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## Nutritional Matters

As we eat our way through winter we are doing some metabolic profiling on suckler herds pre-calving. There have been some interesting results with many cows in negative energy balance in the run up to calving. The cows in question all appear to be fine so we are as yet unsure as to whether this is a truly abnormal situation or just a normal abnormality! We all have a fear of over large calves due to fat cows at calving but cows without the wherewithal to calve and milk properly is a bigger issue.

Separately we have come across a few problems associated with the feeding of Ryegrass silage. Although energy levels are usually adequate the crop is often inherently short on protein, sometimes comparable with levels found in straw. Combined with a very short chop length which reduces intake and digestibility, this can lead to poor growth rates in youngstock and excessive loss of condition in cows.

On the sheep front pregnancy scanning is proceeding with generally better than average results. Converting these encouraging figures into weaned lambs is the real challenge. Ensuring correct ewe nutrition during pregnancy is key to this; to assist with this we offer the complete package of in-house diet consultation and recommendations and metabolic profiling (with same day results) to ensure energy and protein requirements are being met without overspending on feed.

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## BVD

The national picture continues to be encouraging with fewer outbreaks in general. However, we have been made aware of 2 infected farms in Angus where there are still P.I. animals.

We have also recently had a few farms screen 'Not Negative'. This does not always mean they have P.I. animals but suggests that they have been exposed to the virus at the very least, this should be a pertinent reminder that good biosecurity remains the principal method of control with continued vaccination of the breeding herd at least worthwhile.

You will have all received notification that the eradication scheme has entered "phase 5". For most herds this will mean that the testing requirements stay the same, but puts increased pressure on herds who are currently Not Negative.

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## Closure of SAC Perth Post Mortem Service

At the end of last month the post mortem service provided by SAC Perth closed its doors as part of a restructuring of veterinary surveillance in Scotland. Whilst there will still be a post mortem service at SAC Aberdeen it now means that most post mortem examinations will be carried out by one of us where required. To assist with this our vets are involved in further training to ensure we offer the highest standard of service possible. We also will continue to receive support from the SAC vets in Perth.

Post mortems are an invaluable tool in herd and flock health so we look forward to a more active role in providing this service.

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## Rotavec Corona

Despite the presence of 3 competitor vaccines this remains the market leader. Proven to control rotavirus scour in conjunction with good colostral transfer, it should ideally be used 2-3 weeks prior to the onset of calving. Due to a price reduction it has never been more cost-effective to vaccinate against scour.

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## Liver Fluke

Over the past month we have been diagnosing chronic fluke with evidence of fluke eggs in dung samples. We have also continued to see real issues with acute fluke on some farms. This is likely due to the mild and wet early winter we have had, meaning that fluke has continued to infect animals after the “routine” back-end treatments. There have also been concerns over resistance to triclabendazole.

Routine checking of dung samples for fluke eggs is advised at this time of year, a service we are able to offer in the practice, often with same or next day results.

Where chronic fluke is suspected or diagnosed it is advisable to use a product other than triclabendazole. We are currently stocking and selling Solantel (sheep) and Closamectin (cattle) at competitive prices that are ideal for the job.

If in doubt or if you have any questions about fluke please do not hesitate to contact us.