

Farm Animal Practice Newsletter: June 2010

As we approach the end of May it looks like spring has finally arrived: there is some good quality grass silage being made at the moment. In the practice we are keeping busy too (including a new look for the newsletter!): this month we meet a new member of staff, introduce our summer sale and get an update on tapeworm cysts in sheep. As always, there are also a number of forthcoming events to look forward to!



New member of permanent staff

As part of our vision to have more long-term staff in order to provide better continuity for our clients, we've been looking for a new permanent clinician and have now been joined by John Remnant. John says: "After qualifying from Bristol in 2008, I've spent the last two years working in a mixed practice in my hometown of Liskeard in Cornwall. I've now decided to concentrate on farm work— I passionately believe vets can make a big difference to welfare and profitability on farms. In my spare time I enjoy power-kiting and photography. I look forward to meeting you all over the coming months."

Dates for your diary

- **Foot Trimming Course:** On **28th/29th July** we will be running a two-day course on foot-trimming and lameness in cattle. As the course involves practical training, numbers are limited so call the practice to book your place now!
- **Farming Essentials series:** Further courses in this series will be running through the summer, including courses on sheep and goat husbandry, lameness control in sheep and lambing. Look out for course dates nearer the time.



Product news

There is currently an interruption to the supply of Metricure (an intrauterine antibiotic used for treatment of endometritis in cattle) in the UK. A number of alternative treatment strategies can be used for endometritis—while Metricure is not available we will discuss these with you on a case-by-case basis. As soon as the supply issue is resolved, we'll make sure we're at the front of the queue to get it back on the shelves!

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Foot trimming qualification award for Margit

Congratulations to our resident, Margit Groenevelt, who has recently been awarded the NPTC Level 2 cattle foot trimming qualification. It is rare for a vet to hold this qualification, and demonstrates Margit's interest in and commitment to treatment and prevention of cattle lameness.

Farm Health Planning

The benefits of having veterinary involvement in routine health planning are numerous and well documented (see box). Planning to prevent disease is much more cost-effective and welfare-friendly than responding to it when it happens, and we are in an ideal position to help you with this. Producers selling farm assured meat or milk should already have a herd/flock health plan and annual review process in place, but we can help significantly with this.

We are already actively involved with this process on lots of our farms, but this summer we are planning an initiative to get more of you onboard: we are offering a choice of incentives—choose from:

- 20% off time charges for time spent on farm health planning
- A free demonstration of a practical technique (e.g. foot trimming)
- Free bulk milk antibody testing package
(offer applies when you buy at least two hours of health planning time in July or August 2010)

DairyCo Mastitis Control Plan

Dairy farmers—mastitis is a major cost in many dairy herds. We can now offer the DairyCo Mastitis Control Plan—an evidence-based mastitis control strategy which led to an average 20% reduction in clinical mastitis in a large national trial. Call the practice for more details, or see www.mastitiscontrolplan.co.uk.

Health Planning Summer Sale! Choose from time discount or free extras!

Benefits of veterinary involvement in health planning

- Vets have the technical knowledge to control and prevent disease **and** plan for profitable production
- Easy and simple help to satisfy farm assurance requirements
- Make health planning a useful procedure, rather than seeing it as something you “have to do”
- We can make planning for a healthy business an active ongoing process, rather than producing a massive document that you never read!

Tapeworm and sheep

Condemned sheep livers: fluke or tapeworms?

Over the last couple of years, more and more sheep livers are being condemned at slaughter. The reason for this is not always liver fluke — tapeworms also cause a significant number of rejections. The lesions causing the livers to be condemned are small cysts, formed by a life stage of the dog tapeworm, *Taenia hydatigena*. Sometimes even whole carcasses can be condemned because of infection with cysts from another dog tapeworm, *Taenia ovis*. The cysts themselves are not pathogenic to the sheep and, most importantly, are not treatable once they are established. Prevention of this problem relies on reducing the exposure of sheep to infected dog faeces.

Dogs (or other canine wildlife like foxes) get infected when they eat raw, infected carcasses in the fields. They then take in these cysts, which develop further in their intestines. The infectious eggs are then dropped on the grass with their faeces and new sheep can get infected.

To prevent your own dogs spreading the tapeworms, they need to be wormed regularly (every 3-4 months with a wormer containing praziquantel) and they should not be able to eat any waste meat from dead ewes, lambs or other sheep derived raw meat. Worming of foxes is unfortunately not feasible, but removing dead animals and waste from fields as quickly as possible can at least bring down the risk of the foxes getting infected and spreading the disease.

The practice stocks Drontal dog wormers—these are licensed for treatment of tapeworm to prevent these problems. Ask us for more information!

Lifecycle of *Taenia ovis* (tapeworm)

