



nantwich
farm vets

MARCH 2015 NEWSLETTER

Crewe Road End
Nantwich
Cheshire
CW5 5SF

01270 610349

www.nantwichvetgroup.co.uk

Colin Baxter	07860605079
Dave Shaw	07836335185
Rob George	07773384450
John Manson	07813690860
John Yarwood	07814879109
Tim Briggs	07831305749
Stuart Russell	07770448179
Peter Duncalfe	07717780604
Laura Donovan	07800647608
Steve Crowe	07891843694
Liz Davies	07767447281
Michael Wilkinson	07886257014
Jake Lawson	07891843573
Amy Cox	07966833870



Dates for the diary

Dr Dana Tomlinson from Zinpro is giving a talk on advanced nutrition: "When bad things happen to good cows" on Monday 9th March, 7:30pm @ The Wild Boar, Beeston.



Welcome to Spring! I love driving around to farms with signs of new growth - snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils coming up everywhere, and knowing that soon all the green will be returning. It always feels more optimistic...

It's not been an easy winter for our dairy clients, with milk prices falling the way they have, putting pressure on you and on your stock to be producing as efficiently as possible. The temptation is often to cut back costs in all sorts of areas, including vet costs for fertility visits, routine vaccinations, parasite control and early attention to sick cows to name a few. It doesn't take much to see in some areas that short-term gain in reducing costs could actually lead to a much greater long-term loss than you are initially saving. It would certainly be worth discussing any major changes with your vet, as cutting costs may reduce production and efficiency further down the line.

Many of you are keeping a close eye on your fields with view to getting cows (and ewes and lambs!) turned out before long if the weather dries up. Grass is considered a cheap feed and obviously needs utilising, but '*cows shall not live on grass alone*' is a saying worth keeping in mind. Many farmers experience the seasonal drop in fertility and production that often comes with grazing, with associated but largely unseen costs. This particularly affects high yielding cows in early lactation, as they require much more controlled feeding to maintain peak production and get back in calf at the same time. If getting some cows out ASAP is a priority, consider restricting it to your lower yielding in-calf group, helping them to contribute more efficiently to the herd milk production.

I hope that with spring arriving, new growth is seen by all of you again too, and in particular a rejuvenation of the milk price!

Peter

Milk Fever

Everyone knows about milk fever, yet it's surprising how many herds still struggle with it. And with spring turnout approaching, now is the time (if you haven't already) to start doing something about it. Milk fever is far more than just treating the cow that goes down after calving (the clinical case). Clinical cases are just the tip of the iceberg, evidence of bigger problems hidden under the surface. For each clinical case, it is likely there are five cows with sub-clinical milk fever. An affected cow is 3 times more likely to hold her cleansing, 5 times more likely to get an LDA, 8 times more likely to suffer from ketosis and 8 times more likely to get mastitis!

A well managed transition diet (low potassium, added magnesium) is key to prevention, but it is also worth some targeted prevention with Bovikalc® boluses. These are given at calving, and provide both a short and long-term supply of calcium to supplement the cow for the risk period post-calving. They should be given to cows at most risk of developing clinical milk fever: the higher yielding, older, over-conditioned cows or those that have had clinical milk fever in a previous lactation. It can also be given to help treat clinical cases (after getting a bottle of calcium in the vein) to reduce chance of recurrence.



RDPE Funding

Another round of RDPE grants will be available from March for investment in specific types of equipment for improvement of farm productivity, health and welfare. Exact details and documents for application are yet to be publicised by the RPA, but there is a document with some information online under the CAP Reform website. Google "CAP reform Feb 2015."

Do you know if BVD is affecting your herd?

The BVD Screening service that has been on offer was due to end last month, but we now have an extension until the end of March. This scheme enables you to assess your herd BVD status and provides an opportunity for us to discuss any relevant management areas in light of the results. The testing for most milking herds involves two bulk milk PCR tests three months apart to look for PIs in the herd, along with blood antibody screening of ten youngstock. Only one or other of these will be relevant for other herd types (whether flying, beef or youngstock). If you have not signed up, do so while you have the chance!

Lameness and Mobility Scoring

Over the past few months we have hosted three Dairyland Hoofcare Institute 4-day Foot Trimming Courses. It's been great to see farmers keen on improving foot-care and reducing lameness on farm, both in more effective treatment of lame cows and routine trimming.

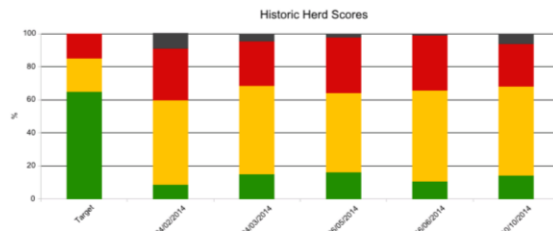
Effective trimming and treatment is one thing. But what if you aren't treating the right cows? Early identification of a lame cow is a prerequisite to prompt effective treatment. But with all the other things that time and attention is taken up with, often lame cows are not noticed until they are severely lame, and by then the response to treatment will be a lot less successful, and the cost of lameness much higher.

Routine mobility scoring is the missing link between a cow going lame and getting prompt treatment. But this isn't something you may have time for yourself, so as part of our Lameness Team we have dedicated mobility scorers that will do the job for you. Every cow seen will be given a score of 0-3 (0 = sound, 1 = abnormal gait, 2 = lame, 3 = severely lame). The visit is arranged to suit you, often the most convenient time being milking as cows come out of the parlour.

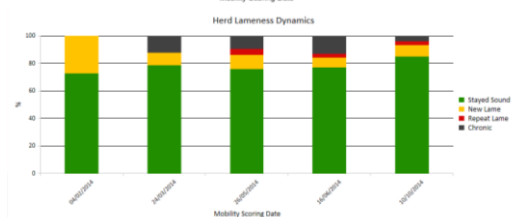
A one-off score will give you an idea of the level of lameness in the herd and a list of what cows are lame at that particular time, but it is routine scoring (ideally monthly or fortnightly) and our reporting that will enable you to prioritise treatment on cows that have gone newly lame since the previous score. A picture will also be built up of cows that are chronically lame that are unlikely to respond successfully to treatment and may require other interventions. So after each score you will receive a mobility report (see sample pictures below) that will provide you with a whole-herd breakdown, and a list of priority, repeat and chronic cows. Further analysis can be done to look at lameness in different milking groups, which feet are more affected, lactation number etc.

If you would like to find out more about our lameness services (including the DairyCo Healthy Feet Plan) and how we can help, please contact either Peter or Steve.

Historic herd scores show the herd break down over the past few scores, to show trends and changes. This can be broken down by groups as well.



Herd lameness dynamics show how cows have changed from one score to the next, either staying sound, a new lameness case, a repeat case or chronic case. The latter three groups are given in lists below.



Priority cows are cows that have not been lame for the previous three scores (if scoring monthly). These cows should be seen within the next 24-48 hours.

Animal ID	Animal Group	Foot	10/10/2014	16/06/2014	26/05/2014	24/03/2014	04/02/2014	Dated
0021			1	1	1	0	0	No Score
0073			2	1	1	No Score	No Score	No Score
0113			2	1	0	No Score	No Score	No Score
0115			2	1	1	No Score	No Score	No Score
0118			2	1	1	0	0	No Score
0129			2	1	1	No Score	No Score	No Score
0153			2	1	1	No Score	No Score	No Score
0227			2	1	1	1	No Score	No Score
0286			2	1	1	1	No Score	No Score
0423			2	1	0	1	1	No Score

Repeat cows weren't lame last score, but have been lame in one of the previous three scores.

Animal ID	Animal Group	Foot	10/10/2014	16/06/2014	26/05/2014	24/03/2014	04/02/2014	Dated
0032			2	1	2	1	No Score	No Score
0043			1	1	2	No Score	No Score	No Score
0047			1	1	2	1	No Score	No Score
0177			2	1	2	1	No Score	No Score
0112			2	1	2	1	No Score	No Score
0219			2	1	2	No Score	No Score	No Score
0257			2	1	2	2	0	No Score

Chronic cows have been lame for at least the last two scores. These cows are likely to have a poorer response to standard trimming treatment.

Animal ID	Animal Group	Foot	10/10/2014	16/06/2014	26/05/2014	24/03/2014	04/02/2014	Dated
0010			2	2	0	No Score	No Score	No Score
0017			1	2	1	No Score	No Score	No Score
0025			2	2	2	No Score	No Score	No Score
0030			2	2	2	No Score	No Score	No Score
0040			2	2	No Score	2	2	No Score
0052			1	2	2	1	1	No Score
0138			2	2	No Score	No Score	No Score	No Score
0144			1	2	1	2	2	No Score
0184			2	2	1	2	2	No Score
0201			2	2	1	No Score	No Score	No Score
0236			2	2	0	No Score	No Score	No Score
0254			2	2	0	No Score	No Score	No Score