



# nantwich farm vets



May 2020

It's incredible how long ago 'normal' life feels! It certainly seems like we are having to get used to this new normal for a while, with all that entails on home and work life. If you missed the details of how we as a practice are responding to the C-19 situation with the work we are doing on farms, do check out last month's newsletter. Please can we reiterate the need to maintain the 2m distance as much as practically possible, and minimize the number of people present on vet visits. There are definitely certain situations where social distancing isn't possible, but where this is the case, limiting that close contact is really important. Remember it's a higher risk that we'll be bringing something to you than the other way round, and we want to keep our clients safe!

## (More!) Medicines Matters

### Foston substitute

Foston injection, a phosphorus preparation which is commonly used to support metabolic conditions (especially downer cows), has been temporarily withdrawn. Unfortunately there is no direct replacement available but we are currently stocking *Vigophos 100* injection.



The licensed use of this product is to support the treatment of secondary ketosis but it contains Butafosfan, an organic phosphorus source. The dose is 5ml per 100kg (iv only), so a 600kg animal requires a 30ml dose.

### Milking Cow tubes

You are probably aware we are facing a severe shortage of certain mastitis tubes due to various manufacturing and raw ingredient sourcing issues. As a result we have some new brands appearing on our shelves. Be aware to check for different withdrawal periods.

*Ubropen* is a new product from Boehringer Ingelheim. It is a high dose penicillin tube well suited to farms that see mainly gram-positive mastitis cases caused by bugs such as *Strep Uberis*.



## Feeding whole milk to calves

In the face of the current extraordinary times many dairy farms are being asked to reduce the number of litres of milk they are producing, and looking for ways to reduce costs. Feeding excess sellable milk to calves is an option that many people are exploring. This is certainly a way to reduce costs and an outlet for milk that is not wanted by the processor but must be done carefully.

Feeding unpasteurised pooled milk from the bulk tank is a big Johnes disease risk unless the herd is tested negative for the disease. Also, whole milk goes off very quickly, so do not store it for long especially if it has not been cooled.

Keep everything from buckets to feeders spotlessly clean. As always do not feed waste milk from cows with mastitis or under antibiotic treatment.

Olly Robinson (7) decided two weeks ago to raise money to help the doctors and nurses at his local hospital (Leighton) during these difficult times, so he set himself the challenge of riding his bike each day around a seven mile loop. To date Olly has biked 91 miles, raised an amazing £1375.00 and won The Community Hero award! If anyone would like to donate to keep Olly pedalling please go to [www.justgiving.com/Melissa-Robinson3](http://www.justgiving.com/Melissa-Robinson3)



# Strategic parasite control

Nicky Bowden discusses what could be worming its way into your stock this spring



It seems slower grass growth is another challenge 2020 is throwing at us, but as more and more animals are turned out to start their grazing season it is important that parasite control is considered. Each spring you need to decide whether your parasite control plan will be *preventive*, using anthelmintic and grazing management, or whether a *therapeutic*, wait-and-see approach is more appropriate for your farm.

An important aspect to the worm life-cycle is encysted larvae that survived the winter on pasture re-emerge with the rise of temperatures in spring. Cattle and sheep can potentially become infected with parasites from every bite of forage they take all grazing season long. When developing a parasite control program for the grazing season consider the age and level of immunity of the cattle.

To be effective, strategic anthelmintic treatments need to begin early in the grazing season, at or shortly after turnout. Thereafter, aim to minimise pasture contamination up to mid July, by which time the over-wintered population should have declined to insignificant levels. Following a relatively mild winter, NADIS are warning that the over-wintered population may be higher than normal. For example, the development of Liver Fluke and its snail intermediate host (*Galba truncatula*) slows considerably over winter, but the warmer and wetter weather this

winter may have allowed a longer development period than usual.

## Immunity

Immunity to gut worms does develop but it requires around eight months of exposure to the infective larvae. Adult animals can still have a worm burden but when immunity is established there is:

- Reduction in size of the adult roundworm parasites
- Reduction in egg laying of female roundworms
- Reduction of inhibition of fourth stage larvae
- Reduction in the establishment of the larvae
- Expulsion of the adult worms

Animals going out for their first grazing season are very susceptible to parasites, and gut worm burdens can have a significant impact on the performance of that animal and may result in disease such as diarrhoea and even death. Treatment during the grazing season will usually be necessary. Animals during their second grazing season should be monitored closely, especially if they did not get significant exposure to infective larvae in their first season due to limited time at pasture or an intensive treatment program the previous year.

Immunity to lungworm is more complicated than that of gut worms. Type 1 immunity develops

rapidly after initial infection but wanes after 6 – 12 months. Type 2 immunity is slower to develop but does not wane, and requires the maturation of the juvenile larvae. For this reason the balance between immunity and the level of challenge is complicated, and why even though there is lungworm on many farms we do not see disease. We do see problems on farm when this balance is destabilised for some reason, for example sudden exposure to a high challenge, the introduction of animals with different levels of immunity or lack of exposure due to worming practices. In immune cattle we do occasionally see reinfection syndrome where there is a sudden high challenge and the larvae reaching the lungs cause a very severe inflammatory response.

Lungworm vaccination in cattle is one opportunity we have to increase the immunity of young animals to a specific parasite. *Huskvac* is flying out of our dispensary at the moment and we would encourage any farms that are considering vaccination but have not yet ordered to get in touch.

## Forecasting

*Nematodirus* in sheep is an example where we can use forecasting to predict when there will be a high challenge to infective larvae as *Nematodirus* eggs require very specific environmental conditions to hatch. This forecast produced by SCOPS is





Left: Nematodirus forecast taken from [www.scops.org.uk](http://www.scops.org.uk) (27<sup>th</sup> April, 2020)  
Above: lambs showing signs of gut worm disease

regularly updated based on data from weather stations throughout the UK. At the time of writing this (27<sup>th</sup> April) the conditions at our local stations are Hawarden (Very High Risk) and Shawbury (Very High Risk) which means that hatching has started and may be peaking soon on some farms.

Due to a unique aspect of its life-cycle Nematodirus can strike very quickly, so you can't afford to have a 'wait and see' policy. And because the damage is done by large numbers of immature larvae that are not producing eggs, faecal egg counts (FECs) are not a reliable indicator of risk. Rapid action is often required which has to be based on a risk assessment (more below) and the forecast for your area (see the forecast map).

### Assessing risks

If your lambs are grazing pasture that carried lambs last spring and you answer yes to one or more of these questions, your lambs are at risk:

- Are they old enough to be eating significant amounts of grass? (generally 6-12 weeks of age but may be younger if ewes are not milking well)
- Do you have groups where there is also likely to be a challenge from coccidiosis? For example, mixed aged lambs are a higher risk

*Nematodirus can strike very quickly, so you can't afford to have a 'wait and see' policy*

- Has there been a sudden, cold snap recently followed by a period of warm weather (suggesting a sudden surge of emerging larvae)?
- Have you got lambs that are under other stresses e.g. triplets, fostered, on young or older ewes.

If possible, avoid infection. Move at-risk lambs (as determined by the risk assessment) to low risk pastures (i.e. pasture that was not grazed by lambs the previous spring).

If you cannot avoid high risk pasture grazed by lambs the previous spring and decide you need to treat for Nematodirus, SCOPS advises farmers to use a white (1-BZ) drench.

### Pasture management

Pasture management is an essential component of parasite control. It is often estimated that 95% of parasites are on pasture and only 5% in the animal. Pasture parasitic load depends on the season, temperature, humidity, stocking density and forage type, as well as the parasite control practices implemented by the farmer and on neighbouring farms. All these variables need to be taken into account to reduce the parasitic load and minimise the impact on productivity on your farm. For example, rotational grazing on a larger number of plots reduces the parasite risk. If possible, avoid grazing grass too short, as 80% of parasites are concentrated in the first 5cm of grass.

In conclusion, 2020 is already throwing us many challenges but due to the wet and warm winter parasites may be another one. For this reason we would encourage all our clients to review their parasite control programs and our vets are happy to help you if you need any advice.

### Vets Mobile Numbers

Dave Shaw	07836 335185	Amy Cox	07966 833870
Rob George	07773 384450	Sarah Williamson	07812 173942
John Manson	07813 690860	Joe Mitchell	07773 342345
John Yarwood	07814 791109	Craig Scarisbrick	07958 361378
Stuart Russell	07770 448179	Eleri James	07958 361278
Peter Duncalfe	07717 780604	Zoe Waterson	07891 843573
Laura Donovan	07800 647608	Lewis Hodgson	07972 463365
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