Winner ANTIBIOTIC GUARDIAN AWARDS 2020

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BVD Free ENGLAND

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The calf scour vaccine BOVILIS ROTAVEC CORONA has made an update to its licence which now allows the vaccine to be kept **for up to 28 days after broaching the vial,** increasing from 8 hours. Rotavec Corona is given to pregnant cows 12-3 weeks prior to calving, with immunity against *E. coli*, rotavirus and coronavirus passed onto the calf via colostrum. The manufacturers MSD state that:

- Bovilis Rotavec Corona should be stored upright & refrigerated (2–8 °C) both before and after broaching.
- Broached vials will be able to be used **once more** during the next 28 days after the first vaccination event & then discarded.
- Use of excellent aseptic technique & a multi-dose applicator to minimise vaccine contamination & excessive broaching is recommended.

COPPER IN DAIRY COWS

Ruminants are notoriously poor at absorbing copper across the rumen (3-5% efficiency), with complicated interactions with iron and molybdenum further potentially binding up the copper available for absorption. For this reason, a recommended level of copper in a cow diet is 11-13mg/kg DM. However, a recent study into levels of copper in dairy cow diets on 50 dairy farms revealed that 40 farms (80%) were feeding levels above 20mg/kg and 10 herds (20%) were feeding copper levels above the legal EU limit of 34mg/kg DM. Calves are much more effective at absorbing copper due to the absence of an effective rumen, with about 70% of available copper being absorbed. Despite this, most calf powders contain 10mg/kg DM copper, and it is now thought that all calves on artificial milk powder have received copper supplementation vastly above requirements and well into the toxic range.

Signs of chronic copper toxicity are vague, including poor milk production, infertility, scour and generalised malaise. Eventually the liver becomes overloaded, resulting in liver failure, jaundice and death, but often the cows are lost to other diseases before this end stage is seen. Copper sources on farm are numerous including in TMR, concentrates, water supply as well as any boluses/licks used as routine on farm. All these sources must be considered when calculating copper intake of animals.

Diagnosis of copper toxicity is difficult, as the liver acts as a store for any excess copper, only releasing controlled levels into the blood stream. Levels in the blood will therefore only increase at end stage liver failure when the liver is no longer capable of storing the copper. Liver biopsies are the most accurate test, but as obtaining a sample can be a very invasive procedure, we would usually recommend cull cow liver biopsies are performed at the abattoir if you feel you have a problem.

As a practice we have dealt with one confirmed and one suspected case of herdwide copper toxicity this year, both farms had experienced significant losses in milk yield, fertility and on farm cow mortality. If you suspect you may have a problem please contact us.

REMINDER – Dairy meeting via zoom on Tuesday 12th January at 2pm to discuss the new on farm mastitis test **MastDecide –** a useful tool to help you decide whether a cow requires antibiotic tubes or not. The talk will last no more than 40 minutes (including questions). Please check your email inbox for the link – if you have not received a link and are interested in "attending" then please contact the practice.

PROTECT YOUR LAMBS – CLOSTRIDIAL & PASTEURELLA VACCINES

Clostridia are a type of bacteria, found in soil, which release toxins that are almost always **fatal**. Diseases include Pulpy Kidney, Black Leg, Blacks Disease, Tetanus and many others. Of main concern in lambs is **Pulpy Kidney** which causes sudden death and usually affects the best growing lambs. **Pasteurella** is another type of bacteria which typically causes **pneumonia**, but also **septicaemia** (blood poisoning). It is carried on nearly all sheep's tonsils, yet is the biggest killer of sheep; animals succumb to infection when stressed or if their immunity is compromised.

Lambs can be protected by **vaccinating ewes 4-6 weeks before lambing**. The ewe produces antibodies in response to vaccination which are passed to newborn lambs through **colostrum**. This is known as 'passive' protection and lasts until the lamb can itself be vaccinated from three weeks of age. There are many different vaccines available for these diseases – speak to any of the vets for more information as to which will be best for your farm.

EWE NUTRITION – GETTING READY FOR LAMBING

Ewes in late pregnancy have a significant increase in their energy requirements to cope with growing lambs, together with a physical reduction in dry matter intake (2% of bodyweight compared to 3% of bodyweight when milking). The table shows the energy requirements for a 70kg ewe at different stages of gestation and with different lamb numbers.

	Weeks pre-lambing							
	7		5		3		1	
Number of lambs	ME (MJ)	MP (g)	ME (MJ)	MP (g)	ME (MJ)	MP (g)	ME (MJ)	MP (g)
1	10.2	87	11.2	92	12.6	98	14.4	107
2	11.4	93	13.1	101	15.3	112	18.3	126
3	12.0	96	14.0	106	16.7	119	20.3	136

It is important to have your forages analysed ahead of feeding. Each year we see several cases of twin lamb disease, weak/still born lambs and poor performance. This often results from feeding conserved forages that were assumed to be good but were actually very poor. **Without analysing you do not know what you are feeding!** If you have good forage then you can reduce concentrate feeding (and therefore cost) whilst knowing if you have poor forage will allow you to address this and minimise any problems.

It is crucial to **MAXIMISE dry matter intake.** Trough space of 45cm/ewe should be provided, however 15-23cm/ ewe is adequate if a total mixed ration (TMR) is provided. Availability of water is also crucial; a pregnant ewe will consume 4.5 litres per day and up to 10L when lactating. Water should be clean (no hay/muck/straw etc).

It is also important to **manage ewe nutrition after lambing**. If housed (bad weather/early lambers) then they will need supplementary forage and concentrates – the amount required will be dictated by **ewe BCS**. If outside then the **sward height of grass** should be considered: if <3cm then supplementary feed and forage is required (fodder beet, hard feed). If <4cm then supplementary feed is required.

Please contact Elske or Jonathan if you are interested in a thorough analysis of your feeding regime to maximise performance within your flock.

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