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AUGUST 2021 NEWSLETTER

RED TRACTOR – CHANGES TO STANDARDS & UPCOMING MEETING



Red Tractor have just announced changes to their standards following a period of consultation earlier this year. As expected, some prior recommendations have been “beefed up” to become requirements, and there are further additions. The new summary points include:

Beef and lamb

- Tethering to be banned as a management practice
- Annual antibiotics use to be collated
- One person to hold certificate of competence in administering medicines (already a requirement in dairy)
- Joining a bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) disease eradication programme to be compulsory by 2023
- Stricter handling requirements

Dairy

- Tethering to be banned as a management practice
- Antibiotics use to be uploaded to an industry medicine hub
- Other medicines use subject to annual review
- Welfare outcomes introduced in relation to housing
- Stricter handling requirements

These rule changes will “kick in” from November. We have provisionally booked a **medicine training day for 29th September** and will no doubt run further courses. We ran this course several times prior to COVID with good feedback. Our plan is to run this **in person at North Tawton rugby club** to allow social distancing to still occur. The course will run from **10am to 3pm**, pasty lunch and other refreshments provided throughout the day. The cost for this course is £60 +VAT for first attendant from the farm and £30 +VAT for any additional attendants. This course has been approved by Red Tractor and everyone will receive a certificate of attendance. Please register your interest with any of the branches and we will organise further days if required.

Consider “**screening**” your **cull ewes** before sending them away. Cull ewes are usually the ewes that are struggling most in the flock, and any flock-based problems are likely to be present in these animals. Examining this group presents an excellent opportunity to target investigations into flock diseases. By testing a small number of animals, we can assess levels of chronic and/or insidious iceberg diseases such as MV, CLA or Johnes within the flock, as well as any potential trace element deficiencies such as iodine or selenium. This will allow processes to be put in place to improve performance and ultimately profitability.

Have you had **abortions** or **high barren rates** previously in your sheep due to **enzootic abortion** or **toxoplasmosis**? Have you recently bought in replacements with an unknown health status? If so, you should consider **vaccination** (Enzovax or Cevac Chlamydomphila for enzootic abortion; Toxovax for toxoplasmosis). **Order now** as they need to be given **at least four weeks before mating**.

Note that toxoplasma is spread by cats and can enter into a closed flock at any time. Enzootic abortion typically enters a flock through the purchase of replacements and we saw several very large outbreaks last spring.

HAEMONCHUS WARNING

We have started seeing cases of haemonchosis in lambs and goats once again. This is caused by the gut worm *Haemonchus contortus* (or the “barber pole worm”) which lives within the abomasum (stomach) of sheep and goats. Unlike other gut worms, *Haemonchus* **feeds on blood and does NOT cause diarrhoea**, but rather anaemia, or blood loss. Affected animals are usually growing lambs or goats of any age (occasionally adult sheep can also be infected). They will present with general weakness and inappetence and have pale to white mucous membranes. If not treated quickly then high mortality rates are not uncommon. Traditionally, *Haemonchus* is a tropical parasite from very hot countries including Australia and South Africa. *Haemonchus* is doing well this year due to the hot summer and then showery weather.



5000 adult worms are capable of consuming 250ml of blood PER DAY! For a 25kg lamb this is the equivalent of roughly 10% of its entire blood volume, so it is no wonder that severely affected animals often die. With less acute disease there will be a general wasting of animals and the development of “bottle jaw”. Liver fluke has very similar clinical signs so it is worth doing a worm egg count before treating. The disease can also be confirmed by post-mortem.



2-LV (yellow) and 3-ML (clear) wormers should be effective against the parasite UNLESS you have known resistance to these products on your farm. If we are certain that only *Haemonchus* is present and no other gut worms are involved then it is best to use closantel or nitroxynil to slow the development of resistance to the other worming products. *Haemonchus* worms will lay thousands of eggs each day and so are capable of rapidly developing a resistant population on your farm. For any questions, speak to any of the vets.

SHOWTIME! We look forward to seeing you all at Okehampton Show on Thursday 12th August. Come and join us on our stand to find out about the latest developments at the practice and what we can offer you and your stock.

SOME DRUG CHANGES

We are changing antibiotic dry cow tubes from Cepravin to Cepritect to avoid a large purchase price increase, allowing us to maintain the same sales price to farmers as opposed to a significant price rise. Cepritect has exactly the same licensing and withdrawal periods. It comes in 120 tube buckets (as opposed to 20 tube boxes) and we can either dispense the whole bucket or individual tubes as required.

Remember to use antibiotics responsibly and pursue “selective dry cow therapy” for cases that meet the required criteria.

WELCOME TO JAMIE GAMBLE! Jamie is a new graduate vet from Nottingham University. Originally from Northern Ireland, he joins us as a mixed farm and small animal vet. He has an interest in all farm work and is looking forward to getting out on farm and getting stuck in. Outside of work he competes internationally in surf kayak and enjoys trail running.



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