

Newsletter August 2010

We are extremely pleased to announce the arrival of Edna's baby, Tobias who was born on the 9th July weighing 5lb 4oz. A little earlier than expected and by caesarean but Edna and baby are both well. Edna's departure has allowed the arrival of a few unfamiliar faces in the practice. Ioana (Joanne to us!) is currently here on a temporary role having trained in her homeland of Romania and undertaken a research and teaching role at Bristol University. Andrew has now arrived and taken up a permanent position as Farm Vet. His roots are in the North-West but has taken a move south with his partner Lindsey, setting up home in Wrington. He has a keen interest in all things agricultural with particular interest in calf rearing and pneumonia. We hope he soon settles and becomes a valued member of our team.

July has seen a marginal growth spurt of grass. On the whole, cattle have been reported to be growing well despite lack of food. I have seen several cases of nervous ketosis over the last month. These cases can be particularly worrying as symptoms can often be confused with BSE, however in reality they are easily treated. Cows will often attempt to eat metal bars or cubicles; sometimes it appears as though they are trying to eat concrete! They are generally uncoordinated and can appear to be blind. The symptoms are a result of the breakdown of body fat in the immediate period post calving the chemicals produced will effectively cause them to become drunk. Affected cows are often too fat at calving and will lose weight rapidly before showing signs. A single case may be an indication of poor dry cow and transition dietary management.

Late summer and autumn is often the time for young cattle to develop husk due to ingesting lungworm out at grass in the summer. So if you have not vaccinated your young stock you should look out for signs of lungworm. Although all ages of cattle can develop the disease, it mainly occurs in young cattle in their first grazing season. The main signs are coughing and lower weight gain in the infected cattle. The treatment is worming and sometimes antibiotics are needed due to secondary bacterial infection. Diagnosis, which may be necessary for organic farmers that cannot use wormers routinely, is reached by identifying the larvae in faecal samples.

We have a couple of dates for your diary, first is a daytime meeting on Heifer Rearing on the 14th of September. We are also holding an evening meeting on the 23rd September on Worm and Fluke control in cattle and sheep. Many of you have encountered deaths due to fluke on the last year or so and this meeting will aim to give you information on a suitable control strategy whilst at the same time bringing you up to date with worming advice. Further details for both meetings will follow next month.