

Cattle & Sheep Vet Notes – September 2008

VET NOTES 16/08/08 – 29/08/08

SECTOR 7 - VET 12

Farm 12034, post mortem on a beef bull, 18 months old. Bowel torsion revealed.

Farm 12156, examine a heifer with Pneumonia, husk. Vet told farmer to worm the rest of the group and that provoked a huge coughing outbreak and about 5 had to be treated with Marbocyl and Finadyne.

Seeing a lot of disease that they don't normally see. They have done 7 LDA ops in 10 days and it's very unusual for them to get one a day in the summer. A lot of herds already eating silage certainly at night and a lot are in all day when the weather is bad.

Has also seen a few lambs with enteritis, farmers have assumed that it has been Coccidia but worm egg counts have revealed high numbers of Trichostrongyle, despite following their usual worming pattern.

SECTOR 7 - VET 79

Farm, 79106, two 5-6 month old suckler calves that had been through the crush some 48 hours earlier to receive their second Bluetongue vaccine now had high temperatures. Vet thinks this is down to the stress of the vaccinations in the crush. The farmer lost one other animal suddenly 2 weeks previously. Later that day another animal of that group was found dead in the field – PM showed it to be blackleg. It is possible that the others may also have been incubating black leg as well.

SECTOR 8 – VET 22

Farm 22118, a dairy unit with Milk fever problem, they are playing around with the ration, dry cows are out in the field, minerals are mixed in with the ration plus they are a bit short of energy. Cows are losing too much condition. Bloods taken from 6 cows.

SECTOR 8 - VET 76

Farm 76007, a second ram on this unit with a urinary blockage, vet advised farmer to look at what was being fed to these animals.

SECTOR 8 - VET 78

Farm 78010, this farm has vaccinated 360 mule gimmer lambs with Bluetongue vaccine a week ago and about 30 have gone lame on the front left leg, these were vaccinated on the left hand side of the ribs. Those examined had significant brisket oedema, over the sternum, going back over the ventral abdomen, they also looked very dozy. Vet has contacted Intervet who is going to get in touch with the farmer

Hearing a lot about sheep with Lumpy wool. The possible contributing factor being the very wet August that we have had. The sheep are constantly wet.

VET NOTES 23/08/08 – 05/09/08

SECTOR 1 - VET 83

Farm 83052, Lab report on sheep worm egg count positive, advise farmer to re test, possibility of there being a resistance problem to a white drench here. Will need to re-test at a later date.

SECTION 4 – VET 29

A group of very poor looking calves at the first TT test. At the second test 2 of these calves had died. PM'd 1 and it showed severe lung worm, interesting as they had been treated at TT1 and he expects that all the worms dying in one go will have caused the Pneumonia.

Has seen a lot of cows with RDA's and then positive for Johnes disease. He would like to know if anyone else has seen this.

SECTION 4 - VET 33

A visit to a small holder who had half a dozen pet sheep, one of which had stuffed itself on crab apples and was suffering very badly from ruminal acidosis. In spite of giving it some Vetrimex and bicarbonate of soda the ewe died over night. Recorded as acidosis.

SECTOR 5 - VET 30

A mixed bag on worm egg counts, either getting major problems with ill thrift or others who seem to be managing the problem much better using some clean rotation etc and getting some zero egg counts back off those pastures. Wonder whether this relates to the grass being longer and the larvae being lower down as well.

SECTION 7 – VET 49

A 240 milking cow herd, routine lameness visit. Lots of sole penetration, stones wedged into cracks and white line disease seen here due to pre-existing problems on the farm.

SECTION 8 - VET 43

A 70-cow suckler unit which has had 10 cows return empty after they had received a Bluetongue vaccination. This is the only example of a possible problem that this practice has related to Bluetongue in any way. Vet suspects that this is however not related to the vaccination they received.

VET NOTES 30/08/2008 to 12/09/2008

SECTOR 2 - VET 81

Farm 81048, this farm has a calf scour problem which they have traced to Cryptosporidia but it seems to be not terribly serious although he often has to remove a calf from the cows to supplement their feeding. The new product of Rehydrion gel is proving very successful; this can be given to calves whilst they are still suckling cow's milk.

They have also had a disappointing take up of Bluetongue vaccine; no more than 30-35% of their farms have used it. This is due to various problems, lateness of vaccine and most farmers now don't think they will be protected till after the midge's season. The wet weather has also been causing problems with a back log of work. Floods have also been a problem with 100 ewes plus their twin lambs being washed away.

SECTOR 3 - VET 85

Farm 85029, blood sample some dairy heifers as they have been having some reabsorptions. Samples showed highly infected with Neospora. This has never been seen before on this farm so they are trying to find out the source of this.

Farm 85383, Fertility tested 27 rams. 13 showed normal samples, 5 showed some sub fertility and these were considered borderline but 9 showed marked sub fertility or infertility. Interestingly this is a group of rams that are mixed, either Suffolk's or Texels and the problems appear to be affecting only the Texels. They thought they had a problem with lameness but nothing particularly major but on closer examination there was obvious signs of contagious ovine digital dermatitis in some of the Texels, this has in the vets experience caused problems with fertility in several flocks were they have seen rams with CODD.

SECTION 3 - VET 86

Seeing a lot of lungworm at the moment.

SECTOR 7 - VET 79

Farm 79183 A 250 sheep flock were grazing next to a field of barley. After combining the gate into this field was left open where there were lots of barley heads and loose grain lying around. 10 animals had already died when the farmer discovered the problem and a further 10 died despite treatment.

Farm 79074 A group of 150 lambs had not progressed well despite being given a trace element drench and being treated with Ivermectin for worms. Trichstrongyle eggs were 700-800 per gramme - a significant level considering they had been treated with Ivermectin. This farm is the demonstration farm for HCC and worm egg counts have been regularly measured. Tests performed 12 months ago found some evidence of White Drench resistance but none to Ivermectin. These results will be further investigated with VLA Shrewsbury.

Farm 89114 A ram lamb died of tetanus. Until a suckler cow had tetanus a few weeks ago there had been no history of the disease on this farm.

Uptake of Blue Tongue vaccination in North Shropshire and Oswestry has been good but the protection zone has now been extended into Wales where there are lots of sheep and there has been less willingness to vaccinate. Farmers believe it is now too late in the year to bother vaccinating and that it would be better to wait until spring and also that vaccination may be linked to infertility in sheep, in particular in rams, and have heard all the rumours about abortion in cattle. Vets practice has written to farmers to dispel these myths and encourage vaccination. He would be interested to hear about other vets experience regarding Blue Tongue vaccination – rumours, myths and uptake rates.

SECTOR 8 - VET 76

Farm 76037, a severe infection of Orf in ram lambs

Starting to see evidence of Fluke, some adult rams are starting to scour on various farms even though they don't usually get acute Fluke, these are responding to drenches of Fasinex. It's anecdotal evidence they don't often see clinical cases of Fluke but they are expecting it this year. Also seeing a lot of ringworm in any calves that are in. Using Imavoral washes. Also a lot of snails on pastures. Advising clients to dose whole flocks to prevent Fluke. A lot of clients still trying to get silage in and talking about selling some stock in order to reduce their stock and conserve whatever forage they can now get in as it's still very wet and the quality will be very poor.

Egg counts seem to be rising on samples from lambs and also have a possible case of Cydectin resistance on one of their units. A client who used this had a high egg count 10 days after using this product.

SECTION 7 - VET 77

Finds bulk milk testing for BVD, IBR and Lepto very useful for giving a quick heads up to farmers without all the hassle of blood testing especially as drug companies such as Novartis and Intervet are now sponsoring them. However he did have an anomaly where bulk milk strongly indicated Lepto but bloods showed hardly any infection. This is because the 2 tests look for different antibodies.

SECTION 8 - VET 78

Because of the wet August a lot of farmers in his practice have not been able to take a second cut of silage. Many cows have been housed day and night through August due to bad weather and so are eating first cut silage and so a significant shortage of silage is feared for this winter – this is having a knock on effect on cow prices which have fallen even though dairies are offering higher milk prices.

Farmers using movement sensors for heat detection are very pleased with the results.

There has been an increase in mastitis – especially Strep. uberis – in dairy cows which have been housed due to the bad weather. Buildings can be wet and warm encouraging bacterial multiplication.

VET NOTES 06/09/2008 to 19/09/2008

SECTOR 0 - VET 82

Farm 82019 Two stirks died of Blackleg. Vet got farm to vaccinate, they have done in the past but don't keep up with it.

Farm 82053, Suspected resistance in sheep that had been treated with Combinex. Vet investigated resistance to Levamisole and dosed the animals himself stressing that the dosage was crucial - the treatment worked very effectively. He came to the conclusion that they do not have a Levamisole resistance problem.

SECTOR 1 - VET 72

Farm 72060, a calf with Cryptosporidia which has also caused the cowman some problems, advised disinfecting area.

Farm 72031, Sudden death on this farm - Black Disease diagnosed and advice has been given.

SECTOR 2 - VET 39

Farm 39003 Vet saw a cow which looked like a Johnes case but was negative on faecal sample. The cow was vaccinated 6 years previously for Johnes but had very high antibody titres and the VLA thought it was a Johnes case. A few vaccinated animals have developed Johnes symptoms over the last 7-9 years.

SECTION 2 - VET 39

Farm 39013 3 cows were presented to the vet as cystic but he believes they are not and that the problem lies with the pedometers they are wearing which are either not reading accurately or at all. He also suspects that the reader in the parlour is inaccurate too.

SECTION 2 - VET 21

Outbreak of liver fluke in dairy heifers. This is unusual in Humberside but vet thinks it is due to the wet weather and movement of animals.

Vet visited a dairy farm where high yielding dairy cows suddenly lose their milk but recover after 7-10 days. Vet suspects this is a nutritional problem as the cows are pushed very hard and there is acute ruminal acidosis. Vet suspects that the mixer wagon may not be used for long enough to properly mix protein supplements etc

SECTOR 4 – VET 29

A mastitis investigation on a dairy farm, the main issue here was that the cows were too dirty in the housing. They had changed the cubicles and hadn't finished them so a lot of the cows were standing around. Poor post dipping and inadequate application.

SECTOR 5 – Vet 30

A major problem for the area, the Wessex incineration plant has gone bust and the local people that used to pick up the fallen stock were relying on them to process things. This will cause a real crisis in the area. DEFRA were asked for advise but were unaware that this had even happened.

SECTOR 7 - VET 31

All dairy cows are now housed all the time. A few dry cows and in calf heifers are still outside where the ground is very wet. One farmer claimed that over the last 15 months his cows had only been out for 5 months. A farmer who wanted to bale straw after combining had to abandon the attempt as combining had left the ground so rutted he could not get the baler over it. Straw will be in very short supply this winter and what there is is of poor nutritional quality and damp. A farmer tried to combine wheat with a moisture content of 33% which was so damp the combine couldn't cut it and 3 drive belts were burnt out and he also abandoned the attempt.

SECTION 8 – VET 43

Have others found an improvement in the percentage of cows presented for pregnancy diagnosis which were actually in calf. They are noticing this and he puts it down mainly to the herds which have heat time as a heat detection system, it seems to be reducing the number of cows which get through to PD which are in fact not in calf, he suspects that these cows are getting re-served and thinks that they are seeing less non bullers.

VET NOTES 13/9/08 to 26/9/08

SECTOR 2- VET 74

Farm 74184, a group of 60 heifers out of the herd of 300. 23 of these heifers were TB positive. The problem was that they had been vaccinated with Bluetongue the day after the TT1 test. In actual fact 21 of them did have visible lesions when they went for PM so the Bluetongue vaccine didn't make any difference but there were severe bovine lumps of about 50mm on many of them.

SECTOR 2 - VET 81

Farm 81046 Tup recorded as a trauma injury had most probably been damaged with a dosing gun. *Vet has been disappointed with the uptake of Bluetongue vaccine which is only 40%. Cattle are still out and it will be a hassle to bring them in, and if cattle are not being vaccinated why bother to do sheep? Uptake may improve over the winter when it is more convenient. It is rumoured that the knackermen picked up over 100 dead cows in Northumberland following the recent floods when food could not be supplemented.*

SECTOR 4 - VET 13

A group of suckler cows and followers all coughing, vet suspects lungworm

A group of dairy calves, 8-9 months of age with high cocci count and a low Trichostrongyle count.

SECTOR 6 - VET 17

A downer dairy cow which the farmer had treated for milk fever had a displaced abomasum and brain damage. She also had reactions around the calcium injection site..

Vet saw a beef cow with staggers that was not a typical case with a lot of head shaking and uneasy as if it had an allergy.

A cow had gangrene at the site of an injection into the milk vein given by the farmer a week earlier.

SECTOR - VET 12

Farm 12038 Vet calved a dairy heifer which had a uterine torsion and twins – a very unusual combination.

A quiet fortnight in the practice as the dry weather has meant routine visits being cancelled as farmers rush to get in hay, silage and cereal crops. Vet is seeing a lot of LDA's for the time of year.

SECTOR 7 - VET 79

Farm 79074 is a HCC demonstration farm where lambs were doing poorly and a worm burden or trace element deficiency were thought to be likely reasons why. To test this 40 lambs were divided into 4 groups of 10. One control group received no treatment, one group received an anthelmintic only, one group received anthelmintic plus a trace element drench containing B12, Vitamin E and Selenium and the final group just received injectable B12, Vitamin E and Selenium. All lambs were weighed and they will be monitored and reweighed in 2 and 4 weeks to see what effects the different treatments have had. Vet will then report the results.

Farm 79206 trauma injury to a ewe was probably caused by drenching.

SECTOR 8 - VET 22

Farm 22021, vet examined 3 cows with milk drop and lung infections, Vet advised farmer to do the whole herd with Husk.

Farm 22047, a problem with calf scour on this unit, did sensitivity on some swabs, E.coli grew, and Baytril was the only thing that they were sensitive to. This is an organic unit and he's not keen on using Baytril.

SECTION 8 - VET 76

Farm 76038 a calf that underwent a tendonectomy had a fit the next day and died. The vet rarely gets the chance to carry out this procedure and was happy with the result and would carry out the procedure again given the opportunity – he wonders if the calf had other congenital problems that weren't detected.

Farm 76022 Outbreak of Trichostrongyle in lambs. These lambs had been dosed 10-11 days previously with Moxidectin. The VLA has confirmed White Drench resistance on this farm and potentially Moxidectin (i.e. Avermectin) resistance too. Faecal egg reduction tests will be carried out. This is potentially the first case of Moxidectin resistance in vet's area.

SECTION 8 - VET 33

Farm 33107 This sheep farm has problems with multi-drug resistant worms.