

September 2013:

It doesn't seem like yesterday that we were in the middle of lambing, but already many of you have injected the sheep against toxo and enzo ready for tupping.

- As we know last lambing was one of the hardest for many years. The ewes were drying up and the lambs were dying. One of the major reasons for this was that the condition of the ewes was very low, as they had suffered for 365 days with awful weather. On condition scoring the ewes we found huge drops in very short time periods. This meant post lambing the ewes did not have any reserves and were unable to milk off their backs, consequently they dried up.

I would urge people to get condition scoring early on, ie now at weaning. This is the cheapest and easiest time to put weight onto a ewe. They want to be going to the tup at 3 – 3.5. Unfortunately a lot of our sheep are more like 2.

Schmallemberg what is it doing?? We are finding aborting cattle and throughout the practice the fertility is poor. One of the main contributors I feel was the very hot period where the cows were suffering.

- This has had a marked effect on some of our best farms for fertility.

We are still seeing a fair few abortions and resorptions..... is it SBV?..... very difficult to say yes or no.

- I would urge beef farmers to get pding and find out if the cows are in calf as many of us came unstuck last year and this year is looking very similar.
- For the dairy guys stay vigilant and consider 2nd pds at around 10 weeks.

With the grass shooting up (like a broken record) I would remind people to be vigilant of staggers.

- Prevention includes high mag licks, mag chloride in the water or rumbol boluses.

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.

Digital dermatitis:

This is the scourge of many cattle farms.



Daragh Brady: We have a new vet starting to replace Ceri who left in the spring. He is 9 years graduated and is a very experienced in all aspects of farm animal.

Fat cows and heifers:

We are having some excellent feedback about the use of Kexstone. It is reducing LDAs and increasing milk yields on these farms. Have you given it a thought??

Again prevention is better than cure:

All these nasty foot problems love muck.

We need to reduce the amount of muck on the foot and in the environment.

1. Look at your gateways / tracks – are the cows walking in lots of muck? Are there lots of stones and sharp edges damaging the foot and skin allowing the bacteria to penetrate the cow and setting up infection.
2. Is there lots of muck in the shed – increase scraper frequency. In a straw shed make sure there is not a bog around the water trough. Try to have a scrap passage in front of the feed face. Have a clean hard standing in front of the feed barrier.
3. Try to reduce the amount of water in the shed – Increase clean out times. Feed a drier diet. Mend any leaking troughs / taps/ gutters.
4. Have a good foot dipping policy. For dairy this is relatively easy. Basically foot dip them every day. As Roger Blowey says you treat every day why not do feet??

Use formalin at 3%- will this harden the feet? No.

How do you keep it clean? Once the cattle are use to it they will not poo in the bath.

How often should u clean the footbath? -After every milking.

How many cows can you put through a foot bath? - As a rule of thumb 1 cow / litre. Ie a 200 litre foot bath 200 cows.

Other effective products: Copper sulphate 10%.

I am beef / what about the dry cows? Only possible when they are housed / handled. Incorporate a foot bath in a passage between the feed passage and cubicles. When you scrap out quietly walk them through the bath. This is really important for heifers as it gets them use to the foot bath.

Does it work? Yes.