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DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

ANTIBIOTIC GUARDIANS

We are very proud to announce that North Park won the “Animal Health, Agriculture and Food Supply” category at the Antibiotic Guardian Awards for our work in reducing the usage of Spectam in new-born lambs and for benchmarking the overall usage of antibiotics in sheep at the “population corrected unit” level. Awards were given across several categories, predominately for human medicine, and entries were submitted from across the world, including from “big pharma” company Pfizer.



Judges commended our work “for demonstrating a clear impact on reducing prophylactic use of antibiotics in lambs, with potential to replicate these actions at other sheep veterinary practices across the country”.

This would not have been possible without the engagement of all our sheep farmers and their willingness to make huge and often scary changes to their usual practices - well done everybody!

“FARMING IS CHANGING”

DEFRA has published their complete (66 page) Agricultural Transition Plan for 2021-2024, together with a lighter summary version. These can both be found online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-transition-plan-2021-to-2024>

These are incredibly important documents that set out the future of UK agriculture. In summary:

- Direct Payments will reduce from 2021, before being completely phased out
- From 2024 Direct Payments will be delinked from land area
- Incentives will be introduced for enhanced environmental management and sustainability (to move towards “net zero” carbon emissions)
- Aim to enhance animal health, welfare and productivity.
 - Including understanding antibiotic usage, reducing this usage where appropriate and “applying learning from case-studies on communications for change”. We are in a strong position at North Park to lead on this – the Antibiotic Guardian Award is very timely indeed.
 - Disease eradication schemes to be partly funded for cattle and sheep – similar to the BVD scheme that we have had success delivering



LAMBING TIME IS APPROACHING!

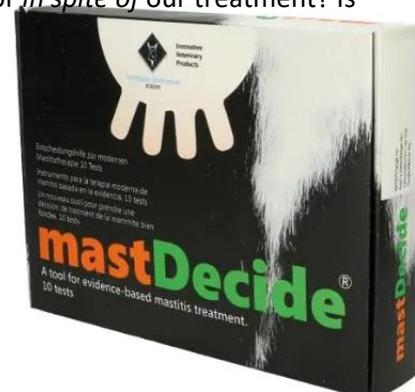
Some of you will start lambing in the next few weeks, so now is the time to make sure you are stocked up before the Christmas opening hours. If you have a bulk order please give us **24 hours notice** to prepare it for you.

MASTITIS – TARGETED TREATMENT FOR DAIRY COWS

Mastitis is **painful** and it is **costly** in terms of treatment, reduced yields, increased waste milk due to withdrawal periods, and increased culling. The **greatest use of antibiotics in dairy cows goes on mastitis treatment**, so there are concerns regarding antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and also public perception. The current position is to blanket treat all cows with mastitis (regardless of severity) with antibiotic tubes BUT is this necessary? Do they need it? Do they get better *because* of our treatment or *in spite of* our treatment? Is there a better way?

Well, yes (with some caveats*)! **Targeted treatment – only giving some cases of mastitis an antibiotic tube** – has been shown to:

- **More than HALVE antibiotic usage WITHOUT negatively impacting upon cure rates, SCC or yield, whilst reducing milk withdrawal times by 3 days on average and saving €40/case** (Mansion de Vries et al., 2016).
- Reduce the risk of bulk tank failure
- Improve public perception and reduced the risk of AMR



“How do I target treat?” I hear you ask. With **mastDecide** – an on-farm test to differentiate gram-negative bacteria (e.g. E. coli) from gram-positive bacteria (e.g. Strep uberis and Staph aureus). In mild or moderate cases of mastitis (milk or udder changes only, where the cow is not sick), gram-negative bacteria have a high self-cure rate and do not necessarily require or justify antimicrobials, whereas gram-positive bacteria always require antibiotics. In the event of a sick cow then she warrants antibiotics, together with non-steroidals (e.g. Metacam) and oral fluids, regardless of the type of bacteria causing the mastitis.

When a **mild or moderate case** of mastitis is detected the cow is **treated with a zero-day milk withdrawal non-steroidal** (e.g. Ketofen or Dinalgen) to aid cure rates. A **sterile milk sample** is collected and transferred into two vials containing pink fluid for the **on-farm test**. These are then put into an incubator for **12-14 hours**. **If both vials become colourless then antibiotic tubes are required**. We know that delaying antibiotic tubes by up to 24 hours (even if found to be required) does NOT affect cure rates, so there is no harm in waiting for the results.

THIN EWE PROJECT WITH STARCROSS

APHA – Starcross are offering free post mortem examinations and tests for OPA, Johnes, Maedi Visna and Border disease (plus anything else they find interesting such as PGE (worms), Fluke, dental disease etc). They require three typical poor conditioned ewes from the flock. Please speak to Jonathan or Elske for further information if you are interested.



FESTIVE PERIOD OPENING HOURS



Thursday 24th December – all branches closing at 15:30

Friday 25th & Monday 28th December – Closed

Thursday 31st December – all branches closing at 15:30

Friday 1st January – Closed

As always, 24-hour emergency cover is provided.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous and “more



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