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AUGUST 2023 NEWSLETTER

MASTITIS- MORE KNOWLEDGE, NEW TESTING AT NPVG (PART 1 OF 2)

Some of our vets recently attended “Future Proofing Mastitis” with Andy Biggs, a world leading mastitis expert. Key points covered were prevention methods and grading mastitis (part 1 of this newsletter article) and understanding the causal bacteria and achieving prompt effective treatment (part 2 in September).

Prevention strategies can be broken down into 3 areas:

- **Environment**; pasture and housing management and hygiene
- **Parlour routine**; especially important for cases of contagious mastitis
- **Cow immune optimisation**; Cows often self-cure, symptomatic treatment (NSAID) and time is all she needs to clear up the case.

When a cow has a clinical case of mastitis, her symptoms are **graded from 1 to 3**:

1. **“Mild”** mastitis- changes in the milk only
2. **“Moderate”** mastitis- milk and udder changes
3. **“Severe”** mastitis- milk and udder changes in a sick cow

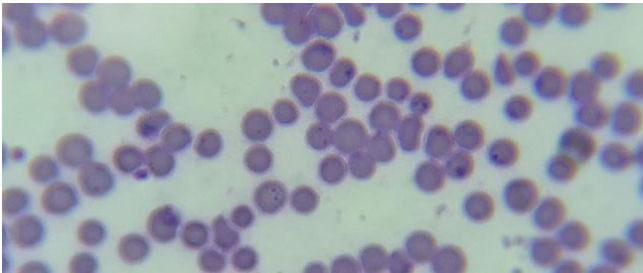
Veterinary care is needed for Grade 3/ severe cases. However, for Grades 1 and 2, on-farm decision making should be heavily influenced by the history of the herd and the individual cow, and the strain of bacteria causing the disease.

We have invested in a **new lab machine** that uses milk samples to report the type of bacteria present (if any!) **within 24 hours**. Knowing which mastitis agent we are tackling leads to better decision-making, reduced treatment costs and more productivity. In the average UK herd, **32% of cows will be affected by clinical mastitis** per lactation- each case costing up to £244. Of these, 36% are caused by Gram negative bacteria that only require NSAID medication, they DO NOT REQUIRE antibiotic treatments. When antibiotics are needed, **Mastatest** can determine which will be most effective. It can also advise if treatment for high SCC cows (subclinical mastitis), will help prevent clinical cases and spread to other cows. We run these tests at our North Tawton practice, the results and appropriate treatment plan can be emailed to you as soon as they are ready. *More information to follow in next month’s newsletter.*



DISEASE OF THE MONTH: REDWATER

Several cases of Redwater have been diagnosed at the practice this month. Redwater is caused by *Babesia* species, usually *Babesia divergens*, a protozoal disease that spreads through **tick bites**. It attacks red blood cells and sits inside them. We can see the parasites in a blood smear using a microscope. Cattle that have been exposed to a low level can become immune and not have symptoms, but bought-in/recently moved animals or animals that have been overwhelmed by the infection can suffer with **anaemia, red urine** and potentially **acute kidney injury**. The treatment is an antiprotozoal medicine with a complex dose rate and a meat withdrawal of 213 days! Due to the long withdrawal, we are required to notify the APHA when the medicine is used. Treatment success can depend on the PCV (level of anaemia) of the animal at time of treatment. Cattle should have a PCV of 35-45%, if the count is significantly lower, the prognosis is worse. As a practice we have seen a PCV as low as 7%!



IT'S A GIRL! Many congratulations to director Jonathan and his wife Katie on the birth of their beautiful first baby. **Baby Hobbs** was born early on Sunday 30th July, happy and healthy and the parents are besotted.

JULY'S JOHNES MEETING Thank you to all that attended our recent meeting. Everyone learned something new about this incredibly difficult to understand and manage disease. Johnes disease causes **significant economic losses** due to reduced milk yield, high cell counts, mastitis, poor weaning weights, poor fertility and premature culling of animals. Johnes is spread to young calves, lambs and kids through contact with faeces, colostrum and milk from affected animals. To identify these cows, **testing on blood or milk** is most regularly used.

Regular testing is recommended on all **dairy farms** to aid control of the disease. To help you get set up, NMR are offering **discounted rates** for the rest of this year. Farms that sign up to Herdwise, will get one-month free testing. If you are interested in testing one to three times a year (Johnes 1-2-3) without additional milk recording, there is a 25% off the first whole herd screen. Applications need to be submitted before October. For **beef herds**, whole herd blood testing is recommended to identify presence of the disease in your herd. This can be repeated yearly to identify affected animals. NMR offer a 25% discount on a whole herd blood screen for beef herds. Please contact the practice and speak to Elske to find out more.

OKEHAMPTON AND HOLSWORTHY SHOWS

Our staff look forward to seeing you at the **upcoming shows**. We have been show vets for over 15 years at Okehampton and look forward to it every summer. We are also returning to Holsworthy show for our 3rd year. Please stop by for friendly chats with the vets and to meet the voices behind the phonelines of our wonderful support team. **Refreshments** to be eaten and drunk, **raffles and quizzes** to be held and **prizes** to be won!



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