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Practice News

May has been an exceptionally busy month for the practice, with much of the routine spring work being delayed for a number of weeks on many units due to the long winter and poor spring.

The foot trimming crush has been in high demand to tend to cows having spent a long winter on the dung and to get bulls sorted to do their jobs properly. We've been busy semen sampling dozens of bulls also, in what is now the routine for many farms. Most have passed which allows turn out with confidence, and where there have been unexpected results then action has been taken to avoid disappointment when it comes to PDing!

This recent run of good weather has seen both grass and stock "catching up". Rain in the last few days, coupled with temperatures staying mild will mean that flies will soon be a problem. As such, this month we're having a bit of a focus on flies.

Summer Mastitis Prevention

Cattle running dry over the summer, autumn calvers and even heifers are at risk of developing summer mastitis, which certainly affects the productive lifespan of these animals but can result in death in severe cases.

There are a number of pour or spot-on products available for fly prevention with a variety of durations of actions, so please speak to us about which product is best for your needs.

Intramammary dry cow tubes are also strongly recommended for at risk animals, gold standard would be to add in a teat sealant also. Although this adds cost, it may prevent several crippling cases of mastitis in certain groups of cows.

Changes to BVD Eradication Rules

There have been a few amendments and updates to the Scottish BVD eradication rules. Notably, any added animals from non-Scottish herds that don't have an individual BVD status (herd accreditation is not sufficient), will require individual testing on arrival during quarantine. In practice, this means that most bulls bought from herds south of the border will require individual testing once they arrive home.

Contact Us

Kirriemuir

20 Forfar Road
Kirriemuir
DD8 5BY
01575 572643

Blairgowrie

Back Brae
Blairgowrie
PH10 6NW
01250 871010

vets@thrumsvet.co.uk

www.thrumsvet.co.uk

Or find us on
Facebook!



Emailing list: if you would like to receive this newsletter by email please send an email FAO Ed to vets@thrumsvet.co.uk



Build a Fly Trap!

It may sound all a bit “Blue Peter” but making homemade fly traps is cheap, easy and if deployed early in the season in areas where flies are numerous, they can have a significant impact on reducing fly numbers on farm.

Use two, 2 litre plastic drinks bottles, one clear, one brown. Cut a 1cm hole in the lid of the brown bottle and three cross shaped cuts around the bottle, about 4cm above the base. The cuts should be about 1.5cm long and push the resulting flaps inwards. Push some bait (chopped offal) through the holes. Cut the clear bottle in half so the top can be secured with tape over the top of the brown bottle.



Flies enter through the holes in the brown bottle, attracted by the offal, leave through the lid hole and are trapped in the clear bottle.

Give it a go! It's cheap and easy and can reduce the numbers of flies on farm significantly if used properly.

Fly Strike In Sheep

We have had our first reports of fly strike in the area about two weeks ago. About 80% of UK sheep flocks are affected by fly strike each year, which costs money and is damaging to welfare and production. Female flies are attracted by decomposing matter such as wounds or soiled fleeces - shear in good time, attend to wounds quickly and ensure worm control is good in lambs.

There are a number of products available for prevention of strike in sheep but the duration of action and withdrawal periods vary massively, so please speak to us for specific advice on what's best for your requirements.

Please note that many products licenced for prevention are not effective for treatment and an alternative product may be needed.

There is now an excellent resource for predicting when fly strike will hit at www.nadis.org.uk that also allows you to report a case.