 4 weeks time. Often, nothing more than a routine trim is needed, making it a very quick job to treat an animal.

To make the mobility scores even more effective, scoring should ideally be done by someone who does not see the cows every day. To find out how the scoring system works, contact the practice for more information!

<p>Score 0 Walks with even weight bearing and rhythm on all four feet, with a flat back. Long, fluid strides possible.</p>	
<p>Score 1 Steps uneven or strides shortened; affected limb is not immediately identifiable.</p>	
<p>Score 2 Uneven weight bearing on a limb that is immediately identifiable, or strides obviously shortened, also often have an arched back.</p>	
<p>Score 3 Unable to walk as fast as a brisk human pace, and signs of score 2.</p>	

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Practice update...

Bluetongue

As of the 1st July 2011 the UK has taken on Bluetongue free status. This means we are clear of the disease but are also not vaccinating. Hence the vaccines will become unavailable, unless you have started the first part of the vaccination course and are due the second dose after the 1st of July.



Changes to Medicines Pricing

As part of our drive to continue to provide you with an excellent value farm animal veterinary service, we have recently reviewed our medicines pricing, and negotiated a number of discounts of our suppliers which we will be passing on to you directly. Give the practice a call if you are interested in seeing the current price list.

Bleeding calf syndrome— control study completed

We have previously reported on Bovine Neonatal Pancytopenia (BNP) also known as "Bleeding calf syndrome" which was a new, rare but fatal syndrome that had been reported in the UK. Some of our farms had cases, normally with just 1 calf affected.



DEFRA have now completed a study into the factors that may have initiated this syndrome. Calves seemed to be affected whilst in the uterus, it is not an infectious disease. Signs were then seen soon after birth, these included bleeding through the skin, often noticed when tagging or when injected.

The study highlighted some factors to be risks for the disease. In particular they found calves to be 10 times more likely to develop the disease if their mother had been vaccinated using PregSure BVD vaccine. However it should be noted that the vast majority of calves born to vaccinated mothers were healthy. Other factors increasing the risk of disease include farms also keeping sheep, and farms where calves are reared inside.

PregSure BVD vaccine has been withdrawn voluntarily from the market, and Pfizer have written to those using the vaccine with further advice. If you are concerned please feel free to talk to us further about the disease. More information can be found on the DEFRA website.



For more articles and advice on common issues please visit our website
www.langfordvets.co.uk/farm_animal_practice.htm