

"Bought-in cows don't last!"

This is a comment heard recently and is a recurring theme during farm visits. Although there are benefits in disease control and breeding strategies of the closed herd; what can be done to ensure bought in animals are ready to work and last?

So you have seen the cow you like at the auction, she has good legs, a well attached udder, not too angular and moves well. What's next?

Date of birth. Whilst an increase of 70kg bodyweight in dairy heifers will result in nearly a thousand litres more in her first lactation, size isn't everything. Heifers that calve for the first time at two years old are more fertile, last longer and crucially give more milk/calves per year of life than older animals. This means the younger, the better as long as the size is right. A heifer calving for the first time at three either grew slowly due to disease or was difficult to get in calf—either way she will be a problem.

Disease status. Asking questions about the health status of the farm, as well as the vaccination status of the cow is always worthwhile but is of most use if you can match up with your own status. Animals that are free of all diseases that arrive at their new home and have to spend the next month fighting off a series of infections will naturally be slow to get going or worse.

Things to remember

BVD free and BVD vaccinated are two different things. Animals from a free herd would require vaccinating before entering a new vaccinated herd. Vaccinating a persistently infected (PI) animal will not stop it shedding virus or infecting the new herd.

IBR is a herpes virus and so is only controlled, not cured by vaccination. If you are IBR free, buying IBR vaccinated or unknown cattle may be a very expensive mistake.

Johne's Disease takes 2-5 years to show signs in cattle after infection and so buying from accredited herds is the safest. Accreditation can be achieved in as little as two years, so checking how long they have been accredited is useful. Anything over five years is likely to be totally free of the disease.

Digital dermatitis is a very painful, infectious cause of lameness which, once brought into a herd will infect the land and be almost impossible to eradicate. Asking about this disease is vital if you are free. Quarantining with three days antibiotic footbath before entering the herd would be a sensible precaution.

If you are buying direct from farm it may be possible for us to talk with the vendor's vet (with their permission) and see how the cattle will match up.

If you have any questions regarding buying stock, how to find out your own herd's status or a disease eradication programme please contact the practice. On 01729823538

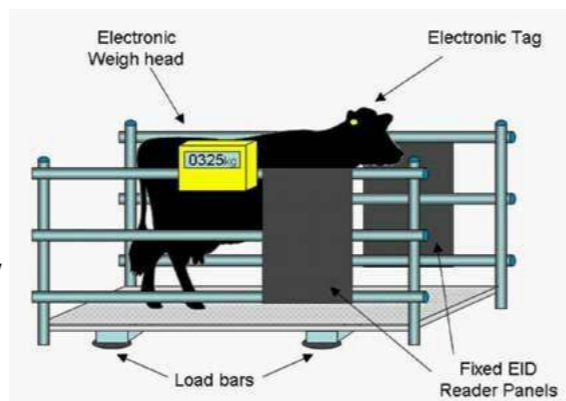
Countryside Productivity Grant Scheme

DEFRA and the RPA have released a list of grants which are available under the above scheme which replaces the old Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme (FFIS). In this scheme, the 'Animal Productivity Health and Welfare Grant' will fund such items as:

- * Static handling and weighing systems for cattle and sheep—which must include a fixed EID reader and electronic weighing facilities linked to the EID
- * Activity monitors to detect oestrus in suckler herds
- * Calving detectors (not cameras)
- * Automated dairy cow lameness detection
- * Devices for on-farm analysis of livestock feedstuffs

In addition there are also slurry application grants and LED lights for livestock housing grants.

For further information we have created a link to the Countryside Productivity Grant Scheme on our website www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk and on our Facebook page



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'Bovela' - New BVD Vaccine



Until now, all BVD vaccines have required an initial course of two injections approximately four weeks apart with either six monthly or annual boosters. Studies have shown that on many farms, the correct intervals between the two initial injections are not observed which will potentially compromise the efficacy of the vaccination programme.

Bovela is a completely new live BVD vaccine which only requires a single intramuscular injection to provide full immunity. This makes it much more straight forward to correctly vaccinate and fully protect animals. A booster vaccination is recommended after 12 months.

The onset of immunity is three weeks after vaccination and animals can be vaccinated from three months of age. The vaccine is ideally suited for vaccinating heifers before turnout which are going to be served through the summer and for bought-in replacements. The vaccine can also be used for whole herd boosters on farms which have already used another vaccine. **Bovela** is safe to use during pregnancy and there is a nil-milk and meat withdrawal period. It comes as a freeze dried pellet that requires reconstituting before use and must be used within eight hours of mixing. Bovela is available in 5 and 25 dose vials.

*For more information about **Bovela** or to discuss whether it may be suitable to use as part of your BVD control programme, please speak to one of the farm vets on 01729 823538*

New 'In-House' Mastitis bacteriology Testing

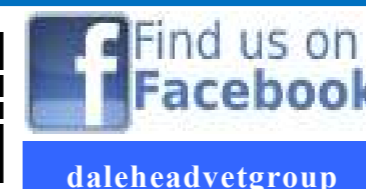
Whilst we have been able to perform individual cow somatic cell counts and bacteriology on mastitis samples in our practice laboratory for several years, the new '**Vetorapid**' mastitis diagnostic test kit allows us to identify the presence of the major bacterial causes of bovine mastitis (Ecoli, Staphylococcus aureus, Streptococcus uberis) within 24 to 36 hours of receiving mastitis samples.

Sampling mastitis cows prior to treatment and freezing allows identification and sensitivity testing if the first treatment fails. Taking mastitis samples from five new high cell count cases and five chronic cell count cases allows a picture of the 'bugs on farm'. This may point a direction for control measures for example:

- * Staph aureus in the parlour
- * Strep uberis associated with pooling of pasture and gate ways
- * Klebsiella from wet sawdust
- * Ecoli associated with cleanliness of housing and straw yards
- * Bacillus and A.pyogenes linked with teat end damage from flies or parlour vacuum problems.

Samples should be collected from new mastitis cases before they receive any antibiotic treatment (or from repeat cases at least two weeks after their last antibiotic treatment) in sterile sample bottles. A sheet detailing the correct sampling technique is available from the surgery or on our website.

Samples should be refrigerated if not bringing them to the surgery immediately and can be frozen if they are being retained for routine screening.



Check out our website www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk for more information about caring for your pet, special offers, vet and staff profiles and much more!



Cattle Turnout

It might seem hard to believe at the moment, but turnout day will be soon upon us! Whilst there are over 18 species of Nematode (Roundworm) parasites that can infect cattle, the main three are :

Lungworm: Of major importance in first-year grazing animals in the summer or early autumn, but we have also **seen signs in adult cattle increasingly in the last few years**. In adults, clinical signs can be less obvious, with reduced milk yield and a drop in fertility being more common than classic severe signs of 'Husk'. The increase seen in lungworm over recent years seems to be a product of the reduced use of the vaccine, and a reliance on worming to control the disease. For long-term protective immunity to develop, these wormed animals need exposure to the parasite. If this exposure doesn't occur at sufficient levels, these animals will remain susceptible to lungworm infection if exposed to larval challenge in the future – be it later in the first grazing season, or subsequent seasons, where the worming regime may not be as thorough! **The only reliable way to induce protective immunity is to vaccinate.** This avoids problems not only in the first grazing season but throughout the animal's productive life. **On farms where vaccination has been stopped, or not used at all, it has been shown that it is safe to vaccinate pregnant and lactating animals.** **Bovilis Huskvac** is given by mouth to animals over 8 weeks of age. Two doses are given 4 weeks apart, and immunity is developed by 2 weeks after the second dose. Even if you have stopped vaccinating a while ago, it is never too late to restart!

Cooperia: A Small Intestine worm, which is common in young cattle and produces a lot of eggs, often showing as the highest contributor in worm egg counts, although less important as a cause of clinical signs. Immunity normally develops rapidly and is usually strong by the end of the first grazing season.

Ostertagia: This lives in the abomasum and is the gutworm of most clinical and economic significance. Considerable numbers of infectious larvae survive the winter on the pasture. In the spring a large number of these will die out, and this, combined with the pasture growth diluting the levels, means that the numbers of larvae on **ungrazed** pasture should be low by June, and safe after mid-summer.

Occasionally the numbers of overwintering larvae remain high enough for long enough to cause signs in calves 3-4 weeks after turnout in the spring. More normally however these larvae infect stock at a level that does not produce signs, but allows them to develop to the egg-producing adult stage in enough numbers to contaminate the pasture later in the season. With the increase in temperatures as the season goes on, the time taken for eggs to develop to infectious larvae reduces, resulting in a peak of pasture contamination in July, with clinical signs of diarrhoea and weight loss from July to October (type I disease). Larvae picked up late in the season as the temperatures fall, become inhibited in the wall of the abomasum until late winter or early spring when development resumes resulting in clinical signs (type II disease). Mortality is higher in these cases, and the scour can be intermittent with lack of appetite more of a feature than in type I disease. Immunity to *Ostertagia* takes longer to develop, usually taking 2 grazing seasons. The immunity that develops is not total, and adult animals can carry quite large numbers of worms which can in some cases cause clinical signs.

A number of worming products and strategies are available for Nematode control. The protocol should be based on pasture management as well as strategic dosing and vaccination in the case of lungworm. All three of the main classes of wormer: 'White' (Benzimidazoles), 'yellow' (Levamisoles) and 'clear' (Macrocytic Lactones - Ivomec, Cydectin, Dectomax etc) are effective, although the White and Clear classes are the most effective against the inhibited larvae of type II *Ostertagia*.

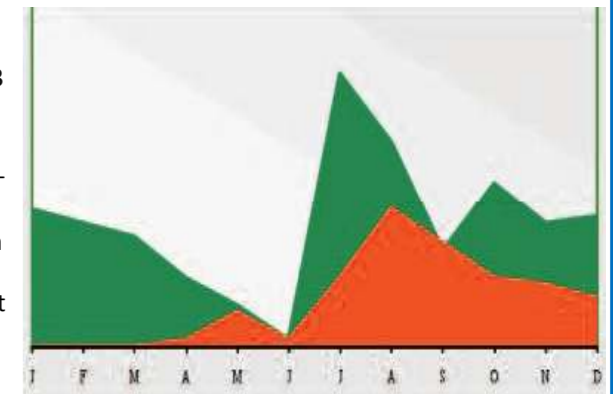


Products include:

Boluses: Two types available both contain wormers from the Benzimidazole group.
Slow release: Panacur – for animals of 100-300kg prior to turnout providing up to 5 months cover
Pulse release: Autoworm First Grazer - for animals 100-400kg prior to turnout, provides 21 weeks cover
Autoworm Finisher: For animals 100-400kg provides 15 weeks cover

Injectables and pour-ons: (These have varying length of action)

Ivomectin based Pour-ons and injections should be administered 3, 8 and 13 weeks after turnout.
Cydectin and Dectomax injections and pour-ons given at 8-10 week intervals.
Cydectin 10% Long acting injection – Given in the base of the ear, it covers against *Ostertagia* and lungworm for 120 days.



Pasture levels of *Ostertagia* during the year.
INFECTIOUS LARVAE = GREEN
EGGS = RED

Please speak to one of the farm vets to discuss options and treatments for your farm on 01792823538

Lambing Time



So far this year only one sheep farmer has fallen asleep in the waiting room at the surgery, which is an improvement on the last couple of years (a reported three!). Lambing time has as usual been long and tiring and is only just starting for many. The recent heavy rain hasn't helped moods although an ever so slightly greening of grassland has raised a hopeful eyebrow.

At the surgery we have been busy with lambings day and night with the usual trappings that go with lambing time. However, the one condition that has been noticeably higher in prevalence this year has been 'prolapses'.

Prolapse is usually seen in the last three weeks of pregnancy in ewes carrying more than one lamb however, this is not always so.

The exact cause is unknown. It seems to be hereditary, so sheep that prolapse should be culled and gimmer lambs from these ewes should not be kept for breeding. Ear notching the sheep assures they don't escape being culled.

Other suggested causes include:

- * Condition of ewe (too fat or too thin)
- * Gut fill and roughage
- * Calcium deficiency
- * Hormone imbalance
- * Short tail docking (the tail should cover the vulva)
- * Coughing

The key to treatment is to **keep it clean** and **replace it quickly**. Delay in replacement can cause swelling, difficulty in urination and ultimately make it harder to replace.

Prolapse 'spoons' and harnesses are available at the surgery to retain prolapses.

To order these or for any advice, please ring the surgery on 01729 823538



Calf Jackets

Just a quick reminder that we now stock Dalehead Cosy Calf jackets at £20.00 plus vat. They are a very reasonably priced quality calf jacket.

We have lots of farms now using the jackets on pedigree beef calves, dairy heifer replacements and black and white bull calves (even we use one on our 'Dalehead calf' here in the surgery—he needs all the help he can get!) The first few weeks of life are the most important and three weeks at an extra 0.2kg grown per day results in the bull calves being sold off farm at 5kg heavier (and a lot better looking).

The long term benefits of quicker growth rates are better EBCVs on the bull and dam's pedigree, more fertile offspring, more profitable commercial sucklers as well as more milk, longer life and more profit from dairy replacements. We also offer a complete

heifer rearing consultancy service for £250.00 per year as well as one off visits to improve health, growth rates and profitability of your calf rearing enterprise.

For more information on our consultancy service, to arrange a visit or to order any Dalehead Cosy Calf jackets, please ring the surgery on 01729 823538

