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MARCH 2020 NEWSLETTER

DAIRY CALF TRACKER

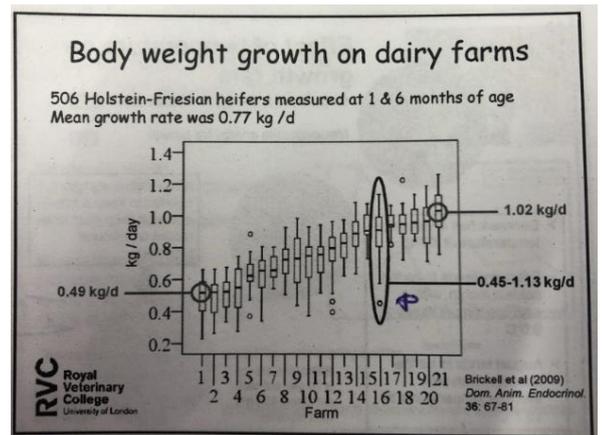
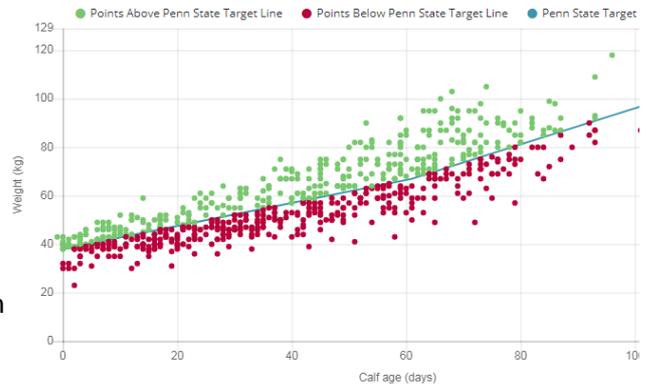
Calf Tracker is an exciting new service that we are offering our dairy clients. This is a monitoring system which allows the recording and benchmarking of calf performance from birth to weaning and should constitute part of your **routine herd health visits**. The four key areas that are monitored under this scheme include; colostrum management, growth rates, calf illness and calf mortality.

The **optimum age for calving heifers is 24 months** to maximise lifetime yields and productivity. Heifers therefore need to be **reaching growth rates of 850g-1kg/per day** to breed at 13-15 months when they should be hitting 60% of their mature body weight. **This starts from birth.**

Monitoring important benchmarks in the early months allows us to assess the farm's current status and create a programme of improvements to help you reach your targets. Plentiful evidence shows that pneumonia or scour in calves permanently affects growth rates and lifetime performance, beside the initial direct cost of treatment and mortalities. Evidence also shows that there are huge differences in performance **between farms but also WITHIN farms** (see graph to the right): **calf tracker aims to improve this**. The calf tracker programme involves:

- Weighing calves twice a month from birth until one or two weeks post weaning with a weigh band. We can either do this or you can DIY and provide us with the data. This allows us to monitor pre-weaning growth rates as well as any check in growth rate associated with weaning.
- Recording rates of disease and mortality. This allows us to determine whether a vaccination policy is or could be effective on your farm, together with other policies.
- Measuring colostrum quality and transfer in young calves. This is done by taking bloods from up to 10 calves, 1-7 days old, and checking it for total protein.
- Ongoing monitoring to assess the impact of any management changes that are made, and to pick up any problems early to prevent disease.

For more information please speak to any of the farm vets.



Congratulations to our vet nurse Lucy and her fiance Andrew on the safe arrival of their second daughter Cora May! They are all back at home and doing well.

RED TRACTOR MEDICINE USAGE TRAINING

Due to further demand we are running our “Deciphering Drugs” course again on **Tuesday 10th March from 10am – 2pm at the North Tawton Surgery**. We have had excellent feedback from the 80+ people that have attended the previous meetings. The course covers:

- different types of antibiotics and which products to use for what disease,
- how to safely and effectively reduce antibiotic usage on farm,
- the correct usage of anti-inflammatory drugs,
- the different types of vaccines including how they work,
- and correct handling, storage and administration of all medicines.



This course fulfils the Red Tractor recommendations that “*at least one member of staff responsible for administering medicines has undertaken training in the handling and administration of medicines*”. THIS IS NOW COMPULSORY FOR ALL DAIRY FARMS but please note that “MILKSURE” meets this standard. The Deciphering Drugs course is open to **ALL** producers (beef/sheep/dairy). The cost for this training is **£60+VAT** (£30+VAT for any additional staff from the same farm). Please book through your branch surgery – lunch provided (please let us know of any dietary requirements). All those attending will receive a certificate of attendance to include in your Red Tractor paperwork.

Medicine Shortages Update – we have now sourced TMPS from Holland (Dofatrim) and a Betamox/Amoxycare LA alternative from Ireland (Trioxyl LA). Both have the same dose rates and withdrawal periods as usual. There has also recently been some issues with Pen/Strep so we will be using Depocillin when this is unavailable, however please note that Depocillin must be stored in the fridge.

Local farmer’s daughter **Jess Baulch** is looking for responses to a questionnaire contributing towards her dissertation for her degree at Harper Adams University. The questionnaire seeks opinions on ammonia mitigation on farm and is open to anyone who is a livestock farmer in the South West. If you would be able to help Jess the questionnaire is found at: <https://harper-adams.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/southwest-englands-livestock-farmers-attitudes-towards-on-2>

The **University of Liverpool** are also looking for responses to a short survey on **liver fluke**. If you would like to take part the details are here, with the chance to win prizes! The survey closes at the end of March.

Sheep & Cattle farmers tell us about your views on fluke

Complete our short **15 minute** online survey

Visit: <https://liverpool.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/fluke-survey>

WIN
Apple iPad or
Fortnum and Mason
Luxury hamper!

Closing date 31/3/20

OR scan the QR code



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