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Practice News

October has seen quite a few cases of grass staggers, principally in spring calving cows still suckling a calf at grass. Often these are complicated by low Calcium or Phosphorous levels, particularly in cows that are in good condition. An early intravenous bottle of CMP is always a good idea.

The parasite challenge from lungworm, gutworms and especially fluke appears to be higher this year due to the ideal conditions, warm and wet, early in the summer. Many farms that managed without a fluke treatment last year will need to address the problem this autumn.

A few early pneumonia outbreaks have been treated but as yet we have not seen any IBR. We have managed to secure a few more doses of Tracherine for those who wish to continue to use those vaccine before it goes off the market. As previously it will be available on a first come first serve basis.

On the sheep front the tup fertility testing continues, with over 300 tups in the practice now tested this year. We have also been involved in our first scab outbreak of the season - see below for more on this.

We've been busy blood sampling ewes for pre-tupping trace element requirements. These can be very farm specific and already this year we have diagnosed deficiencies to all of the "big four - copper, cobalt, selenium and iodine.

Reminder - Free Johne's testing and health planning

A wee reminder as per last month's newsletter that we are on the lookout for a number of volunteers who are not currently annually screening for Johne's disease but believe there may be some level of disease in the herd, to get involved in a pilot study and as such receive some free testing and health planning time. If you are interested and believe you fit the bill, please contact us at the practice.

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Antibiotic Usage

As everyone will be aware we are coming under increasing pressure to reduce our inputs as an industry and no-where more so than with antibiotics. This is particularly the case with the so-called Critically Important Antibiotics, or CIA's that are vital for human use. This includes products such as Marbocyl, Baytril Max, Naxcel and a lot of the shorter acting dry cow tubes.

For the most part we have alternatives to these products and generally they are just as effective. We are glad to say that over the years we have seen a steady reduction in the use of antibiotics for the treatment of conditions such as pneumonia and lameness as strides forward are made in terms of prevention. Management and vaccination are the key tools and as we reduce antibiotic use we also see healthier and more productive stock. It is however imperative that we retain the ability to use what products we deem necessary for any given situation, a position that is easier to maintain if we are seen to be using medicines responsibly. There is much more information on this topic on the RUMA website, www.ruma.org

Sheep Scab Warning

We are currently involved in our first sheep scab outbreak of the winter season. If you have any concerns about itchy sheep please do not hesitate to contact us.

Recently, resistance to some of the injectable scab treatments has been diagnosed, likely due to overuse and perhaps unnecessary preventative measures.

The new blood test is very effective at detecting if scab has been active within a group of sheep and it is far more sustainable to test and see if treatment is required, rather than to blanket treat everything "just in case".

Worming Ewes Pre Topping

We now know, contrary to historical practice, that the majority of ewes do not need wormed pre topping. Adult ewes, in good body condition and on a good plane of nutrition have a strong level of immunity to gut worms.

Gimmers, tups and thinner ewes do not fall into this category and likely could do with a dose. However, don't fall into the trap of using a combination fluke and worm product just because it's easy - it may cost you more and have an inappropriate combination for your farm or for the time of year.

If in any doubt about what to be dosing your ewes with, please just give us a call at the practice.