



Vets' Welcome

This issue falls at a busy time of year here at Castle Veterinary Group as, unfortunately, colder weather brings with it plenty of problems for our farm animal species – and plenty of TB testing! Following our successful Shepherds' Hut course we hope to schedule several evening meetings in the New Year and... with Easter never too far from our minds, we announce dates for our Lambing Live courses in this issue. We hope everything is under control with your animals and, as always, we hope you won't hesitate to call if you need us. Regards of the season – Katherine and Amy.



Silage Eye

At this time of year, when cattle are housed and being fed winter rations of baled silage/ haylage is the biggest risk period for outbreaks of silage eye. Silage eye is a uveitis, which is inflammation of the middle layers of the eye.

Silage eye is caused by a bacteria, *Listeria monocytogens*, that lives in poorly preserved bales of silage. It multiplies especially once the silage is exposed to air when unrolled and placed in feeders.

Early signs include excessive tear staining, blinking and squinting of the eyelids due to pain. As disease progresses over the next few days a bluish-white opacity occurs on the surface of the eye. This will remain as scar tissue for a few weeks after disease has cleared up.

Active disease can last for a few weeks without treatment and is highly contagious and can spread through a herd quickly. It is therefore advised to treat promptly.

There are several options for treatment;

- Eye ointment applied directly to the eye
- Inject antibiotics into the eyelid

(Please seek veterinary demonstration before attempting this for the first time)

- Injection of antibiotics in the muscle

Usually the response to treatment is prompt if caught early. Please ring us to discuss treatment options as the choice of treatment is determined by the severity of signs.



Moving Stock and the law...

Livestock movements are strictly regulated in order to help with disease control and maintain animal welfare standards. All farms should have accurate movement records.



Cattle - Cattle born since 1st July 1996 must be accompanied by a passport which records all their movements. Details of movements must be notified to the central tracing system run by British Cattle Movement Service. *Standstill is 6 days.*

Sheep and Goats – movements must be made under an animal movement licence, except when moving to and from veterinary practice for treatment. *Standstill is 6 days.*

Pigs – movements must be made under an animal movement licence and must be reported to the local authorities by the recipient. A pet pig walking licence can be obtained from animal health. *Standstill is 20 days if pigs are moved in but only 6 days if cattle or sheep are moved onto the premises.*

So what's 'Standstill'? It is the duration of time during which farmers must not move any livestock, having introduced a new animal to the holding. Standstill does not apply if animals are going directly to slaughter.

Top Techniques Column

Tipping sheep.

Turning sheep up onto their back end makes it possible to examine the udder, feet and mouth. This position can also be a useful form of restraint for injection administration.

- 1) One person should be able to tip a sheep. Stand with the sheep against your legs so it is facing right (if right handed or left if left handed).
- 2) Place the thumb of your dominant hand in the sheep's mouth between the front and back teeth, cupping the ewes chin with this hand. Place your other hand on the hip further away from you.
- 3) Turn the ewes head away from you towards its shoulder. Put pressure on the hip pulling it towards you so the ewe sits.



- 4) Then lift both front legs and sit the ewe upright on its back end between your knees.



- 5) Squeeze gently with your knees letting the head fall to one side, the sheep should be secure enough for you to have both hands free to examine it.
- 6) Lower the ewe gently, back onto its front.

Any questions?

Give us a ring; 01566 772371

Smallholders' News

Castle Veterinary
Group



Smallholders'
Club

Did you know??

The chicken and egg question may remain a mystery but did you know that a hen can lay fertilised eggs up to a week after being with a rooster! The vast majority of supermarket eggs are laid by hens which have never seen a rooster.

Erysipelas infection in Pigs

Many diseases commonly seen in pigs occur as a result of the intensive rearing systems in place on large scale farms. As a result many pig farms include antibiotics, parasiticides and coccidiostats in their feeds.

Pet pigs are generally a healthier bunch. Of all the pig problems we see Erysipelas is by far the most common. Erysipelas is caused by the bacteria *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae* – a bacteria found on the tonsils of healthy pigs and in soil contaminated with faeces. It can be associated with the following signs;

- A sudden high temperature and lack of appetite in growing pigs
- Arthritis – swollen joints with lameness in older pigs
- Raised, dark red diamond shaped areas on the skin
- Sudden death
- Heart damage due to bacteria on the valves
- Miscarriage in sows

Erysipelas is very responsive to antibiotic treatment in the early stages. If you are suspicious of this problem please call us sooner rather than later. There are many vaccinations for pigs, however few are used routinely in pet pigs. Of all those available it may be worth considering Erysipelas vaccination which requires a two dose starter course and a booster every 6 months.

Characteristic diamond shaped skin lesions.

Marilyn Monroe may have us believing diamonds are a girl's best friend but your pigs would rather be without!



Quick Picture Quiz??



Any thoughts as to the identity of this creepy crawly removed from a sheep and viewed here under the microscope??

Find out more next issue!

Last issue's quick quiz answer was
'Lungworm Larvae'

Lungworm is an important parasite in cattle and sheep. The main risk period tends to be July-September (when these images were taken of samples we were testing).

However, at this time of year, when pneumonia is commonly encountered, it is important not to forget lungworm as a cause of coughing in animals which have been out at pasture in the Autumn. Especially as it has been rather mild.

Unlike gut worms there is little recognised lungworm resistance to treatment – so many worming options exist. You can also vaccinate cattle to protect against lungworm if you have a particular problem.



Up and coming events ...

Get prepped for lambing and find out lots of top tips – Join us for Lambing Live – 29th January or 5th February 2014

In the next issue...

Find out the answer to our 'Quick Picture Quiz'.

A 'Case Review' based on a real clinical case seen by us since this issue.

Read our article on urinary blockage in Goats

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