

info@northparkvets.co.uk

NORTH TAWTON
Tel: 01837 82327
OKEHAMPTON
Tel: 01837 658777
HATHERLEIGH
Tel: 01837 810455



JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER

COVID-19 UPDATE

Thank you for all your understanding over the last few months of lockdown. It has been a challenge for everyone whilst we juggled reductions in staff numbers, opening hours and overall opening of our three branches. It has also been a slightly odd time on farm as we have all had to keep our distances and turn down several cups of tea!

Fingers crossed we are now through the worst of it however. As the lockdown eases, we are back to our usual opening hours of 8:30 – 18:00 at all three branches. We have also re-opened on Saturday mornings 9:00 – 13:00, however this is at North Tawton ONLY until further notice. We are continuing to follow the social distancing rules and due to the nature of the premises we are still restricting access to the buildings. As such, drugs and other items for collection will continue to be left out in the lockboxes. Thank you again.

REMINDER TO ALL DAIRY FARMERS – you need to have your Johne’s Disease Management Plan Annual Review completed **by 31st October**. Although this is still some months away, time does fly by and we cannot sufficiently meet the requirements if left too late.



The review requires another risk assessment with a farm walk and a review of progress from last year by a BCVA Accredited Johne’s Veterinary Advisor. Please book an appointment through your branch surgery in plenty of time to ensure you do not miss the deadline.

TICK BORNE DISEASES CONTINUE

We have had further cases of Tick Borne Fever this month, this time affecting 8 week old suckler calves, as well as the more usual cases of Red Water (babesiosis) in cattle. This follows significant outbreaks and deaths in various groups of lambs across the practice area over the last few months. The APHA labs are continuing to see an increase in cases across the country as well. Please ensure that animals are treated with appropriate products to prevent tick infestation and that this is applied regularly



to maintain protection throughout the season (*NOTE – there are no licensed formulations for cattle*). Where ever possible, also review grazing policies and endeavour to keep livestock away from “tick pastures”.

Normally the tick species causing these problems are *Ixodes Ricinus*, however other species are becoming more common and may carry different types of disease. Public Health England (PHE) are always keen to receive ticks that you find and are running a tick surveillance scheme. This includes the ability to submit ticks found on people, pets, and livestock. Through submission of ticks found and by providing details of location, we will better understand whether ticks are spreading into different areas, whether their activity is changing (such as time of year), and whether alternative species are becoming of a significant concern. For more information please visit

DAIRY COW LAMENESS & BIOTIN

Biotin is a water-soluble B-complex vitamin that has been shown to be a “limiting nutrient” in high yielding cows – in other words they are often deficient. Supplemental biotin can **improve hoof health and hoof hardness** as it is crucial in the proper growth and health of keratin, the substance that makes up the hoof horn. Studies have shown **significant reductions of sole ulcers, heel erosion, heel warts, claw lesions, and sand cracks** when biotin is supplemented (20 mg/day) for 8-12 months. Results can take a long time to be seen however due to the slow growing nature of hooves. Cases of **digital dermatitis can also be reduced** through the overall improvement in hoof health and reduction in lesions so that the bugs are less able to penetrate. **Milk production responses** to supplemental biotin have also been seen.

This is nothing new – studies were showing the benefits of biotin 20+ years ago, however it is now getting wider traction and recognition, with many dairy farms now incorporating biotin into the feed. **These improvements in foot health will also be seen**

Figure 11-9: Supplemental Biotin and Hoof Integrity in Hereford Beef Cows and Heifers

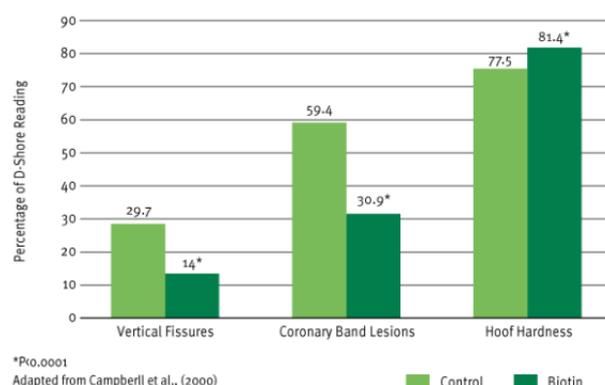
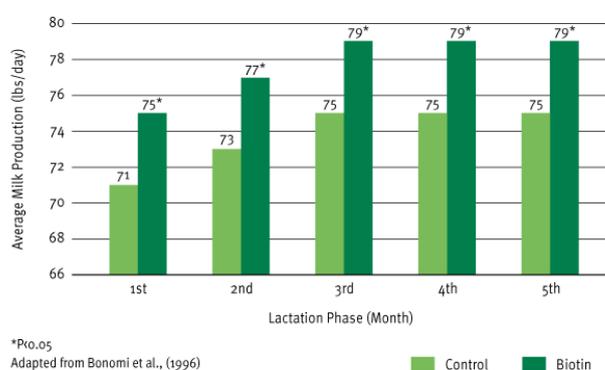


Figure 11-12: Biotin Supplementation and Milk Production in Friesian Dairy Cows



It is with sadness that we announce the recent passing of **Mike McHugh**. Mike was one of the founding partners of North Park Vets (along with Jim Hindson) and no doubt some of you will still remember him. Mike employed the recently retired Jon Herrord-Taylor and Paul Martin when they were newly qualified vets back in the 80's, and as Keeley's grandfather he was an inspiration for her becoming a vet herself. There will be a cremation this year, but the family are hoping to hold a more public memorial for him sometime next year in the local area.

The risk of **fly strike** is very high at present due to the hot and intermittently wet weather we have been having. As well as strike, many other diseases are common with flies, including **New Forest Eye** and **summer mastitis**. Ensure good fly control is in place and maintained throughout the season (e.g. spot on/pour on/tags). Similarly, this weather provides excellent conditions for **gut worms and lungworm** to thrive. Monitor stock carefully to watch for dips in performance. Ideally utilise **Faecal Egg Counts (FECs) every 2-3 weeks to monitor** the worm situation and/or **weigh stock**.

We are pleased to welcome back vet Amy Houldcroft from a period of maternity leave. She will be working Mondays and Fridays and is splitting her time between farm and small animal work.



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