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## MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER

### COVID-19 UPDATE

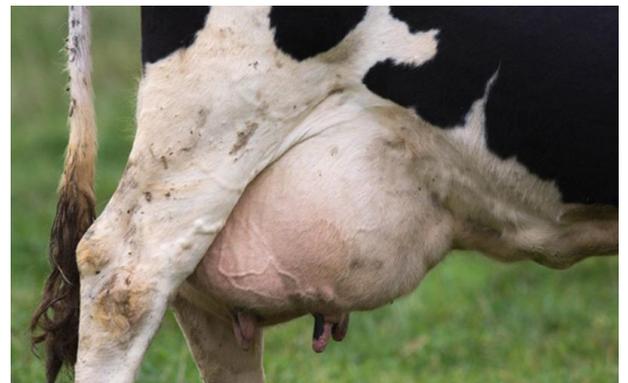
What strange times we live in! Our farm animal work is continuing almost completely as normal, with the caveat of maintaining the 2m social distancing. We are still being instructed to conduct APHA TB testing and generally this is going very well, although a little slower in some cases. Most routine work is also being conducted as normal and we are obviously always available for emergencies 24/7. The opening hours have reduced slightly: now 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and closed on Saturday mornings. **Remember that Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May is a Bank Holiday this year.**

We are continuing to run reduced levels of support staff at present across the branches, however at least one person is present in all of three branches to dispense medication. We are continuing to put drugs out in the boxes for collection instead of having people enter the buildings. There is inevitably some delays in processing of orders – please give at least 24 hours notice for big orders and ring ahead for all orders. Deliveries from our wholesaler are generally coming through well each day, however problems with certain supplies of drugs are continuing.

Thank you for all your help, patience and understanding during the lockdown. Fingers crossed everything will start returning to some sort of normality in the not too distant future.

### MASTITIS – LACTATING COW TUBES

There have been some recent changes to the availability of mastitis tubes. We are now being told that **Tetra Delta** is unlikely to be available until at least the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the year. The manufacturers of **Ubro Yellow** have decided to completely stop making the product and all supplies have now run out, so we will never be having this again. A new tube, **Ubropen**, has entered the market. This is a high dose, penicillin only tube, best used as a first line treatment against certain bacteria (it has a narrow spectrum of activity). Milk sampling to assess your “bugs” will help us know whether Ubropen is a good option for your farm.



In summary, only 8 licensed tubes are currently available in the UK, however two of these are identical (Combiclav and Synulox), so really there is only a choice of 7! Of these 7, there are many similarities between them and there are also intermittent shortages in the supply chain, so it is certainly a tricky time at present. The best alternative to Tetra Delta is **Multiject** (being almost identical) and we are expecting a delivery this week – fingers crossed! That will provide us with a combination of Multiject, Combiclav and Ubrolexin, which between them are licensed for all the main mastitis bugs.

Remember to consider testing of clinical cases and/or high cell count cows to assess the situation on your farm, which will allow for a better choice of tubes. Also remember that cure rates in the lactation period can be poor, and may require injectable antibiotics. Often the best cure rates are obtained through the dry period.

## JONATHAN BEGINS RESEARCH PROJECT

Following on from work conducted 12 months ago, Jonathan has just started leading a research project with the assistance of other vets in the SWISH group (South West Initiative for Sheep Health), alongside his usual work. The work is titled **“Current practices employed by sheep farmers using anthelmintics in the South West of England”** and aims to understand the practices of those administering anthelmintics (wormers) and what influences these practices. This will hopefully allow advisors to focus on particular issues and consider different ways of engaging with farmers to ensure that clear, useful, practical, concise and consistent messages can be delivered to farmers. Ultimately this should improve both the health and welfare of sheep and the economic viability of the entire sheep sector in the UK.



The reason for conducting this research is that anthelmintic resistance continues to increase, and we need to try and understand how and why some farms have very little trouble, while others are struggling. Furthermore, there is Zolvix resistance (within only 8 years of the product being available), ivermectin and moxidectin resistant sheep scab, and triclabendazole resistant liver fluke.

The project has been granted **Ethics Approval** from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and has been **awarded one of two annual Ruminant Research Bursaries by MSD**. We will be asking everyone to voluntarily take part in the study when your annual Red Tractor Review is completed. This involves a questionnaire of approximately 15 minutes duration, which a vet will go through with you if you are willing. Information on the worming products and months of use are required for the years 2017, 2018 and 2019, so having the medicine book to hand would be useful, otherwise all questions will be easily answerable. The study requires a minimum of 200 responses. Data will be gathered over the next 12 months across 9 veterinary practices in the South West, with completion and publication of the work expected around September next year. For any further information, please get in contact with Jonathan.

The **University of Liverpool** is running a project to investigate **Johne's disease on UK beef and sheep farms**. Ovine Johne's disease is much more common than most people realise and this project will investigate the risk factors and effect of the disease on the productive lifespan of ewes and farm economics. Furthermore, little research has been done on cross species transmission and a major aim of this project is to better understand the risk posed by sheep to cattle for Johne's infection and vice versa.

The researchers are looking for sheep only, beef only and mixed beef and sheep farms to participate in this practical research, whether you think you have Johne's on your farm or not. If you wish to take part, please complete the short questionnaire which can be found here: <https://liverpool.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/johnes-disease-copy> along with further information about the project and a consent form.

A follow up, free of charge visit for flock and/or herd-level sampling and further data collection will be arranged for later in the year for approximately 100 suitable farms. Each enrolled farm will receive a detailed diagnostic report from the samples collected, free of charge. Please feel free to email Laura Taylor at [L.Taylor11@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:L.Taylor11@liverpool.ac.uk) for further information.



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