www.nantwichvetgroup.co.uk

nantwich farm vets

Crewe Road End
Nantwich
Cheshire
CW5 5SF

24hr phone line: 01270 610349

March 2019

Dates for your diary

5th March / 2nd April 11am-1pm	**BVD Stamp It Out Meeting** For beef and dairy clients. Contact Laura if interested.
May, dates TBC	**Dairyland Foot Trimming Course** Contact Steve or the office if you are interested (March course cancelled)

Well, February has certainly flown by! With the recent stretch of beautiful sunshine and warm weather, days getting longer again, and recent call outs to lambings, it's certainly feeling like spring. Some of you have (hopefully not too prematurely!) taken the opportunity to get cows out again to ease the pressure on silage stocks.

In this issue we focus on Neospora abortions and plenty of practical advice for reducing the risk of getting TB in your herd.

Local Anaesthetic Availability

There is currently an issue with the production and availability of local anaestetic (affecting both Adrenacaine and Willcaine). For the time being we are restricting any disbudding and dehorning calls, and are unable to sell it over the counter, in order to keep what we have for emergency surgeries. We are hoping to have an alternative shortly, but will keep you updated.

Neospora

Jake Lawson gives the low down on this common cause of abortion in cattle

Neospora is one of the most commonly diagnosed causes of abortion in cattle, with over 10% of all abortions being caused by the protozoa *Neospora caninum*.

Neospora is transmitted by two routes, horizontal transmission and vertical transmission. Whilst horizontal transmission is important, and will be discussed here, vertical transmission is the most common way Neospora is transmitted on farm.

Horizontal transmission is when a cow eats feed contaminated by faeces from an infected animal, dogs being the main species involved. The dog itself gets infected by eating infected placenta, and then the life cycle of Neospora means that eggs (oocysts) are then passed in the dog's faeces. This is one of the main reasons why biosecurity around aborting cattle is vitally important, as if a farm dog gets to it before its disposed of, then they can start infecting cattle in as little as 24 hours. The dog can then be passing infected faeces for several days after being infected, and the eggs themselves stay infective for up to 6 months. This means that any faeces picked up when making silage can still be infective when that silage is fed.

Vertical transmission is the most important route of transmission. This is the when the Neospora passes across the placenta from the cow to the calf while she is pregnant. Abortion generally occurs at 5-7 months of gestation, and infection can affect future pregnancies. No other clinical signs are seen in the mother. However, if infected through horizontal transmission, not all pregnant cows abort, and the calves born alive will be infected with Neospora and will stay infected for life.

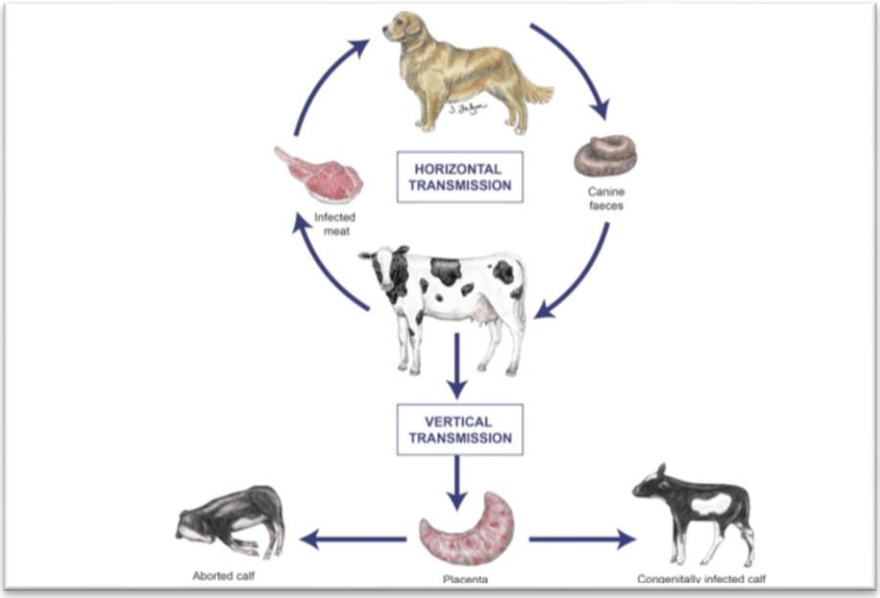
Not all infected cows abort, and calves born alive will be infected and stay infected for life

This means that these infected calves will become infected cows and will in turn give birth to infected calves. This shows that one or two infected cows can soon become a big problem in a relatively short time. In order to combat this it is important to blood sample any cows that abort for Neospora, and if possible send aborted foetuses and placenta away for testing to confirm the presence of Neospora, or determine if there is any other cause of abortion.

In summary:

- Keep dogs away from calving areas, and dispose of any aborted material immediately.
- Prevent dogs or wildlife getting access to feed stores.
- If possible, stop dog access to grazing or silage fields (though this may be nearly impossible if there are footpaths through fields).
- Test any cows that abort. In severely infected herds, every animal might be blood sampled at drying off in order to make decisions regarding that cow and its offspring.
- Eliminate vertical spread by culling Neospora positive cows, or breeding them to beef.

If you have any questions or concerns about abortions in your herd then feel free to contact us.



Neospora lifecycle, showing horizontal and vertical transmission.
Image taken from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Life-cycle-of-Neospora-caninum-Neospora-exhibits-a-highly-similar-life-cycle-to-that-of_fig18_301566619 [accessed 28 Feb, 2019]

A risk-TB business

Peter Duncalfe takes a look at the five main areas of managing and minimising TB infection risk in your herd

Over the last few months we have plugged the free TB Advisory service a fair bit. These visits with John Manson or Amy Cox (our current TBAS team) are completely free, and involve an in-depth look at potential risk areas for introducing or maintaining TB infection in your herd and some practical advice for managing those risks. You don't have to have had a breakdown to get a visit, and it can be helpful to get input into ways you can minimise your chances of getting TB in the future. Don't hesitate to get in touch to book a visit in or get some questions answered. In the mean time, TB Hub is a brilliant website full of info and advice about TB in the UK. It highlights five main areas for protecting your herd from TB (the main points and images come from tbhub.co.uk). We've included these in previous newsletter articles so you may have heard these before, but it's worth being reminded and going through each aspect and asking yourself the question, "Are we doing all we can to reduce the risk of introducing/maintaining TB in our herd?"

RESTRICT contact between badgers and cattle

- Find out if badgers visit your farm.
- Introduce barriers to prevent badgers accessing cattle.
- Limit access of cattle to badger latrines and setts.

Mapping out areas of your fields where there are active setts, latrines etc can help with planning grazing and silaging to avoid them. Setts should be fenced off from grazing cattle.

MANAGE cattle feed and water

- Restrict badger access to feed stores, troughs and mineral licks.
- Don't put feed on the ground at pasture and clean up spillages.
- Use clean, fresh water and restrict badger access to water troughs.
- Only feed waste milk to calves if it has been boiled or pasteurised.

Infected badgers can excrete the TB bacteria in urine, faeces and saliva, either through direct badger-cow contact or indirectly with material (ie. feeds, water troughs etc) that has been contaminated by badger excretions.

> *"Are we doing all we can to reduce the risk of introducing or maintaining TB in our herd?"*

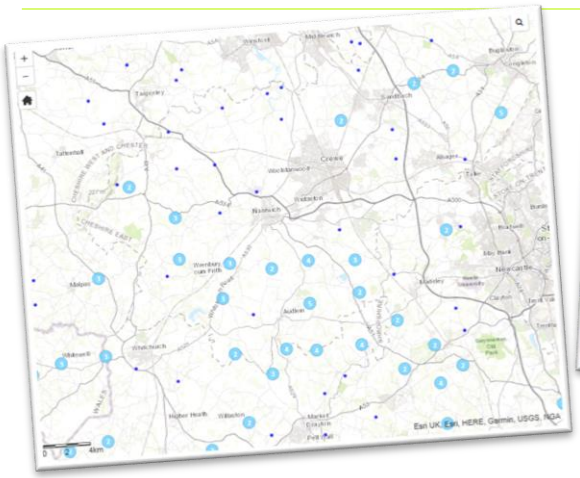
Open feed stores and cattle sheds present an easy meal for badgers, even if you don't see them. Feed store walls and doors should be solid, smooth sided (to prevent badgers climbing), 1.5m high and with less than a 7.5cm gap at the bottom and sides. Feed and water troughs in the field should be raised. Setting up cameras, even temporarily, to monitor any badger activity overnight can be helpful to raise awareness of any unwanted on-farm visitors.

A well secured, badger-proofed feed store

STOP infected cattle entering the herd

- Ask for TB history information before you buy new cattle.
- Post-movement test cattle entering the herd.
- Isolate all higher-risk cattle before they enter the herd.

Cattle movements, even with pre-movement testing, are still a major contributor to the spread of TB in the UK. Introducing <u>any</u> new animal to your herd is a potential disease risk (and not just for TB!). Getting information about the pre-movement test date, last herd test and length of time the seller (and any other recent holdings the animal has been on) has been TB free should be a bare minimum before purchasing. A herd that has been officially TB free for ten years is a lot lower risk than a herd that has been free for six months!



ibtb.co.uk provides information on current and recent TB breakdowns in the UK

Boundaries with neighbouring farms should be a minimum of 3m apart

With regards to post-movement testing, it is worth remembering (as if you need telling!) that the TB test is not perfect, and a negative test does not guarantee an animal is free from TB. Approximately 1 in 4 infected animals may not show as reactors, and tests are far more effective in detecting infections on a herd basis rather than on individuals or small groups (as in a pre-movement test). Therefore it may be wise, particularly if purchasing cattle from a higher risk area, to carry out a post-movement test on new stock before they join your own.

REDUCE risk from neighbouring herds

- Check local TB outbreaks data online at www.ibtb.co.uk
- Put in place effective barriers between neighbouring herds.
- Avoid sharing equipment or vehicles with other farms.
- Avoid sharing cattle grazing with other herds.

Contact with infected cattle from neighbouring herds is another important potential source of infection, either directly or indirectly through contaminated equipment or aerosol spread by slurry spreading. Boundaries to prevent nose-to-nose contact with neighbouring cattle should be a minimum of 3m apart, and ideally you should avoid grazing in fields adjacent to other livestock or at the same time as neighbours are spreading slurry. Is it possible that farms could communicate and cooperate on this sort of thing?

Slurry spreading can aerosolize potentially infected faeces, risking contamination of adjacent fields.

MINIMISE infection from cattle manure

- Store manure for a long period before spreading on farm.
- Only spread manure on arable land or pasture that is not going to be grazed by cattle for at least two months.
- Minimise aerosols and contamination of roadways when spreading.
- Don't spread manure from other farms.

Infected cattle can excrete TB bacteria in their faeces, so slurry can be contaminated. It can survive in slurry for up to six months, so storing it for this amount of time before spreading is advisable. If you use a contractor for spreading your slurry, their equipment can be a massive potential risk for spread if they are coming on your holding after spreading elsewhere. You should expect (and enforce) any vehicles coming on your farm to be clean and disinfected from muck from other farms.

Credit goes to tbhub.co.uk as the source of much of the above material, including logo for each of the points.

TBhub The home of UK TB information

ibTB TBAS TB ADVISORY SERVICE

Vets Mobile Numbers

Dave Shaw	07836 335185	Steven Crowe	07891 843694
Rob George	07773 384450	Mike Wilkinson	07866 257014
John Manson	07813 690860	Jake Lawson	07891 843573
John Yarwood	07814 791109	Amy Cox	07966 833870
Stuart Russell	07770 448179	Sarah Williamson	07812 173942
Peter Duncalfe	07717 780604	Joe Mitchell	07773 342345
Laura Donovan	07800 647608	Lewis Hodgson	07972463365

Vet Tech Services

Laura Tomlinson	07889794981
Rachel Shelley	07881385014

@NantwichFarmVet