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nantwich farm vets

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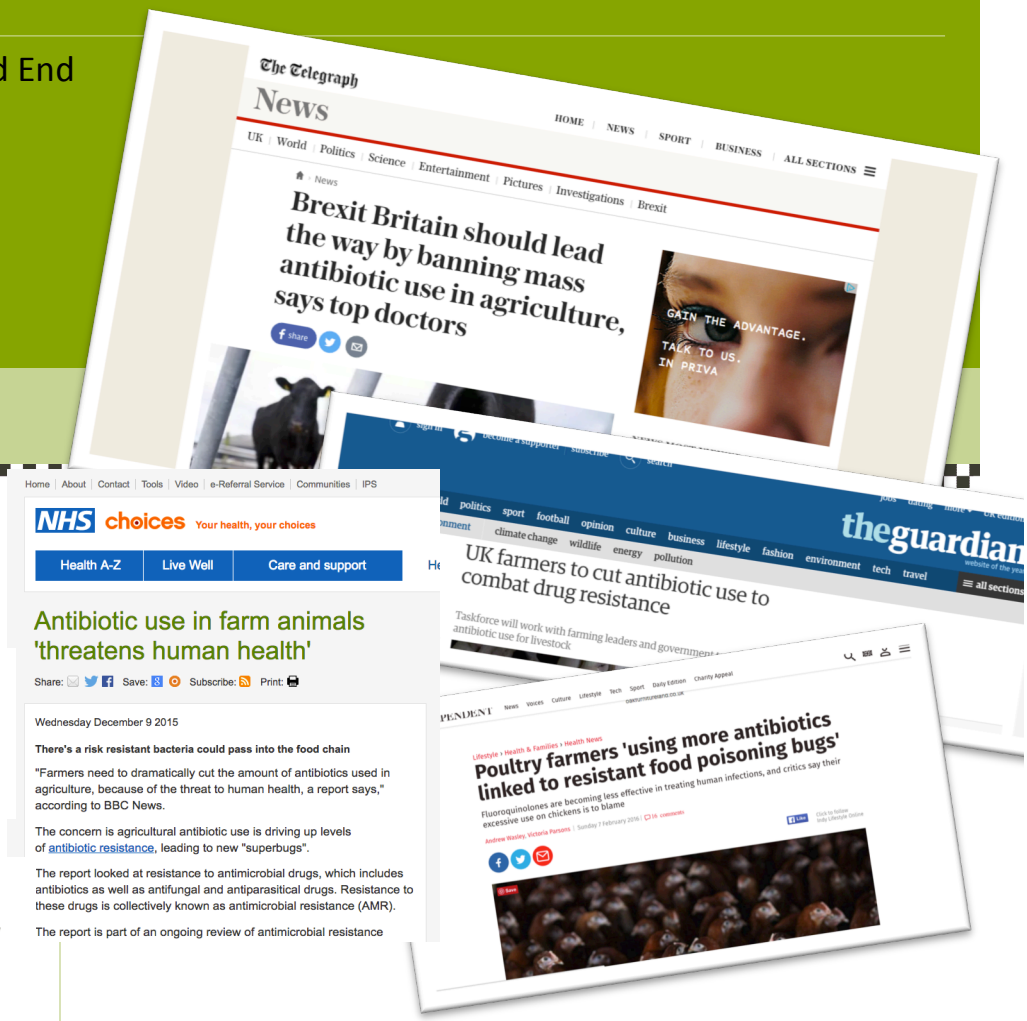
February 2017



Dates for your diary

15th February 10am-2pm
"What's in my medicine cupboard?" Responsible use of antibiotics

1 day course. Contact Liz

22nd February 11am
Lucerne discussion group
Nantwich equine centre
All clients welcome to attend

28th Feb-2nd March
DIY AI course

Contact Mike to book a place

20th -23rd March
Dairyland Foot Trimming Course

Contact Steve to book a place

Under pressure....

There has been a great deal of talk in the press in the last few months about use of antibiotics in farm animals leading to resistant so called 'super-bugs'. Some of your supply contracts already specify which drugs you can or cannot use. As a practice we have a responsibility to safeguard antibiotics for the future and we would like to encourage you to book a place on our **"What's in my medicine cupboard?"** training course on Wednesday 15th February.

Harper Adams University

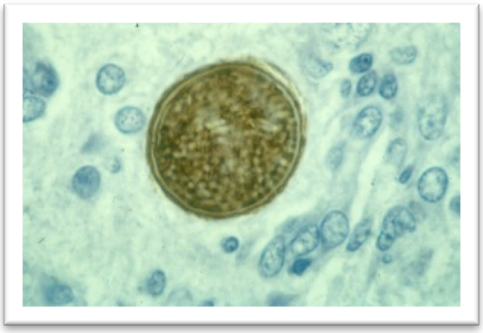
Calf Rearing Research Project

Laura Palczynski is a PhD student at Harper Adams University looking to interview people involved in dairy calf rearing. Interviews generally take about 40 minutes to an hour and responses will be stored and reported anonymously. The format of the interview would be a fairly informal chat about opinions and experiences regarding youngstock management. Please contact 07454 533064 if you would like to find out more

Neosporosis in cattle

Neospora is the most commonly diagnosed cause of abortion in the UK. This month, **Liz Davies** discusses the disease and how to prevent it.

Neospora is a tiny single celled organism (protozoan) about half the size of a red blood cell that can invade and live inside animal cells. It is very similar to Toxoplasma that can cause abortion in sheep. Infection of cattle with Neospora can result in serious disease and neosporosis is recognised as one of the major causes of bovine abortion worldwide.



The organism is a parasite that can only live and multiply within cells of an animal and it is often known as Neospora caninum as it was first discovered in dogs in the mid 1980s.

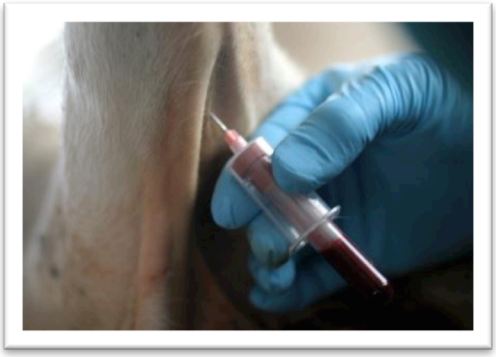
Disease is mainly seen in dogs and cattle. In dogs the most severe clinical cases are seen in pups infected in the womb where they often present with paralysis of their backend and have difficulty swallowing.

In cattle, Neospora may cause cattle to abort or produce still born calves. Cows of any age may abort from 3 months of gestation to term. If an infected cow gives birth to a live calf it may show neurological abnormalities and have difficulty walking and feeding but most calves that are born infected show no outward clinical signs.

Abortion "storms" happen when a group of pregnant cattle all get infected at the same time. Usually by pasture, feed or water contaminated with Neospora eggs.

Not all infected cattle will abort but infected cows are 3-7 times more likely to abort than non-infected cows. Abortions are most common in heifers and recently infected cows. After an abortion storm the frequency of abortions within the herd drops and a lower number of abortions are usually seen over time.

Infected cattle stay infected for life and these carrier cows will spread the parasite to their calf during pregnancy. This allows Neospora to be maintained within a herd for many cattle generations without the need for a dog to spread it. There is no treatment to help infected animals and as yet there is no effective vaccine that will prevent abortion or transmission of the parasite from dam to calf.



Bulk testing of around 500 GB dairy herds in 2012 has suggested 51% of herds are infected and research on 15,736 cows on dairy farms in the south west found that 12.9% of cattle tested positive. It is very likely that even if you don't think you have a problem with abortions you will have some Neospora positive cows in your herd.

Neospora can be diagnosed on an aborted fetus sent to the lab. A bulk milk test can give you an indication of your herd status and blood tests can show individually infected animals. Because a cows' antibodies can go up and down the best time to blood sample a cow is 2-3 months before calving or immediately after an abortion. If you take a blood sample when she is not pregnant you may get a false result.

Infection can be transmitted on farm via 2 main routes

1. A carrier cow is bought-in which can pass the disease onto her calves
2. A recently infected dog that is on the farm can transmit it via its faeces especially if it contaminates feed or drinking water.

A dog becomes infected by eating Neospora infected meat (aborted calf or cleansing). After this it will start shedding eggs in its faeces after 3-9 days and this will continue for around 2-3 weeks. After this period no further oocysts are produced and the dog is no longer a risk to the herd.

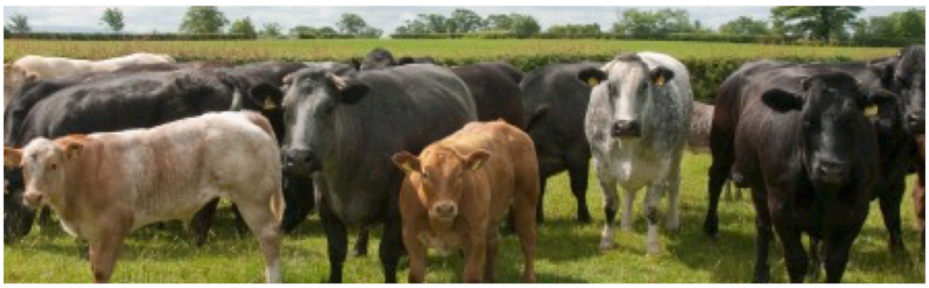
To prevent your dog getting infected keep it away from calving areas and do not allow it to eat cleansings or aborted calves. It is also advisable to keep dogs away from cattle feed and areas that could result in the contamination of drinking water for cattle.

If your dog is already positive to Neospora on a blood sample then it is less of a risk. If public footpaths cross your farm it is advisable to put up notices reminding dog walkers to pick up their dog's muck.

It is unknown how long the Neospora eggs can survive in the environment but it is likely that they are similar to Toxoplasma eggs that can survive for more than a year in favourable conditions.

Culling of infected cows is not always practical or economical. Positive cows are only a risk of spread if they give birth to a replacement calf. There is no evidence of adult cow to adult cow transmission of Neospora.

Ideally these cows should be bred to beef or if a heifer is born to a positive cow then this is not kept as a replacement.



Are you considering trace element supplementation?

- Copper, cobalt, selenium and iodine are essential trace elements required by cattle and sheep. Deficiencies of trace elements can cause poor production. However, there are other common causes of low productivity such as parasite infestations or energy deficiency.
- Trace element requirements vary with age and production level - young, pregnant and milking animals have greatest need. A trace element deficiency should be confirmed by independent testing and advice before buying and feeding supplements.
- Grass and forage varies widely in trace element content due to soil type, pH, drainage, plant species and fertiliser use.
- Clay soils generally have higher trace element levels than sandy soils. Soil testing may reveal gross deficiencies but should only be used as a guide when considering the trace element status of livestock.
- Forage analysis can be misleading and needs careful interpretation. Deficiencies are more accurately diagnosed from blood or tissue tests.
- Diagnosis of a deficiency should be confirmed by monitoring the response to supplementation.
- **BEWARE** Over-supplementation could cause toxicity or cause other undesirable interactions in the animal.
- Over-supplementation could waste money!!!

Vets Mobile Numbers

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Stuart Russell	07770448179
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Jake Lawson	07866257014
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