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## JUNE 2021 NEWSLETTER

### IMPORTANT – CHANGES TO STATUTORY TB TESTING INTERVALS

In autumn 2019 it was announced that cattle holdings within the High-Risk Area (HRA) – which includes Devon – would be required to undertake **statutory 6-monthly testing instead of annual**. This started in January 2020 in Shropshire and Staffordshire. We were told on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021 that this is **taking effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021**. You will receive further details from APHA, but we wanted to briefly summarise the changes.

**Why is this happening?** It is expected that increasing the frequency of surveillance testing in the HRA will help detect TB-infected herds at an earlier stage. This reduces the time *M. bovis* can spread within the herd, be transmitted to other herds, and potentially shed in the farm environment. Moving to six-monthly surveillance testing will also allow APHA to reduce the number of ad hoc, unplanned tests such as tracing and contiguous tests.

**What does this mean for me?** Cattle herds will complete their first routine whole herd test (WHT) scheduled in the period between July 2021 and June 2022 as normal. Once this WHT has been completed with negative results, APHA will schedule the next test for six months later, **unless the herd qualifies for earned recognition**. Therefore, **herds that complete their annual WHT between July and December 2021 will have their first six-monthly herd test from approximately January-June 2022**. Those that complete their annual WHT between January and June 2022 will have their first six-monthly herd test from July 2022. There is no change to the statutory interval testing requirements for AFU's.

**How do I qualify for Earned Recognition?** Earned recognition allows herds to remain on an annual testing regime and will be reviewed by APHA every 6 months. Qualification requires the **herd to have been in existence for at least six years, without a TB breakdown in that six-year period** (including breakdowns where no lesion and/or culture positive animals were disclosed). A single break from keeping cattle of less than four months during the six-year period is permitted. The herd **must also be registered to a bovine TB health scheme licensed by the Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHECS) and accredited at level 1 or above**. See [www.checs.co.uk](http://www.checs.co.uk) for more details and contact us if you wish to enrol in this scheme.

**What does this mean for North Park?** Our TB workload will almost double, as it will for all vet practices within the HRA. Due to this, and because there is an insufficient pool of qualified vets available in the UK, in December 2020 APHA approved the use of **lay TB testers**. These will be employed by the practice and appropriately trained and regularly audited as all our vets currently are. Lay-testers will only be able to TB test – they are not qualified vets so will be unable to examine and treat animals, or perform castrations etc.

**We are therefore looking for one (or more) lay-tester(s) to join the team at North Park.** If you are interested in this role, or know of someone who might be, then please contact either Jonathan or Roger for further details. You must be at least 18 years of age, complete a DBS security check, have a minimum of 6 months previous livestock handling experience, and have three GCSEs or equivalent qualifications in Mathematics, English and in a Science subject or Food Production, **OR**, three years performance in a Government regulatory role e.g. Local Authority (LA) Inspector or Environmental Health Officer.

**FREE OF CHARGE SELEKT PUMP SERVICING** – we have arranged for a rep from Nimrod, the manufacturers of the the Selekt pumps and product range, to visit the **North Tawton branch from midday on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June** to undertake FOC servicing of pumps as per their warranty. Either come along with your pump or drop it off with us in advance if you cannot make it on the day. Servicing usually takes around 10-15 minutes. Please let us know of your intention to either drop of or attend, so that we know roughly how many to expect.



**RINGWORM VACCINE** – MSD recently stopped producing Ringvac, which was very disappointing as we have had great success eradicating and controlling ringworm on several farms through using this vaccine.

We are able to source an alternative however – **Trichoben** – with a **special import licence**. This has very similar characteristics (doses and vaccine intervals) as Ringvac and looks very promising. Contact us for more info.

**TB VACCINE TRIALS** – Veterinary field trials of CattleBCG vaccine and the companion DIVA (Detecting Infected amongst Vaccinated Animals) skin test are to begin in the **Low Risk Area of England** and the **Low TB Incidence Area in Wales**. This is the first phase of many before any vaccine *may* be approved. The targets of this phase are to determine the safety and specificity of the DIVA test in TB-free herds. Herds taking part must be

- Officially TB Free for 8 years or more
- Not in a current TB hotspot, or in a contiguous testing regime
- Approximate herd size of 60+ animals
- Ideally a closed herd or with minimal purchases.

We await the results of this trial with interest.

**Congratulations to Amy Houldcroft** for recently completing her Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (cattle). Over the last few years, she has been busy with further study, exams and writing case reports alongside day-to-day work, which takes a lot of time and dedication – well done!

**Congratulations to Hannah Emery** on qualifying as a Registered Veterinary Nurse! Hannah is mainly based at the Okehampton branch and will be familiar to many of you through phone calls and dispensary collections. She has been training with us for the last few years and we are all very pleased to see her qualify – well done!

**Congratulations to Jonathan** for completing the 44 mile “Endurance Life Classic Quarter” ultramarathon from Lizard Point to Land’s End along the SW coast path last weekend. Training was non-existent and he was a bit sore for a couple of days afterwards, but he was pretty pleased with a total time of just over 10 hours and lovely weather after a wet and windy start! He is already looking for the next one...



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