

November 2011.

This **continued mild weather** has been bringing its **fair share of problems** to our livestock, one of the main being **pneumonia in adult cattle**. The very changeable temperatures have stressed the cattle and we have had some **nasty cases of pneumonia**. It really highlights to me the need to **stop pneumonia in the young stock** as it can cause **irreparable damage** to the lungs that never fully recover, and lead to problems in later life.

We also had an **outbreak of IBR** in the practice. In this case it appears to be hitting the cattle very quickly, with a **milk drop overnight** and the **cows becoming very sick indeed**. If you have not vaccinated then please crack on and do it. The **vaccines can save you a fortune**. Don't forget if you are having to **TB test this is an ideal time to get us vaccinating** etc.

- If you don't **know the status of your herd** then it is very easy for us to check it.
- In the last week we have **found 2 new cases** which may have contributed to infertility and a reduced milk yield.

IBR:

- **67% of dairy farms** and **65% of beef farms** in the UK suffer from IBR.
- An affected dairy cow produces **173 litres less milk / year** than a non infected cow which is a **loss of about £45 per year per cow**.
- In an outbreak **2% of the herd will die** and there will be an **extension of 4 weeks to reach finishing weight**.
- The virus **spreads very rapidly though out a herd** and will infect cattle above 3 months old.
- Once an animal has the virus it cannot get rid of it. It will shed the **virus whenever it gets stressed** such as calving time or housing time. The **animals that are not vaccinated** or have not come across the virus before ie the heifers then **become infected**.
- In an outbreak we get **runny noses and eyes** but in an infected herd that is dealing with the disease we get sudden milk drops, increased post calving problems, unexplained high temperature, poor fertility. **If you don't suffer from any of these then you don't need to worry!!**

Your heifers are the most at risk animals. Try to vaccinate them at the time of introduction to the herd.

- **Vaccination** reduces **clinical signs** of disease, it **reduces the spread of virus** within the herd and it improves the **herd health** and **profitability of your herd**.
- When injecting into the **muscle** the immunity doesn't start **for 7 – 10 days**, if squirted up the **nose** immunity is within **a couple of days**, so this is better in the case of a clinical outbreak.

If in doubt talk to us.

Footrot / CODD / Scald.

Having spent the weekend with a vet who has injected **25000 sheep with micotyl** in the North East and eradicated the above conditions from **17 out of 20 flocks**, 3 years later, I am even more convinced by the logic behind it.

- When you consider that a **case of footrot costs up to £9 / ewe**, on a farm of 1000 with 20% affected each year this will **cost £1800**.
- It only works if all sheep are done on the farm. There is no point in doing a half hearted affair and missing sheep or else it is a waste of money. Don't forget then to do any **sheep that enter your farm / you buy in**.

You do not need to do every sheep every year, assuming you don't re by the problem in.



Subsidised Bull testing.

In Wales there is currently a scheme where you **can claim back about 80% of your costs of bull testing**. We are doing a fair amount of it but when I hear of people up North doing 50 at a time I think there may be room for improvement!!! The **bull is 50% of your herd** if he is not working then it is a disaster.

- Even if you lose one cycle over 100 animals this can cost the farm at least £2500.

We have recently tested a newly purchased bull and found that he has never nor will ever be any good, a disappointment to the farmer but at least he tested soon enough before he started to loose serious money.

- Consider testing **all newly purchased bulls** and ideally **all bulls before you use them for a lot of work**.