



WORMING AND WORMER RESISTANCE IN CATTLE

Reports of anthelmintic resistance in cattle are relatively uncommon compared to anthelmintic resistance levels seen in sheep and goats. In these species it is a recognised problem and precautionary measurements are being taken. Something similar to SCOPS for sheep has now been developed for cattle as well, called 'COWS' (Control of Worms Sustainability).

Reports of resistance in cattle nematodes in the UK are still rare, compared to countries like USA and New Zealand where multiple resistance has been found.

It is not always known if these cases of resistance are attributable to true anthelmintic resistance rather than treatment failure.

Treatment failure is a common problem with the use of cattle wormers. With a wide range of treatments and applications available there is the potential for incorrect application resulting in anthelmintic failure which may be perceived as anthelmintic resistance.

The two main reasons for incorrect application are:

- Under dosing through underestimation of bodyweight. Not many farms will weigh animals prior to treatment.
- Incorrect dosing:
 - Due to incorrect application, especially in the case of pour-ons. If not applied correctly not all the product will be absorbed. There appears to be a greater efficacy of the same product given by injection
 - Due to incorrect use of the dosing gun, mainly not calibrating the gun before use.

Another issue is the overuse of wormers; it has been shown in several trials that many farmers treat their cattle even though faecal egg counts indicated that this was unnecessary. Therefore it is strongly recommended to perform WEC's before treatment, as overtreatment:

- Is a waste of money
- Increases the risk of anthelmintic resistance
- Does not allow for natural immunity to be developed. This natural immunity in calves (especially dairy calves and beef heifers kept for breeding) is important to ensure fewer problems with worms in adult cattle.

We want to avoid in cattle, the level of resistance found in sheep. Therefore it is encouraged to look at proper worm control in cattle now and aiming for a control strategy that ensures the development of natural immunity without production losses. As suggested above a good place to start is performing worm egg counts, which can be done in the practice laboratory.

Please contact us with any queries or if you have not already done so these issues can be discussed when setting up/reviewing a herd health plan.



WATER—THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT

(Article from DHHPS newsletter, University of Edinburgh)

Even though everyone is desperate for that rain to come, at the moment it remains very dry and warm. This warm weather will have a significant effect on the all important water intake of your cows.

A rough rule of thumb is that cows need **2-3 litres of water for every litre of milk produced**, and so a high yielding cow is going to need up to 150 litres of water a day. The amount of water a cow will drink depends on a number of factors: her size, milk yield, temperature and relative humidity of the environment, temperature of the water, quality and availability of the water, and the amount of moisture in her feed. Some of these we can control and others we cannot, but is essential that water is not the limiting factor on your farm. Signs that water availability might be limiting include:

- Empty water troughs at any time.
- Cows crowding around water troughs waiting for them to refill
- Bullying around water troughs
- Dirty troughs. Would you drink it?
- Signs of heat stress in the summer.

Research work is now looking at the impact of cow behaviour and bullying on water and feed intakes. Dominant “boss” cows can reduce water access, especially in blind alleys where subordinate cows such as heifers are prevented from going. Providing water troughs in at least two (if not more) sites will prevent this situation by reducing competition.

To ensure that water availability is not the limiting step in herd productivity:

- Ensure that there is clean, fresh water available at all times.
- Clean out water troughs regularly – tipping troughs are ideal for this. Not only can water palatability affect intakes, but contamination with blue-green algae can be potentially toxic to cows.
- Allow 10cm water trough space per cow.
- Trough height should be 60 – 80 cm to allow easy access.
- Site water troughs for convenient access including immediately after milking, and at a number of sites throughout the shed to prevent bullying.
- Check water flow rates, and use a low pressure valve if necessary to ensure rapid filling of water troughs.
- If using a borehole, analyse a water sample on a regular basis for both chemical and bacterial content. Water hardness is not currently thought to affect production but levels of sulphate, nitrate, heavy metals and bacteria are potential issues to consider.
- If in doubt over water quality, provide mains water via an alternate trough for two weeks and see which source the cows prefer.

PRACTICE NEWS

As I am sure that most of you know, Nanja is due to start her maternity leave towards the end of next month. She has been a valuable part of the Cliffe Farm Department for over two years now and will be missed, although she does expect to return! We wish her well at this exciting time...

In the interim period both Sophie and Andrew will be seen more often on farm, and we will also be taking on Alex, a new graduate, at the end of July.

Bill

VACCINE SUPPLY PROBLEMS

Warnings have already been issued by the manufacturers of likely shortages of sheep abortion vaccines again this year. In view of this information we are strongly advising that you advance order your 2011 requirements for enzootic abortion or Toxoplasma vaccination. The timing of vaccination must be at least one month before tupping but can be much longer.



MEETINGS COMING UP

Beef: Fertility

Run by EBLEX and Cliffe vets
Monday 13th of June 16.00-20.00
Venue: Plumpton College, Lewes BN7 3AE

Sheep: 'Healthy flock, healthy profits'

Preparing for tupping
Run by Cliffe vets
Thursday 23th of June 18.30-21.30
Venue: Plumpton College, Lewes BN7 3AE