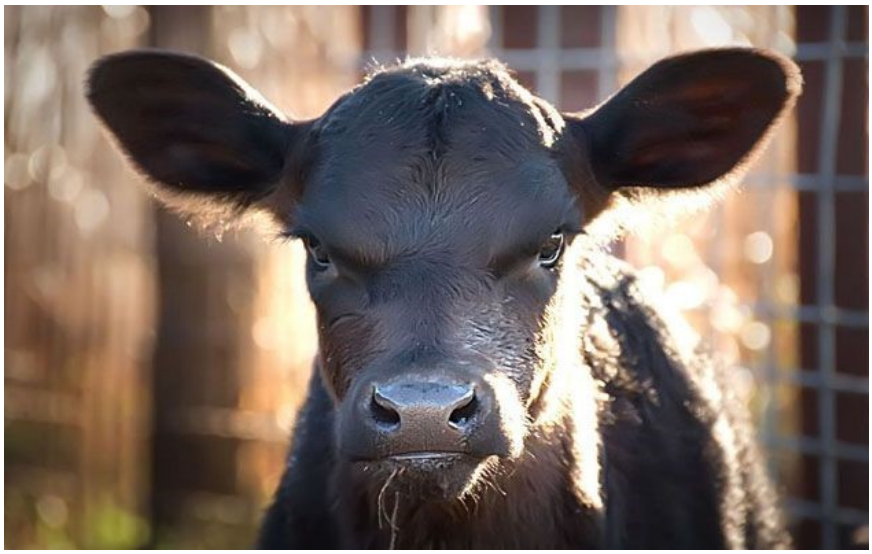
SOUTH MOOR VETS
FARM NEWSLETTER

April 2023



NEMATODIRUS ALERT!

SCOPS have issued a warning that if the warm weather continues, grazing lambs will soon be at high risk of Nematodirus Infection. You can follow the forecast here to keep-up-to-date regarding current risk in the South West:

https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/

NEMATODIRUS IN LAMBS

Nematodirus battus is a worm that usually affects lambs between 6 and 12 weeks of age. It can also cause issues in young calves. With a run of mild weather predicted now, we could expect the rise in the nematodirus to strike soon. Look out for clinical signs of scour and death in young lambs from the end of March untill May.

Clinical signs:

- Sudden watery scour, (could be dark coloured)
- Dehydratation
- Depressed, lethargic, not sucking

-Sudden death with short history of diarrhoea

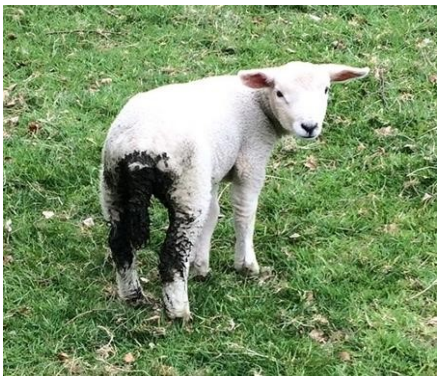
-Drop in growth rates

Diagnosis:

-Clinical Signs

-Faecal Egg Counts. (However, when burden is high, severe disease can be seen before eggs are present in the faeces) so a negative egg count does not rule out Nematodirus infection.

-Grazing history: Lambs can only pick up Nematodirus if they're on land previously grazed by other lambs (including the previous year).



Prevention and Treatment:

-Rotate pasture each year if possible, so young lambs are not grazing on the same field as last year's young lambs did.

-Worm following advise in your flock health plan as soon as disease is suspected / risk period has been entered.

-White drench (benzimidazole) is usually recommended for Nematodirus (but not advised later in the year for other worms)

-It is important to follow correct drenching technique and dose for the correct weight to avoid building up future resistance

POLITE REQUEST

It's a busy time of year for both yourselves and our vets and so we often don't have a farm vet in the building until later in the day.

When requesting medications or phone calls, please give us time to respond to your request. A vet may not be free until later in the day to call or authorise your medications.

So please give us plenty of notice and **try to collect any on-the-day medication requests after 4pm.**

Q FEVER

(Coxiella Burnetii)

Q fever is caused by the bacteria Coxiella Burnetii, which is able to infect mammals, birds, reptiles and insects. It causes a mild disease in ruminants, but can cause significant production losses, including abortions and still births in cattle, sheep and goats. It is also a zoonosis, a disease of animals that can infect humans. Q fever is an emerging disease in the UK and more prevalent amongst UK cattle than first thought, especially amongst dairy herds.

There are two common routes of transmission, blood-borne spread by ticks, and, more commonly, spread by inhalation, ingestion, or direct contact with birth fluids or placenta. The organism is also shed in milk, urine, and faeces. High-temperature pasteurization effectively kills the organism.

The most common signs of the disease are late abortions/ stillbirth, inflammation of the placenta, metritis (whites/dirty) and loss of appetite. Long term effects can include a reduction in fertility.

Testing is reliable and can be used to indicate current infection or historic exposure to the disease. We can test bulk milk, blood and aborted material.

Treatment and control strategies focus on supportive care of sick animals, biosecurity, avoiding contact with aborted material and vaccination.

As previously mentioned this disease presents a serious risk to human health, in particular those that work closely with breeding animals. Signs can vary from a self-limiting flu-like illness to severe disease such as endocarditis (inflammation of the heart), pneumonia or hepatitis. It can also lead to miscarriage, or serious fetal complications in pregnant woman.

As part of your herd/flock health plan we will use your mortality data to assess whether your animals may be carrying or at risk of this disease and undertake testing accordingly.

If you have concerns or questions regarding this disease, then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

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PASTURE MANAGEMENT

Good pasture management is vital for livestock productivity and profitability as well as sustainability of the ecosystem. Measuring and following grass growth is also vital for successful rotational grazing patterns.

Without top quality forage, grasses or legumes, animals will struggle to reach KPI, be more prone to disease and production costs can soar. In addition, a poorly organized system causes weed invasions, slows the recovery of forage grass, increases pathogen risk and reduces quality of grassland. Pasture also allow animals to have the freedom to exercise, choose their diets and recycle their own manure.

AHDB have a wealth of resources available in their knowledge library regarding pasture and forage management, which can be accessed here:

https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/ahdb-grass

We're always more than happy to advise where we can.

DO YOU NEED TO COMPLETE YOUR MILKSURE TRAINING?