



FARM NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2024

PNEUMONIA SEASON Ruminants are especially prone to respiratory infections when the weather is **mild in the day and much colder at night**, even more so when the **humidity** is high. There are several tactics that can be employed to **reduce the numbers** that suffer from pneumonia and **minimise the damage** that the disease causes once the animal is sick. **Lung damage** has been shown to affect cattle for large portions of their productive life. For interested parties, North Park Vets' beef group invite you to attend;

Bovine Respiratory Disease And Housing Discussion at Bridgetown Farm, Iddesleigh, EX19 8SN 13th November 2024 @ 10:30-2pm. Join us on farm for our next walk and talk on issues surrounding **Bovine Respiratory Disease, diagnosis, treatment and prevention measures as well as vaccines and assessing housing**. Led by our vets Amy Houldcroft and Jamie Gamble who look forward to answering any questions that you may have. Small fee of £5. Free to suckler group members. Light refreshments will be available, and **booking is essential**. Please contact the team to book your space.



What the FLUKE? We have seen acute and chronic cases of liver fluke in cattle and sheep this year so far. The **wet weather** through the summer has been favourable to the flukes' intermediate host, the mudsnail. Liver fluke in sheep can cause **acute disease and death**, as well as the more chronic form of **poor body condition and bottlejaw**, as seen in cattle. **Testing for liver fluke** is always worth doing when comparing it with the **cost of treatment**. At this time of year, fluke will be older than 6 weeks, therefore it is **reliable to test dung samples**. However, unlike for worm egg counts, there is a limit of 4 animals per pooled sample. Thanks to our new lab equipment, we can test for fluke eggs **the same day we receive the sample**. If you are debating treating the cattle after housing, testing a dung sample first can be very informative and may help to save treatment costs and **negative impact on the environment**. Discussion with a vet can help determine the most appropriate test for your system. Fluke should be a hot topic for the next couple of months and testing will be even more convenient for those with TB tests due (let the tester take the sample back to the practice on day 1), or those with Animal Health and Welfare Pathway or Endemics follow-ups in the near future.

Free of charge Selekt pump servicing clinic on the morning of Thursday 21st November, please drop in your equipment to a branch so that it can get to North Tawton before the date.

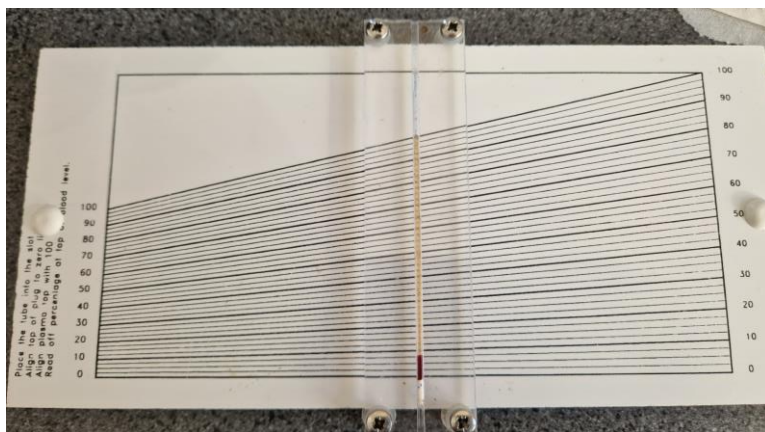
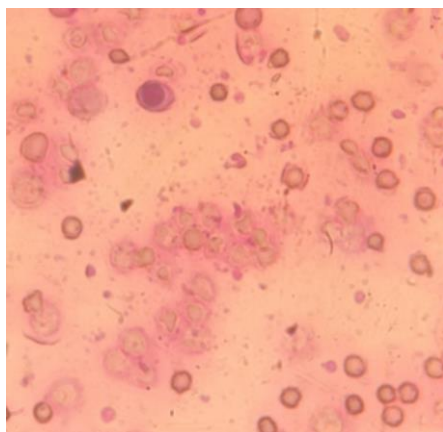
STAFF CHANGES FOR 2025 We wave a very sad goodbye to vet Harm at the end of the year. He has been with North Park Veterinary Group for 3 years. His well-measured vet work and charm around the office will be missed but we wish him well for his pastures new. We have a new vet joining in January that will be taking on small animal work so that our mixed vets are more available for farm calls.



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CASE OF THE MONTH: STAGGERS DEATH?

All cattle farmers should be aware of the **high staggers risk** at the end of the grazing season, especially those with cows with calves at foot. If animals are being **fed forage** out, their risk will be reduced. Another reliable preventative is to put **magnesium chloride flakes in water troughs**, as lick buckets are not taken by all animals. One of our vets attended a call this month for a cow that had recently been brought in and had gone down in the yard, unable to rise. The cow was seen to have muscle fasciculations (whole body skin twitching), a fast jugular pulse and was grunting with increased respiratory effort. A blood sample was taken, then **intravenous calcium and magnesium solution** was quickly administered, with more magnesium given under the skin to act as a depot reserve while the cows blood levels normalised. After the magnesium was in, the cow was given a full physical exam and was noticed to have an **abnormal mucous membrane colour and a low temperature**. Mucous membranes (most easily assessed when looking at the third eyelid or the vulva) should be "salmon pink" and uniform in colour. If pale, the animal may be **anaemic** or in a form of circulatory shock. This cow was seen to be pale and grey/blue or "**cyanotic**". Cyanotic mucous membranes can be the result of poorly oxygenated blood, and along with the cold temperature, this cow was suspected as being in a very compromised state and prognosis was uncertain. The vet and farmer opted to treat for **redwater**, and the cow was given **supportive treatments**. A blood smear was made and Packed Cell Volume (PCV) was analysed, the results shown below. In the blood smear, **Babesia parasites** can be seen, the cause of redwater. In the **PCV**, a **value of 8%** was seen. Cows should have a PCV (percentage of red blood cells per volume of blood) of around 33%. We called the farmer to warn that the cow had a **really poor prognosis despite correct treatment** and were sadly informed that she had died a couple of hours after the vet had left the farm. Tick-bourne disease such as redwater can cause increased risk of staggers as the circulatory system is compromised and the animal is likely to be eating less than it normally would. We are seeing increasing outbreaks of tick-bourne disease on farms that have not suffered with them before so please be vigilant. Also, for best possible prevention of staggers, **supplement magnesium when your cows are at risk!**



BLUETONGUE UPDATE; Levels of incidence are expected to decline as we enter a period of cooler weather, due to the decreased activity of the biting midge vector. DEFRA has permitted use of unauthorised vaccines (against BTV-3 only), subject to special conditions. As the vaccines will not be effective protection for 3 weeks after administration, the likelihood of achieving good immune status before the risk of infection has passed is very low. If you are suspicious of symptoms, please contact the practice. For more information, visit www.gov.uk/government/collections/bluetongue-information-and-guidance-for-livestock-keepers



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