

SOUTH MOOR VETS

FARM NEWSLETTER



March 2023

NEOSPORA

Neospora is the most common infectious cause of cattle abortion. It is a protozoan parasite that lives in cattle and dogs.

Cattle that are infected with it are infected for life. When an infected cow is pregnant the parasite can reactivate and cause the death and then abortion of the calf she carries. A neospora positive cow is about 5x more likely to abort than the average cow.

If an infected cow gives birth to a live calf then that calf will nearly always be persistently infected with neospora and a high abortion risk if retained for breeding. The disease therefore often runs in family lines.

Dogs are an important part of the life-cycle. (Foxes can also carry Neospora but less efficiently). A dog that eats raw infected beef / placenta can become infected. They usually remain healthy and shed the parasite in their faeces for a couple of weeks before becoming immune. Cattle can then become infected by grazing land contaminated with infected faeces.

A vital control measure is therefore to restrict the access of farm dogs to cattle carcasses (especially still-born calves) and placentas. Asking dog



walkers to pick up after their dog may have some benefit.

The disease is best controlled by focusing on identifying positive cattle and not keeping their offspring for breeding.

Any cow that aborts is worth testing for neospora (by blood sampling), even if they are not to be kept, as it is always beneficial to identify if a disease is

present in the herd. If positive, testing the whole of the breeding herd can be beneficial. At a minimum, it is worth testing any direct relatives of that cow. Removing positive cattle from the herd also reduces the risk of dogs becoming infected

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE REVIEW HAS LAUNCHED!

Registration for the AHWP review funding is now open. This is a great opportunity to focus on the health and welfare of your herd/flock.

Due to high demand, DEFRA are currently staggering applications. But please do register your interest and they will then send you a link as soon as you are able to register.

Please see the enclosed letter for more information regarding the scheme. Any questions, do get in touch.

Red Tractor-approved MEDICINES TRAINING COURSE



**"BEST PRACTICE IN THE
USE OF MEDICINES"**

**1.30pm Wednesday 22nd
March**

**South Moor Vets Ivybridge
PL219JL.**

**£30+VAT (incl. Pasty!)
Call 01752 892390 to book**

BE ON THE LOOK OUT FOR SCHMALLEMBERG!

Those of you with long memories will remember all the trouble we had with Schmallenberg virus causing abortions and malformed lambs and calves a decade ago.

Last year, we saw Schmallenberg raising its head again in the UK, so we want to keep a close eye on the situation. Let us know if you have any lambs, calves or kids born with musculoskeletal deformities. APHA are offering free testing as part of their disease surveillance scheme.

With Starcross approval, we can send the brain, or the whole fetus and placenta, to Starcross for testing. We can also blood sample a selection of adults.

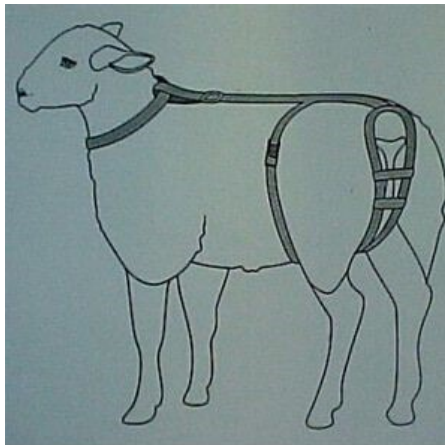
HARNESSES FOR EWES WITH VAGINAL PRO-LASPE

We have had a run of vaginal prolapses in recent weeks. Once occurred, reoccurrence is common until the ewe has lambed. So after cleaning up the prolapse and gently replacing, it is important to have a method for holding the prolapse in place.

Prolapse harnesses are a great solution for this and a must have on any farm at lambing time. When fitted correctly, they do an excellent job and are much more welfare friendly. Other methods of retaining

prolapses such as spoons and stitches can be more uncomfortable and can result in substantial trauma to the ewe were they to try lambing through them or force their prolapse out.

We are hoping to start stocking these soon, so do give us a call if you would like one and our vets will also try to carry them in their cars.



SPRING IS IN THE AIR: LOOK OUT FOR GRASS STAGGERS

Staggers (hypomagnesaemia/grass tetany) occurs in cows that are deficient in magnesium. It usually occurs around calving time and presents as a down cow. Cattle cannot control magnesium levels in the blood so the condition can develop quite quickly.

Staggers is mostly seen in lactating cows (especially beef) at grass particularly fresh, lush grass in the spring. It occurs when magnesium is lost through milk and cannot be replaced sufficiently by dietary means. High levels of potassium (from certain soil types) and

nitrogen (from fertilizers) can prevent plants taking up sufficient magnesium reducing the amount available to the animal.

Magnesium is required by the central nervous system for normal function so deficiency causes neurological symptoms (muscle tremors, staggering, collapse seizures and sudden death). Risk factors include older cows, low mag levels in grass, grazing land fertilized with nitrogen and potassium containing soils. Lactating cattle at pasture require 2.5g/kg dry matter of magnesium. Prevention includes adding magnesium flakes to water, and oral boluses.

Staggers is a medical emergency. Treatment with calcium and diluted magnesium into the vein, followed by magnesium under the skin. Treatment will only support the animal for 6-12 hours, repeat magnesium under the skin may be required, especially if the animal is not up and eating.

Prevention is key: can add magnesium flakes to water, oral boluses. If you are concerned please contact one of our farm vets.



For up-to-date news and events.

