

## December 2016

First of all we would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our clients a **very happy Christmas** and **thank each and every one** of you for your **continued support**. It means a great deal to us and we are **very grateful**.

**So what are we seeing at the moment:**      **In the cattle:**

Fortunately it is a relatively quiet time but the same old issues are raising their heads:

**Pneumonia** is the biggest issue that we are still seeing.

- This **weather** provides the ideal **stress** to **trigger** pneumonia, one minute the **temperature** is in double figures the next it is – 4. You and I are able to **put on or take off a layer of clothes** but these calves are unable to adapt so quickly.
- The **beef** cattle are in a better situation as they get **hot water bottle of hot milk** put inside them when they are cold but the **dairy calves** have to put up **with 2 feeds** at either ends of the day.
- These **calf jackets** are ideal at **keeping the calves warm** and I would strongly recommend them for the dairy calves.
- For all calves make sure they are well **bedded down** in good **deep bedding of straw** which is as dry as possible. Again **high humidity** will lead to further pneumonia outbreaks.
- Check your **mineral and vitamin levels....** We have found some really low levels especially of **selenium** in the cattle. This is **really important for immunity** and so low levels means the **calves are more susceptible to common diseases**.

It is really easy to check these levels in the cattle. A huge amount of money is wasted on minerals and vitamins so talk to an expert about it before randomly putting licks out.

**Staggers in calves!!!** We have had a couple of outbreaks of staggers in calves. This is a bizarre age to get staggers in but does highlight the need to **reduce the stress in the calves** and to **make sure they are fed correctly**.

- This means a **good quality milk replacer**, along with **adequate fresh water**, a **mineralized calf creep** and **good quality forage**. Don't just rely on them picking off the floor as this can lead to a multiplication of disease.

**In the sheep:**

The tup is well and truly in with the ewes and so it is best to leave well alone with the ewes where possible.

- We have seen a few **dying yearling ewes**. This occurred over a **period of a week** where they were **melting away** to nothing and then **dying**. At **postmortem** the ewes were **very pale and thin**. Their guts **showed bad diarrhea** and the lungs on cutting open had **lots of lung worm larvae**. When looking under the microscope at the poo there were lots and lots of worm eggs.

The ewes had **recently been drenched with a white drench**. This was a classic case of **white wormer resistance** leading to a **really bad outbreak of gut worms and lung worms**. It shows the importance of doing a **wormer check both to see if the sheep need worming and to see if the wormer you are using works**.

**Grants:** We had been lead to believe that **there were going to be some flock / herd health associated grants** coming out.

- Unfortunately these have become a **casualty of Brexit** and are **not now going to be released** which is a disappointment.
- It does not detract from the fact that **all of our businesses need to become more efficient**.
- I am going to set up a **sheep focus group** which will **entail knowledge transfer** between us **discussing problems** we are all **experiencing** how we can **deal with these problems and going forward** with targeted visits and developing a **dash board on your farm for sheep health**. **Please talk to us in the office if you are keen to progress this idea**.

**TB:** There is currently a **TB consultation out with the Welsh Government**.

This consultation puts all our **Welsh clients in a high risk area: What does that mean?**

1. Whole herd tests will be done **at six month intervals** to find infection earlier.
2. **More restrictive herd movement controls** (both external and internal) will be used to reduce the chance the disease will spread within herds.
3. **Removal of standard IRs as reactors** in all breakdowns with clear testing severe IRs restricted to the herd for life.
4. The clearing test (which allows a herd to come off restrictions) will **not be able to be used as a Pre- movement TB test**.
5. **Compensation would be reduced for cattle movements between units** within the same herd where the breakdown has been open for 18 months or more or has had recurrent infection i.e. a chronic breakdown herd.
  - There is no denying that Welsh Government **do want to stamp out TB**, which is a great thing. In our opinion it is just **very one sided**, with all of the rules and regulations being enforced on the farmer, whereas the **harbourer of the enemy is still able to run freely** across everyone's land and woe betide anyone who tries to stop it.
  - I am sure in the long run **these rules will help eradicate TB**, however, even more pressing it will **also help eradicate the cattle farmer**. These rules are becoming **untenable** for people who trade in cattle. **Please have a look at the consultation and respond or else it will be allowed to go through.**

TB was controlled in the 60s with the test we currently have but also with wildlife controls. What has changed??