



# nantwich farm vets



December 2019

## Dates for your diary

<b>Fri 6<sup>th</sup> Dec</b> 7:30pm	<b>NFV Christmas Party</b> See invite below!
<b>Wed 8<sup>th</sup> Jan</b> 11:15am – 2pm	<b>Medicine Course</b> NEW DATE!! Still some spaces available!
<b>Wed 15<sup>th</sup> Jan</b> 10:30am – 12:30pm	<b>Care Around Calving</b> The first module in our exciting calf series, Rearing for Returns. See back page for details.
<b>Thurs 16<sup>th</sup> Jan</b> 11:30am	<b>Beef Club</b> How can we maximise fertility?

I can't believe we're saying this already! Where's 2019 gone...



A Very Merry Christmas  
and best wishes for the New Year  
from all of us  
at Nantwich Farm Vets

We hope to see you at our Christmas Party (at least this social event won't get rained off!, fingers crossed it doesn't get iced off instead like last year...) – details below.

## More medicine changes:

Following on from all the product changes detailed in last month's newsletter, we also have a further change as Tetra Delta has become unavailable for the moment – we don't know for how long! It has been replaced with Multiject IMM – the most similar product on the market. It is licensed for the same treatment regime (one tube daily for three consecutive days) and has the same withdrawals of 108h milk and 7d meat.





**nantwich**  
farm vets

Join us for our Christmas Party

Friday 6th December  
7.30pm

Worleston Village Hall  
CW5 6DN



# Leptospirosis

With renewed availability of the vaccines, **John Manson** takes a look at why this is such an important disease to protect your stock (and staff) against.



As many of you will have been aware we have just come through a 12 month period where there have been serious supply issues with both the leptospirosis vaccines (Spirovac and Leptavoid-H) that we supply. Thankfully this situation is over and we are now in a position to sell both again according to demand. I thought it was a good time to look at leptospirosis ('lepto' from now on) as a disease and why it is still important on many farms to include it in any vaccination protocols.

Lepto is a disease caused by bacteria belonging to the genus *Leptospira*. There are two significant strains that can infect cattle in this country: *Leptospira interrogans hardjo* and *Leptospira borgpetersenii hardjo*. It can affect both dairy and beef herds so don't be lulled into thinking it only affects dairy cattle. It can spread between cattle through direct transmission from either contact with acutely infected cattle or recovered carrier animals who continue to shed the bacteria. Indirect transmission can occur through contact with urine or reproductive secretions of infected cattle, drinking contaminated water or contact with other animal species e.g. Sheep which can carry and excrete the bacteria.

## Symptoms

Disease can manifest in two main ways in a herd. The first is the symptom of milk drop, in what is

commonly called 'flabby bag.' This occurs in the acute phase though we do tend to see less of this these days. Cows with flabby bag present with milk becoming yoghurt-like in consistency, a flabby feel to the udder, a fever and loss of appetite. We would typically see these symptoms in a naive herd where infection suddenly enters. However the symptoms are often more subtle than above and sometimes go unnoticed.



Figure 1: the classic (but now less commonly seen) symptom of 'flabby bag'

The second more obvious presentation is abortion, with this most likely occurring 3-12 weeks after the initial infection. Abortion is most common in cows during the last 3 months of gestation. This can also present as premature and weak calves. Cows in early gestation may experience embryonic death and return to service. These cows can then take multiple services before conceiving again. Again, this drop in fertility won't be picked up until a few weeks after the initial infection.

Following the initial infection the bacteria tend to localise in the cow's

urogenital tract. The bacteria are shed in urine, uterine fluids and milk. Chronic carrier cows will continue to shed lepto in their urine unless treated with antibiotics or vaccinated.



Figure 2: abortion and other signs of poor fertility are often seen in infected herds

## Diagnosis

Blood antibody tests can be used to show if a cow has ever been exposed, though a one-off test won't confirm if it is a current infection. In suspect clinical cases paired bloods 3 weeks apart with an increased antibody titre in the second blood would be conclusive. If the only clinical symptom on farm is abortion then a fresh foetus presented to the lab should have the bacteria present in either kidney or lung tissue. Isolating lepto in these circumstances is dependent on the foetus being presented fresh (within hours of abortion).

At a herd level, regular bulk milk antibody testing can be done on naive unvaccinated herds to ensure they remain uninfected. Any sudden increase in bulk milk



antibody should raise alarms with prompt action required. We currently have free bulk milk testing available, so let your vet know if you want to see whether your herd is infected, especially if you have never vaccinated.

### Zoonotic risk

At this point I'm going to discuss the zoonotic risk (that leptospirosis is transmissible from cattle to humans). Leptospirosis causes flu-like symptoms in humans, so typically fever, headaches, muscular pain and nausea – clearly not pleasant! As previously mentioned, acutely infected cattle will shed the bacteria in urine and milk. Aborting cows will also shed large quantities in uterine fluids. Cuts on hands are a very common route of entry, or getting splashed by milk or urine in the parlour. People milking cows or calving cows are therefore probably at greatest risk. It's not top of a GP's diagnostic list so it's worth mentioning if you ever have the symptoms above. Treatment with antibiotics will usually lead to recovery in about a week.

### Treatment

Acutely infected cattle require antibiotic treatment with Streptomycin (Pen & Strep). This is the only effective antibiotic available. Treatment in the acute phase will eliminate the bacteria and prevent future shedding and development of the chronic carrier state. However, prevention is clearly the better option.

### Prevention

I believe that any herd that regularly buys in cattle should be vaccinating against leptospirosis - it is the most simple and practical way of

controlling the disease. *Vaccination* not only protects naive stock from becoming infected, it also will prevent urine shedding from those that have been exposed e.g. through contact with infected cattle or water courses. This is also key to protecting all staff on farm who are at risk.

*Vaccination is the most simple and practical way of controlling the disease*

Animals being vaccinated for the first time (maiden heifers and bought-in stock) require two injections 4-6 weeks apart. Annual boosters are required thereafter. Maiden heifers should be injected twice, ideally at least two weeks prior to service. All bought in cattle with an unknown vaccination history should also be given the full primary course.

*Biosecurity* is key for naive herds who don't wish to vaccinate. This is in addition to the regular bulk milk testing mentioned previously. Cattle at grass should be protected from any contact with neighbouring cattle.

A *double stock fence* with a 3m gap is the gold standard. This is the same as would be recommended for protecting your stock from BVD, TB and other diseases.

Other measures to prevent leptospirosis include *avoiding any contact with sheep* as they can be carriers of infection, and *avoiding access to stagnant water sources or streams that have passed through other farms*. If you regard yourself as a closed herd but do bring the occasional stock bull on and you've not vaccinated for leptospirosis then the only way to protect your herd is to isolate the bull for 3 weeks and treat twice with high doses of Pen & Strep 10 days apart. This will eliminate any risk of the bull introducing leptospirosis into your herd.

Finally, I would emphasise that leptospirosis is not a disease you would want to see either your herd or your staff becoming infected with, so please take the necessary steps to protect both the cattle and people who work with them.



Figures 3-6: various aspects of biosecurity are involved in preventing disease entering the herd. Clockwise from top left: avoid co-grazing with sheep, maintain 3m double fencing with neighbouring stock, managing bought in bulls and avoiding water courses that have passed through other farms. (photos taken from nadils.org.uk)

# Courses & Meetings

## MEDICINE TRAINING COURSE + MILKSURE PART 1

**\*\*Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December FULL\*\***

**NEW DATE! Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January, 11:15am - Nantwich Farm Vets, Hurleston, CW5 6BU - £65**



This course provides a broad look at medicines that are commonly used on farm, what they are for, how they should be stored and used responsibly. 'Responsible use of antibiotics' is a common catchphrase in the industry, with the aim of reducing unnecessary treatments, and making sure when we do treat we are doing so as effectively as possible and minimising resistance. This course also includes the first half of the Milksure course, involving discussion on minimizing risk of residue and milk failures. If you are interested in the full Milksure course, an on-farm visit to provide the second half can be arranged at a later date. Attendees will be given a certificate of competence and will meet the new standards required by Red Tractor Farm Assurance.

## DAIRYLAND HOOF-TRIMMING COURSE

**Feb 2020, dates TBC – Nantwich Farm Vets, Hurleston, CW5 6BU**



These courses continue to be in high demand. Having one of your farm team well-trained, competent and keen on keeping your cows mobile is a key aspect for herd health and production. This comprehensive course provides theory and hands-on practical experience with knives and grinders over four days, and is perfect for first-timers or old-timers when it comes to trimming! Get in touch with Steve or the office if you want to get your name down for this course early next year.

And introducing...

## REARING FOR RETURNS – BITE-SIZE LEARNING

We are excited to launch our new bite-size calf health training series, Rearing for Returns.

**WHAT?** Two-hour, bite sized, small group sessions (maximum 12-15 people), focusing on the practical aspects of calf rearing

**WHEN?** 9 x monthly sessions, 10.30am - 12.30pm

**WHERE?** Nantwich Farm Vets, Hurleston

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND?** Anyone on farm who is responsible for the day to day care of calves. These would also provide a great basis for training staff members in calf rearing best practices.

**WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?** all attendees will receive a training certificate and courses will be Dairy Pro registered

**COST?** £35 per session or £275 for all 9 (to be charged as a lump sum after first session)



### 15th January – Module 1 - Care around calving for a healthy calf

This session will cover caring for the calving cow to give the best start in life, this will include recognising the stages of calving, how to recognise when things are not going to plan and how to offer basic assistance safely. We will also focus on cleanliness at all stages of the calving process and immediate care of the new-born calf.

### 12th February – Module 2 - Colostrum is Gold

This session will cover the essentials of colostrum management to ensure that every calf gets the best start in life. We will look at practical tips on the testing, storage and feeding of colostrum.

**March – Module 3 – Pre-weaning nutrition**

**April – Module 4 – The calf environment**

**May – Module 5 – The coughing calf**

**June – Module 6 – The scouring calf**

**August – Module 7 - Growth rate monitoring**

**September – Module 8 - Weaning to bulling**

**October – Module 9 – Heifer fertility**

## Vets Mobile Numbers

Dave Shaw	07836 335185	Mike Wilkinson	07866 257014
Rob George	07773 384450	Amy Cox	07966 833870
John Manson	07813 690860	Sarah Williamson	07812 173942
John Yarwood	07814 791109	Joe Mitchell	07773 342345
Stuart Russell	07770 448179	Craig Scarisbrick	07958 361378
Peter Duncalfe	07717 780604	Eleri James	07958 361278
Laura Donovan	07800 647608	Zoe Waterson	07891 843573
Steven Crowe	07891 843694		

## Vet Tech Services

Laura Tomlinson 07889 794981

## Nantwich Farm Vets

Chester Road, Hurleston,  
Cheshire CW5 6BU

24hr telephone: 01270 610349



@NantwichFarmVet