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- Make diet changes slowly over a 3 week period to the rumen to adapt
 - o Close up dry cows should consume enough carbohydrates in their ration so that changes are minimized when they go into the milking herd after calving.
- Increase intakes of effective long fibre to increase rumination
 - o Big bale silage, straw or baled Lucerne could be considered.
- Increase levels of digestible fibre
 - o E.g. soyahulls, draff, brewer's grains or pressed pulp.

- Reduce the level of highly fermentable starch and sugar or switch to "slow release" starch sources
- Rumen buffers can act as a short-term solution but measures to increase rumination allowing the cow to produce her own rumen buffer should still be taken.

Bethany Collins

BVD Stamp it out - Lunch and Learn

Did you know the BVD status of your herd? RDPE Government funding available for testing your herd.

Come to one of our meetings; Find out what is involved, sign up and get the first cluster meeting ticked off all in one go – whilst getting a bite to eat as well.

January date TBC—please contact the office to be added to the list to contact when a date is arranged.

The funding will soon run out so don't delay!

Dairy Mastering Medicines Course:

(Dairy version) Thursday 6th December 1-3.30pm, Kendal, £35.00

This course is in line with the new Red Tractor standards aiming to increase trainees understanding about different types of medicine used and how these relate to common diseases relevant to their farm. To book your place please call 01539 722692 or 015242 71221.

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PRACTICE NEWS

KENDAL ○ KIRKBY LONSDALE ○ ULVERSTON

December 2018



Suddenly we seem to be in the midst of winter, which has come as a bit of a surprise after a never-ending autumn. Now that dairy cows have been housed for a while it's a good chance to review the medicines that have been used to treat them for liver fluke, as it's a conversation that seems to come up daily. The use of products containing triclabendazole has now been extremely restricted to the early dry period (for dairy cows) for 6 years believe-it-or-not!

There are now a few triclabendazole containing products licensed for use in dry dairy cattle. Using Fasinex 240 as an example, this product can be used a minimum of 50 days before calving. Other flukicide products that are available, containing ingredients other than triclabendazole can often only be used in maiden heifers up to certain stages of pregnancy, so it's always best to check out the label and ask before you buy, to avoid confusion and errors. Triclabendazole, along with many other flukicides, does get excreted in milk, so please bear all this information in mind. Please give us a call and speak to a farm vet if you have any questions, as that's what we're here for! We also run courses on medicines usage and milk residue avoidance as well, which are helpful to the running of your business.

Fertility in general seems to be pretty good. It's a nice change from last year to be able to PD plenty of cows in calf, and heifers too. Some not seen bulling animals are not cycling, this is especially important to determine for beef and dairy animals alike, especially heifers, as the management of those affected may need to be changed to give them a better chance of starting to cycle again and getting in calf. This typically might be putting them back an age group in the case of heifers, concentrate feeding, or assessing their trace element and mineral status.

TB testing which has had to be done as radial testing around farms with confirmed TB is continuing apace- this next round will be in about 6 months' time all being well. Keep talking to each other, as support and empathy for the plight of those farmers at the sharp end is invaluable and it means a lot to them. **All that's left to say is have a safe and happy Christmas.**

Richard Knight

Rumen acidosis



Due to this year's dry summer and potentially low forage stocks this winter may be a particularly risky year for rumen acidosis in our herds. Consumption of excessive amounts of readily fermentable carbohydrates and low forage intake can cause acute or subacute rumen acidosis (SARA) due to higher than normal levels of volatile fatty acid (VFA) being produced. A decreased rumen pH (more acidic) causes significant changes in rumen motility, fermentation and rumen flora and can result in rumen wall damage and the development of liver abscesses. High risk diets for SARA have low forage DMI and typically have over 60% concentrate and less than 40% forage on DM basis. High levels of sugar and starch are also a risk. Slug feeding (i.e. feeding more than 3-4kg of concentrates in one go) also causes the rumen pH to drop and should be avoided if possible. In dairy herds the incidence of acidosis is highest during the first month post calving as the cow adapts to a new higher concentrate diet.

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Signs of SARA:

- Low butterfat levels and variable milk yields
 - o SARA often causes sporadic cases of milk drop
- Poor cudging rates
 - o aim for over 60% of cow lying to be cudging
 - o Cudballs are often seen at the front of cubicles
- Loose dung
 - o Undigested fibre may be present
 - o May contain gas bubbles and have a foamy appearance
- Reduced feed intake
- Lethargy

Other signs that may occur after an episode of SARA include episodes of laminitis, weight loss and poor body condition despite adequate energy intake, and unexplained abscesses.

How is SARA diagnosed?

SARA can be a difficult condition to diagnose at the herd level; depressed butterfat levels is often used as an indicator but bulk tank testing may disguise a number of individuals that are suffering with SARA. Individual milk-fat tests of cows in the first 60 days of lactation therefore provide a much better indicator of the level of SARA within the herd.

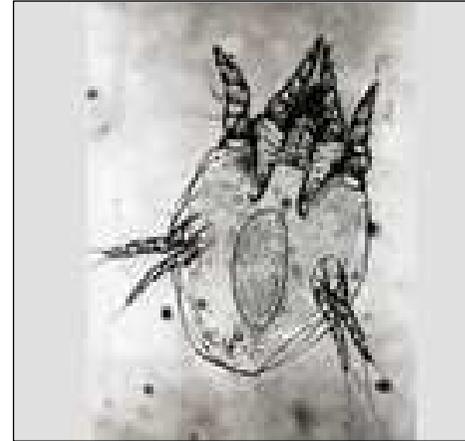
How to control SARA

If rumen acidosis is a concern a number of strategies could be adopted;

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Sheep News

It is common to see itchy sheep at this time of year. The usual causes are the scab mite and lice. Telling the two apart can be challenging and of course they can happen together!



The scab mite can spread between sheep or via fence posts, shed/dropped wool or buildings as it can survive for up to 17 days away from the sheep. It can take several weeks for the sheep to show any signs of infection. The mites cause an allergic reaction in the skin which appears wet initially as serum oozes from the surface. Subsequently, this dries and produces scabs. Large areas of fleece can be lost with mites congregating at the edges of the lesions. Sheep can be intensely itchy, so much so that they can seem to be fitting after they have been handled. It isn't possible to see the mite with the naked eye, so skin scrapes from the edge of the affected area

are examined using a microscope. The withdrawal of compulsory dipping has led to an increase in the incidence of scab. There have also been some reports of the mite becoming resistant to the injectable treatments like ivermectin.

There is now a blood test for scab infection which identifies the presence of antibody to the mite. So how can this help? We know that there is increasing resistance to worms and the use of routine 'just in case' treatments for scab will only serve to increase the problem. Blood testing 12 sheep from the flock will help to identify if there is any infection present and therefore whether treatment is necessary. It could also be used to screen bought in sheep which may be infected but not showing signs yet. Antibody appears after 2 weeks of infection and can last up to 4 months after successful treatment. However, it is possible to monitor the effectiveness of treatment by looking at whether antibody levels are increasing or declining 2 weeks post treatment.. The best treatment is plunge dipping and there is now a list of mobile dippers available on the Bimeda website <https://www.bimeda.co.uk/mobile-dippers>

Judith Lee