

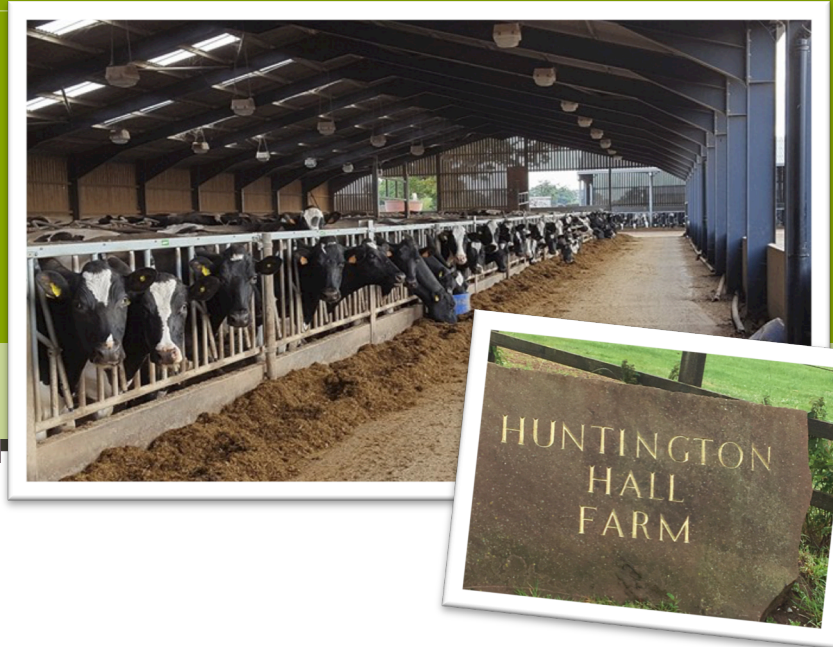
nantwich farm vets



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July 2017



Dates for your diary

- 7th July** **Farm walk**
Huntington Hall Farm
6.30pm
- 12th July** **Lucerne Discussion Group**
Tilstone Bank Farm
- 26th July** **Nantwich Show**
- 7th-10th August** **Dairyland Foot Trimming Course**
Contact Steve to book a place

See you on Friday!

Looking forward to seeing you all at 6.30pm on Friday 7th at our farm walk at Huntington Hall Farm, Chester, CH3 6EA in conjunction with Genus and Profeed. The herd has expanded from 300 to 700 cows over the last couple of years. John has developed a very impressive building set up over the years concentrating on cow comfort, health and optimising productivity. The herd are milked through a rotary parlour three times a day. They are currently averaging 38L milk sold/cow/day. John has focused heavily on fertility to optimise milk production and maximise herd profitability.

All welcome to come along there will be 4 stations covering different areas of the farm management, plenty of beer and a hog roast so we look forward to seeing you all there!



FREE Soil Day July 7th at 9.00am at Smeaton Hall, Wrenbury Nantwich, CW58HE

Great opportunity to hear world renowned speaker Graeme Sait. Learn an array of profit building tools including key ratios in the soil and plant to build production and resilience. Also secrets of the harnessing soil biology as your hidden workforce.

Please contact Anne Stones on 01270 780990 to book your place.



Seeing double

Two for the price of one is not always a good thing! This month, **Liz Davies** discusses twin pregnancies and strategies to manage them in your herd.

Twins are an undesirable reproduction outcome in dairy cattle. Negative effects are seen in both cow and calves, so a greater understanding of how and why twinning occurs and what can be done to mitigate these effects is useful.

Most twins in cattle are as a result of double ovulation, i.e. non-identical. Incidence of double ovulation in dairy cattle has been reported as around 14%, so perhaps it is no wonder that in some herds the rate of twin births can approach 10%.

A healthy follicular wave pattern should result in selection of one dominant follicle which then goes on to ovulate. Twinning occurs when stress and genetic factors combine to result in two follicles being equally dominant and reaching ovulation at the same time.

Risk factors for twinning

Breed – Holsteins consistently show higher rates of twinning than other breeds with a range in various studies of 0-10%

Genetics – though not strongly heritable, previous twin pregnancy is a risk factor for increased likelihood of future twin pregnancies

Parity – risk of twinning increases with parity

Yield – cows producing a greater than average milk yield at the time of ovulation have a higher risk of double ovulation (and therefore of twinning). This may be directly linked to a high plane of nutrition, or indirectly to metabolism of oestrogen and progesterone in high yielders.

Season – some studies have shown effects of season, but these can be confounded by changes in nutrition. Heat stress and decreasing day length may play a role.

Management strategies

Management of cows carrying twins can only be achieved through early identification. Ask your vet who does your pregnancy diagnosis to scan for twins as a matter of routine. It doesn't take a lot longer, and is useful for managing the cow.

When 2 CLs are visible in a pregnant cow, it is a good indicator of a likelihood of twins and shows the vet which horn to scan for the 2nd foetus. Early identification of twins (30-42 days) should be followed up by a confirmation at the next fertility visit (50-60 days) as the incidence of late embryonic death is higher in twins.



This will minimise the chance of a cow being confirmed PD positive at early PD and subsequently being found empty when late in lactation/due to calve, or treated as a twin when it is now a single pregnancy. It isn't worth trying to abort the cow or to abort a single foetus. The cost of an abortion (delay to subsequent pregnancy, risk of failure to conceive) is greater than the cost of twinning.

A proportion of twin pregnancies will go on to lose one foetus anyway, so trying to abort a single foetus is likely to cause more harm than good.

Once a cow is confirmed still carrying twins at recheck then she should be identified and managed differently in late lactation. Assessment of body condition should be undertaken to allow correct allocation of concentrate or grouping (e.g. might stay on the high yielding ration longer).



At drying off, the nutritional requirement will be higher than for a normal cow, so in a management system where cows are split into 'far off' and

'transition' then the cow carrying twins should go straight into the transition group. This should allow for slightly increased energy density, plus there is a good chance of her calving early (average gestation length is 6-10 days shorter than for single



pregnancy) so the risk of her missing out on a proper transition (with consequent metabolic disease) is reduced.

On a single dry cow ration, other strategies may need to be employed such as increased feed space allocation and application of a Kexxtone bolus 3-4 weeks pre-calving.

The knowledge that a cow is carrying twins is useful at calving, as there is an increased risk of requirement for manual assistance. Increased observation and earlier intervention than normal may help avoid a protracted calving, with consequent stress and risk of infectious disease.

Cows which have calved twins are at increased risk of metabolic diseases for example:

Milk fever – provision of additional oral calcium using bolus or drench may be of benefit at calving

Ketosis – testing ketone levels at 5-15 days post calving is worthwhile. Cows with a BHB level >1.2 mmol/L should be treated with 5 days of 300ml propylene glycol. This should reduce the risk of immune suppression and LDA.

If the calves are breeding replacements and are of mixed sex then there is a >90% chance that the heifer will be a freemartin. This is because testosterone from the male foetus has crossed to the female placenta and influenced its genital development so that it is infertile.

Twin calves are very unlikely to receive adequate colostrum if left to suckle, so just as we recommend for all calves: the cow should be milked as soon as possible after calving and the calves fed either by bottle or stomach tube

Scanning for twins is extremely worthwhile to aid your cow management. Ask your vet to start doing it at the next fertility session!



Vets Mobile Numbers

- Dave Shaw 07836335185
- Rob George 07773384450
- John Manson 07813690860
- John Yarwood 07814879109
- Colin Baxter 07860605079
- Stuart Russell 07770448179
- Peter Duncalfe 07717780604
- Laura Donovan 07800647608
- Steven Crowe 07891843694
- Liz Davies 07767447281
- Mike Wilkinson 07866257014
- Jake Lawson 07866257014
- Amy Cox 07966833870
- James Patterson 07774795700
- Sarah Williamson 07812173942

Vet Technician

- Jess Tonks 07921855043



“@NantwichFarmVet”



Will you sponsor Steve?

The UK and Irish veterinary and farming worlds join forces this summer with the aim of raising £50,000 for the international development charity Send A Cow. Activities include a Land’s End to John O’Groats cycle ride, a cycling and walking relay across Britain from The Wash to Aberystwyth, Chief Veterinary Officers climbing 850metre-high Slieve Donard, the highest peak in Northern Ireland and our very own Steve Crowe who is going to run 50 miles, just under 2 marathons, through the Cumbrian Hills.

The initiative is the brainchild of Andrew Cobner, president of the British Cattle Veterinary Association, and is part of celebrations marking the organisation’s 50th anniversary. The money is being raised in memory of former member and lecturer Andrew Madel from the Royal Veterinary College, who inspired generations of farm animal vets and championed the work of Send a Cow until he died in 2013.

Andrew Cobner took on the challenge of cycling 950 miles from Land’s End to John O’Groats, with friends and colleagues joining him along the way. They stopped at various veterinary practices along their route, including here at Nantwich where they refuelled on Liz’s lasagne and Laura’s chocolate brownies before heading on up to Weaverham to finish the day! Two weeks after they set off, Andrew and his team made it to John O’Groats.

Send A Cow is a charity that many in the farming industry have supported over the years, helping families in Africa produce food sustainably. They’ve been working with some of Africa’s poorest families for nearly 30 years, helping over 1.3 million people work their way out of extreme poverty. They provide livestock, tools, seeds and training as part of a programme giving people the hope and means to establish a future for themselves, their families and their wider communities. They are currently delivering programmes in seven African countries: Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya.

If you would like to sponsor Steve in his incredible efforts please visit www.justgiving.com/vetsteve