THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies

Farm Animal Practice

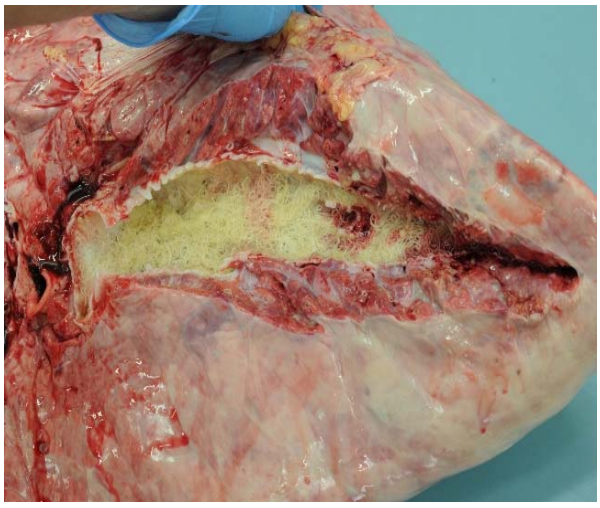
Newsletter June 2017

We hope that the spring lambing and calving season has gone well for all and that first cut silage is underway. Since our last newsletter Fraser and his wife Jill have welcomed a wee boy into the world, Hector. Fraser is looking forward to taking some leave in July and August to share some of the parental duties.

In this newsletter Rob reminds us of all of some of the parasite risks to calves over the summer and we introduce Rachel, our new cattle resident.
We will be providing veterinary cover at the Highland Show again this year so may well bump into you in the cattle or sheep lines.

Keeping an eye out for Ostertagiosis and an ear out for lungworm in young stock

Reasons to look out for stomach and lung worms: With the mild weather set to continue for the rest of the summer, hopefully, there is an increased risk of parasitic disease in beef calves. Especially in calves that have not yet developed immunity to stomach (*Ostertagia ostertagi)* or lung worms (*Dictylocaulus viviparous*). Stomach and lungworm infections can lead to reduced growth (down to as as little as 0.2kg/day) rates with cattle taking longer to reach slaughter weight. Infection will result in immunity, from ingesting stomach worm eggs or lungworm larvae at pasture, with immunity boosted by future worm infections. However, the number of worms infecting an individual, or "burden", will result in different clinical presentations. Light burdens will result in minimal clinical disease but are useful in the development of immunity.



Adult Lungworm in the airways

Risk factors and clinical signs: Stomach worm disease (Type I ostertagiosis) is a risk in autumn born calves, which have not develop immunity to stomach worms as were not yet eating contaminated grass whilst at pasture in the autumn. When turned out in spring, autumn born calves ingest large quantities of worm eggs and these develop into adults to produce more eggs to contaminate pasture. Multiplication of stomach worms can lead to heavy pasture contamination in mid-summer at temperatures rise to infect more calves and result in clinical disease before onset of immunity. Weight loss can be the only sign with moderate burdens. With higher burdens, green diarrhoea is the main clinical sign with weakness and loss of appetite. Spring born beef calves are less susceptible to stomach worm disease as they ingest low numbers of worms later in the grazing season that allow gradual development of immunity. Lung worm disease (Husk, hoose or parasitic pneumonia) can be unpredictable but tends to occur in calves 2-3 months post-turn out (Late summer) that have not developed sufficient immunity. Damage caused by lungworms migrating through the lungs leads to weight loss and increase susceptibility to bacterial pneumonia. Older cattle can also be affected by lungworms if their immunity wanes. Farms with no history of lungworm can also bring in infection on farm from bought in cattle. Cattle with early stages of lungworm infection present with an increased breathing rate and mild

coughing, particularly after being moved. As adult worms begin to block the airways within the lungs, cattle will extend their necks as they struggle to breath and be reluctant to move. **Diagnosis:** Suspicion of either disease is based upon the grazing history and presenting clinical signs. Confirmatory diagnosis can be made by collecting individual or pooled faecal samples for examination under a microscope. A blood test (Blood pepsinogen) can be used to detect stomach worm damage to the gastric glands before diarrhoea presents. A blood test is also available to detect exposure to lungworm if the disease has not been encountered on the farm previously.

Prevention: Although most wormers are effective against stomach and lungworms, prevention is better than cure. When clinical disease presents the damage has already been done. The caveat of responsible use of wormers applies as resistance has been reported to white, yellow and clear drenches in cattle. Hence preventing build up of infection on pasture and development of immunity is key to prevention of disease. Referring to the COWS website can be useful for more information on how to control these worms responsibly in your herd visit http://www.cattleparasites.org.uk/

COWS Control Of Worms Sustainably
Promoting sustainable control of cattle parasites

Although worming can be effective for lungworm, with heavy worm burdens worming can result in worsening of clinical signs and veterinary advice should be sought. Vaccination to minimise the risk of lung worm disease can be achieved from 8 weeks of age with 2 doses given 2 weeks apart (Huskvac®). If there is sufficient exposure to lungworms on pasture then yearly boosters may not be required. To discuss suspicion of clinical cases or prevention strategies for your herd please contact the practice for further information.

In other news we are delighted to announce we have a new Cattle Resident, Rachel Bragg MRCVS, joining our team at the start of July 2017.

Originally from Shropshire Rachel is returning to the Dick Vet Farm Practice after spending 2 years in Dumfries and Galloway as a mixed vet. Rachel graduated from Edinburgh in 2015, and we are delighted she has accepted taking up the position as Cattle resident within the Farm Animal Practice.

Outside of work Rachel is a keen rugby player and also enjoys exploring the Highlands whenever possible.

Rachel enjoying the great outdoors

Farm Animal Practice, RDSVS, Easter Bush Veterinary Centre, Roslin, Midlothian, EH25 9RG
Telephone: 0131 445 4468 Out of Hours Emergencies: 01223 849835 Fax: 0131 650 8836
farmanimalpractice@ed.ac.uk www.ed.ac.uk/vet/farmanimal