

Are You Eligible for Annual TB Testing?

APHA have recently announced that from May 2019 cattle herds in the six monthly testing parts of the Edge Area will be eligible for annual surveillance testing if they meet either of the following criteria:

- The herd has been in existence for at least six years and has not had a TB breakdown in that six year period.
- The herd is registered to a bovine TB Health Scheme Accredited under the Cattle Health Certification Standards (CheCS) to Level One or above. Level One is obtained once the herd has not had a TB breakdown for 12 months.

APHA will review all herds' eligibility for annual surveillance every six months in January and July and will notify farmers if their TB testing interval has changed. If you qualify for annual testing under CheCS criterion only then you should contact APHA yourself to inform them of this.



Qualifying For Annual Testing Under CheCS Accreditation

Even if you have had a TB breakdown in the past six years you may still be able to qualify for annual surveillance testing by gaining CheCS accreditation. Full details of how to obtain CheCS accreditation can be found at: <https://www.checs.co.uk/bovine-tb-herd-accreditation/how-it-works/>

Key points include:

- Your herd must be registered with a participating CheCs Accredited Health Scheme- these are either the Premium Cattle Health Service or HiHealth Herdcare.
- You must work closely with your vet to implement excellent biosecurity on farm. This includes isolation facilities.
- All purchased animals must be subject to a pre-movement test within 60 days prior to arrival on farm, unless they have resided since birth in a low-incidence area.
- All purchased animals must be subject to a post-movement test 60-120 days after arrival on farm.
- Animals returning to the farm having attended shows or sales will also require post-movement testing, unless the show has been deemed low risk and is already exempt from the requirement for pre-movement testing.

Time to Think Huskvac

With Spring rapidly approaching it's time to think about your Huskvac requirements for this year. Calves require two doses given at four week intervals and it takes six weeks from the time that the first dose is given for protective immunity against lungworm to develop. **Due to its short shelf life Huskvac must be ordered in specifically for each farm** - please ring the office and speak to Rachael to place your order.

Annual Herd Vaccinations...

Many of you will be **vaccinating your breeding herds against BVD and Leptospirosis ahead** of turn out. You may have heard reports that leptospirosis vaccine is in short supply this Spring- this is due to a batch failure affecting 'Leptavoid'. We currently have good stocks of the alternative vaccine 'Spirovac' in place; however we recommend that you order promptly to avoid any issues.

Don't forget that heifers must be vaccinated prior to service - this is a common area where vaccination programmes fail and disease is allowed to persist on farms. Heifers being vaccinated for the first time will require two doses of Leptospirosis vaccine given four weeks apart. They will also require either one dose of the live 'Bovela' BVD vaccine or two doses of the inactivated 'Bovilis BVD' vaccine given four weeks apart. If you aren't sure of the best vaccination protocol for your farm then please ring Holly Tree and speak to any of our farm vets.

Upcoming Meeting

We are hosting an evening meeting for cattle farmers on Tuesday 19th March at 7:30pm at Macclesfield Rugby Club. The topic is **'Are your Cattle Ready for Turnout- Preparing your cattle for a healthy and productive grazing season'**. Pie and chip supper will be provided- please ring Holly Tree to book your place.

Calf Pneumonia

We remain in the high risk season for calf pneumonia and it is always worth reviewing your prevention and treatment protocols to ensure that they are up to date. Should you be unlucky enough to lose any calves to pneumonia then we strongly recommend a post-mortem examination. New techniques mean that we now have a much higher success rate in identifying the causative agent even in calves that have had antibiotic treatment. We also currently have funding available allowing us to subsidise the cost of diagnostic testing. For more information please ring Holly Tree and speak to any of our farm vets.

Rehydion Gel - new recommendations for use in lambs

Rehydion gel is a concentrated electrolyte supplement that is used in young calves to aid with recovery from diarrhoea. It is highly palatable, easy to use and can be diluted in milk. It is now also recommended for use in scouring lambs. Affected lambs should be given 2ml with each feed; alternatively the gel can be given neat.

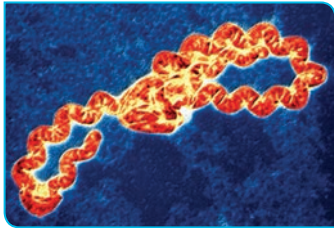
Leptospirosis in Cattle

Leptospirosis (aka 'Lepto') is a condition of cattle caused by the bacteria *Leptospira hardjo* which is endemic in the UK. Leptospirosis is known to be under-diagnosed and causes significant financial loss.

The main effects of this disease are due to its ability to cause abortion, infertility and reduced milk yield. Lepto is an expensive disease as it incurs high indirect (hidden) costs due to reproductive failure. It is hard to quantify the loss but it is widely accepted that for every day a cow exceeds her target calving interval (i.e. 380 days) she is losing between £3 - £6 per day (due to reduced yield when 'stale'). If calving interval in a 200-cow herd is increased from 380-410 days due to an underlying Lepto problem this equates to a herd cost of £18000 - £36,000 a year! In addition to this are the direct costs of acute milk drop, herd depression in yield and cow loss due to abortion when acute infection occurs.

In beef herds the costs can also be hidden; an increased rate of premature or weak calves (another sign of Lepto within a herd) can increase calf deaths and depress growth rates. Also infertility or abortion outbreaks in beef herds can be catastrophic (calving block extended, loss of cows from herds without rearing a calf).

Lepto is also a zoonosis (can infect people) – this poses a risk to people milking in infected herds where there is exposure to infected urine.



Signs of Leptospirosis

The signs of Lepto depend on the herd's degree of immunity, the infecting strain, and the age of the animal infected. But in general Lepto can cause either clinical or subclinical disease.

Subclinical disease can be hidden – it may manifest as reduced conception rates or poorer yields without obvious sickness.

Clinical disease is more striking - a sudden drop in milk yield occurs 2-7 days after infection. The udder becomes soft and flabby with colostrum-like secretions or blood-tinged milk in all quarters. Signs may be mild but some cows become lethargic, stiff and feverish with a reduced appetite. Abortion may occur 3-12 weeks following infection with most abortions occurring during the last 3 months of pregnancy.

There is evidence of infertility following isolation of Lepto from the reproductive tract of a high percentage of repeat breeder cows. Lepto can also cause embryonic death which manifests as returns-to-service.

Risk Factors and How Animals Become Infected

The two main types of Lepto are *Leptospira borgpetersenii* serovar *Hardjo* and *Leptospira interrogans* serovar *Hardjo*. Animals become infected by ingesting infected urine or abortion fluid. Disease is spread most often while cattle are at pasture. Animals that have been infected can become life-long carriers – the bacteria reside in the kidneys and are shed in urine. Lepto is killed by drying, exposure to sunlight, low pH or extremes of temperature. Lepto is **not** carried by vermin or wildlife but **sheep** can carry and excrete *Leptospira Hardjo* therefore mixed grazing is a risk factor.

The important risk factors for leptospirosis are:

- Open herds (buying in carrier animals)
- Using shared bulls (carriers, possible venereal spread)
- Mixed grazing with sheep (can be carriers and are untested!)
- Shared grazing with common watercourses

Diagnosis

There are numerous other causes of herd milk drop and abortion so please speak to a farm vet about what to do if you suspect Lepto (or any other infectious disease!) in your herd.

Various tests detect antibodies to *Leptospira Hardjo* in blood and milk samples. These are useful tests for monitoring herds that are not vaccinating. Herds that are vaccinated can monitor Lepto by blood sampling heifers prior to primary vaccination. We strongly recommend monitoring dairy herds that are naïve through quarterly bulk milk analysis. Beef herds can be monitored via blood screens of a proportion of animals but unless Leptospirosis accreditation is required it is highly advisable to vaccinate all breeding beef animals as a routine procedure.

Milk Drop Diagnosis:

In acute infection paired blood samples taken three to four weeks apart will normally demonstrate increased antibody levels.

Abortion Diagnosis:

Any abortions encountered should be reported to a farm vet who can decide if sampling is advisable. In general any abortion (especially repeat cases) needs investigating ASAP.



Herd screening tests:

A bulk milk ELISA test is available and can be monitored regularly as part of surveillance programme in a naïve herd. Pooling milk samples from first lactation heifers is a useful way of monitoring the infection status in a herd.

Treatment

Antibiotic treatment of milk-drop cases is recommended to reduce excretion of Lepto (and zoonotic risk). However, vaccination is the more reliable method of control and avoids unnecessary use of antibiotics.

Management / Prevention / Control measures / National control schemes

Control of *Leptospira Hardjo* in cattle herds relies upon a combination of factors:

- Reduce risk of infection
- Strategic antibiotic treatment
- Vaccination

Vaccination is the best approach to herd protection – the risk of entry in areas of high cattle and sheep concentration (i.e. our area!) is high so it is very risky not to vaccinate. The primary course of immunisation consists of two injections four weeks apart followed by annual boosting. Replacement heifers must complete their vaccination course before first service.



In a closed herd with no evidence of previous infection that needs to buy in replacements (including bulls), bought-in animals should be isolated for at least 4 weeks and either tested or vaccinated during this time.



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