

Newsletter October 2009

The autumn typically brings its array of seasonal disease. 'Fog Fever' is one such disease that we have seen a number of cases in the past week or so. Fog Fever is a non-infectious cause of pneumonia. It occurs due a hypersensitivity or allergic reaction to a chemical called l-tryptophan in lush grass. Most commonly it occurs on after-grass following mowing when the grass has a slight yellow tinge. The tryptophan is metabolised in the rumen to form a toxic chemical called methyl-3-indole, which attacks the lining of the lungs, altering the composition of the cells and reducing their ability to exchange gas. The animal effectively suffocates itself.

There is no specific treatment for fog fever, the key is to remove cattle from the pasture, supportive medication in the form of anti-inflammatories can be helpful, but those cattle that survive may be permanently affected. The key is prevention, by introducing stock to lush pastures gradually or avoiding grazing them altogether.

Cases of lungworm 'husk' also peak in the autumn, although we have seen cases throughout the grazing season. Typically lungworm are seen in cattle during their first grazing season; however cases are sometimes seen in older cattle and cows that have not previously been exposed to disease and developed immunity. A blood sample can be used to prove previous exposure to lungworm or larvae can be detected in the faeces but not for up to several weeks from the onset of coughing.

A very good vaccine 'huskvac' is available to administer pre-turnout to cattle in their first or second grazing season. Vaccination is well worth considering, as the effects of husk will affect the life-long production of the animal.

We have for a while now, been assessing bull fertility on problem bulls. The number we are examining has steadily increased, so we have taken the decision to purchase an electro-ejaculator. This device allows us to produce a more reliable and representative semen sample, enabling us to give you better advice on the reproductive capability of your bull. We are keen to test bulls prior to the mating period to be sure he enters the cow group capable of performing well, and getting cows in calf. All too often it is only after significant and costly period that you discover the bull isn't doing his job. If you would like to find out more about this service please speak to Ed.

An (exciting) new product has arrived, the first pour-on flukicide. Closamectin is a combined worm and fluke product. The flukicide, closantel will kill adult and immature fluke, it is ideal to use as a post-housing treatment. As with other fluke treatments, it is not licensed in lactating dairy cows so cows should be treated at drying off to allow a 60 day period before calving. We have an extremely competitive introductory offer; 1 litre for £112 2.5l for £199 and 5l for £399. Please contact Redhill to place your order.

