

August 2014:

With this very hot and dry weather many of us are crying out for some rain to get the grass growing. Unfortunately **nematodirus** also likes the **rain after a prolonged drought**. Whereas before we use to say that the lambs would have **immunity**, the parasite seems to have **adapted** and a **later surge after a drought will kill the lambs**. If in doubt then bring us some **poo samples** down. Currently **worm burdens appear to be low** in the lambs, but keep checking.

We are seeing **coccidiosis** in calves and lambs which **have been treated**. Cocci is a nasty parasite which infects the gut. It takes **21 days from infection of the egg (oocyst) till maturity**. Once mature it **strips the gut lining of the absorptive fingers (villi)**. This means less water is absorbed from the gut and the animal starts to scour.

1. If an animal has **small amounts of cocci** then it will become **immune** to it and never suffer again from that strain.
2. If an animal is infected with a **big dose but treated 1-2 weeks post infection with vecoxan** then it will not suffer and become **immune**.
3. If you treat with **vecoxan prior to infection** it will **not** do anything **beneficial**.
4. If you **over treat** i.e. regularly treat the same animals, then they will **not be able to build up immunity** and clinical signs will be seen in 2 year old animals.

How do you know if your animals have been infected: **Bring us poo samples**, if there is cocci then they need to be treated. This gives us an **indication** on when animals are being infected so we can pre-empt future seasons.

The very **high temperatures** have been triggering **heat stress** in our cattle.

What is heat stress and how does it manifest? A cow functions best between **5 – 25 °C**, when the temperature gets above this she **needs to start regulating her temperature**, she does this 2 ways.

1. By trying to **lose heat** through drooling, panting and diverting blood supply to her external regions i.e. skin.
2. She **limits her own heat** production which includes eating up to 30% less dry matter, reducing her forage intake, and reducing the number of ruminations.

What does this mean? A drop in milk yield, an increase in embryonic death (so reduced fertility) and an increase in mastitis.

How do we mitigate?

- 1) Provide as much **shade** as possible; cows like to congregate in cool areas such as collecting yards, under trees etc.
 - If this is out in the field and the cows are all lying down in the same spot this will lead to an increase in **mastitis** and so make sure you have a good quality post teat dip ideally a barrier dip which coats the teat acting as an extra layer against infection. Make sure the cows have a good fly repellent as well.
- 2) **Water** is critical; a cow will drink up to 100 litres of water / day. She will not walk far to the water so make sure there are plenty of water troughs nearby.
- 3) Try to **encourage cows to eat at night** when it is cooler. **Freshen the feed** after **evening milking** and then push the **feed up before bed!!!!**
- 4) Improve your **ventilation** in the sheds whether this is through adapting your roof and inlets or putting in fans.
- 5) A **sprinkler system** would be ideal but there may be economic considerations here???

Tupping is fast approaching.

Have you?

1. **Checked the feet** of your tups and ewes. If you suffer from foot rot this is the ideal time to use the footvax vaccine! A lame tup will not serve the ewes. Also they spend a lot longer lying down; this increases the temperature of the testicles and renders the sperm useless.
2. Have you **checked the condition score** of the sheep. Between 2.5 – 3 is ideal. Too fat and they can't serve, too thin and the ewes won't hold.
3. Check **the testicles of the rams**. They should be the same size, freely movable in the sack. There should be no lumps and bumps. The circumference should be 32 cm. 90% of rams are infertile!
4. If you were worried about the **fertility** of a ram last year then get us to check it.
5. Make sure the **sheep aren't itchy**.
6. Source your **teaser tups** at least 30 days prior to use.
7. Checked the **mineral status** of your ewes. (we only need 6 random ewes which we can sample for Se, Co, Copper and Iodine.)

Bad eyes in youngstock:

We are still seeing a lot of bad eyes on farm. **Prevention is better than cure**. It is difficult to prevent as we don't know the exact reason for it but make sure you have a **good fly prevention strategy**.

- Flies are the **main carriers** and the majority of animals we treat have not had any control put in place. Also check out your **IBR status**.

Treatment: Eye ointment into the eye, an injection of tetroxy LA and metacam. The latter will take away the pain, stop them itching and making it worse.