

Robson & Partners

Farm Newsletter

October 2011



New vet at Robson & Partners

Rebecca Mcpeake has joined us this month to replace Louise Wilson who is off travelling & working in the Far East & Australia. Rebecca graduated from Glasgow University and previously worked in mixed practices in rural Norfolk for 3 years and for the past 2 years in the Inverurie/Oldmeldrum area. Her areas of interest include bovine fertility, preventative medicine and herd health planning.

Fluke

Summer 2011 has been very wet with many areas seeing 50% above their average summer rainfall figures. Current forecasts predict the rise of fluke infection will be much higher than 2010, so it will be worthwhile checking whether your stock are affected.

Infection with fluke can cause obvious, dramatic losses in sheep especially, as well as slower insidious losses in cattle & sheep i.e. weight loss, increased metabolic diseases, reduced birth weights, reduced milk yields, fluke also affect young animal's growth rates, secondary infection with Clostridial disease and condemnation of livers are very common.

Problems vary with the numbers and age of fluke in the liver which depends on the time of year. It takes 10-12 weeks for fluke to reach adult size & then pass out eggs in the dung. Dung

samples are useful from early winter onwards. Blood tests in cattle and post mortems are required at other times.

Treatment	Age of fluke killed
Triclabendazole	2days to adult
Closantel	6 weeks to adult
Nitroxynil	6 weeks to adult
Oxyclosamide	adult
Albendazole	adult

For cattle when using nitroxynil or closantel you need to delay treatment for at least 6 weeks after housing to ensure all fluke are old enough to be killed by the drug.

Clorsulon is a cattle flukicide and only kills adult fluke.

If in doubt 2 treatments 6+ weeks apart may be required.

Cattle wintered outside may require additional treatments depending on the level of pasture infection.

Herd Health Plans

It is time again to review the farm herd/ flock health plans. Last year we suggested that the SAC web based health plan for either cattle or sheep could be used as a step up from the basic plan that we offered before, hopefully those interested will have gathered the data required over the year to set this up now. Once this is entered it will allow your own performance to be compared to others with similar units within Scotland.

Please contact us as soon as harvest is over for an appointment to review and plan for next year. This is a very worthwhile part of your stock management especially when underlying disease issues can be addressed and production and profitability improved.

TB tests & BVD sampling

There are some TB tests due this winter and it would be an opportunity when cattle are being handled to test young stock for BVD under the Scottish Government scheme at the same time.

We will contact those due TB tests shortly to arrange dates to ensure these are carried out within the nominated time frame to avoid movement restrictions.

BVD Sampling

Herds which are already established within a cattle health scheme for BVD are not required to do any additional testing over their routine annual young stock check.

Beef breeding herds should blood test a small group (usually 6-10 individuals) of young stock to establish the status of the herd. These animals should be;

- Between 9 and 18 months of age

- Be run as a stable group for at least 2 months

- Be homebred

Once BVD status is established as negative or not negative, further investigations can be carried out as appropriate. Negative herds should consider vaccination to prevent the entry of infection.

Beef fattening herds are only required to test 'accidental' calves – those born to heifers unintentionally. This will usually be done as a tissue sample when the calf is young.

All results are required to be reported to the Scottish Government through a system yet to be finalised and every herd will need to be tested annually.

Farmers meeting

We would like to hold an evening meeting with those of you interested in finding out more about what we can offer you in the herd/flock health planning schemes, including a basic introduction to the web-based health plan now available through the SAC. If you would be interested in attending a meeting like this, please tell any of the vets or contact Mariel at the reception in Laurencekirk within the next couple of weeks, so we can get the ball rolling!