

Focus on Fly Control

It's that time of year again and the earlier you commence with your summer program of fly control the better. With a wide range of products available it is important to know what you are using and how often it should be repeated. We have both Ectofly and Spotinor in stock and available at competitive rates.

PRODUCT	LICENSED IN	CONTROLS	DURATION OF ACTION	WITHDRAWAL
ECTOFLY	Sheep	Flies (including established blowfly strike) lice and ticks	6-8 weeks	Meat: 8 days Milk: Not licensed for sheep producing milk for human consumption
SPOTINOR	Cattle and Sheep	Flies (including established blowfly strike) lice and ticks	4-8 weeks, do not repeat after less than 4 weeks	Milk: cattle 0hr (Not licensed for sheep producing milk for human consumption) Meat: 17 days



Upcoming Meetings

Matt will be running an evening meeting for sheep farmers on **Tuesday 11th June at Macclesfield Rugby Club at 7:30pm**. The meeting will focus on reducing your barren ewe rate and preventing abortions. Pie and pea supper is included! Please contact the office on 01477 571000 to book your place.

Bridget will be continuing to run her very successful **Mastering Medicines Workshops** over the coming months. Attendance at a medicines workshop is now strongly recommended by Red Tractor assessors and will be of benefit to any members of your farm team who are involved in handling and administering medicines. To book a place or register your interest in future courses please contact the office on 01477 571000 and speak to Vicky.

Come and see us at Cheshire Show! This year we'll be in the Agri-Centre, so do pop in and say Hello.

We have more meetings in the pipeline including plans for a Mastitis Control meeting in July or August and a farm walk with a focus on Lameness Prevention in September. If there are any topics you would like to see covered in future meetings then please do get in touch.



Product Updates

Adrenacaine local anaesthetic is still unavailable; however we do have an alternative local anaesthetic that we are able to supply to our clients. Remember that it is a legal requirement to use local anaesthetic when disbudding calves. It is also strongly recommended that all calves receive additional pain relief such as metacam at the time of disbudding.



There is also an issue affecting the supply of **leptospirosis vaccines**. If you have not yet vaccinated and need to do so then please get in touch as we are still able to help with this.

Toxovax and **Cevac** are now available to order. Due to supply shortages in previous years we are recommending that you order early to avoid disappointment. Both vaccines can be used in ewe lambs from five months of age and can be given upto 4 months ahead of tupping. We are currently offering a 5% discount on all Toxovax ordered for use by 31st August, for more information please ring the office and speak to Rachael.



MAKING THE MOST OF NATURAL SERVICE

Whether your herd is dairy or beef a stock bull can form an important part of fertility management on your farm. However, it is not uncommon for natural service to achieve poor results. This article focuses on our top tips for getting the best from your bulls.

Choose Wisely

Careful sire selection is essential. Consider what the purpose is of the bull you are buying and then look for bulls with appropriate Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) for that purpose. For example if you are buying a bull to use on heifers then selection for calving ease is key.

Ideally buy a bull directly from the farm rather than from market, this will hopefully allow you to choose from several bulls as well as assessing their temperament. It is also useful to see what the breeder has actually been feeding them- be wary of bulls fed large amounts of concentrates or cereals as these can predispose them to liver or feet issues.

It is also worth taking the time to have a look at the scrotum of the bull- scrotal circumference is directly correlated with fertility of the bull as well as having an influence on the fertility of his daughters.

Take time to question the breeder carefully regarding their health status- always buy from a herd with equal or better health status than your own. Remember that bulls purchased from accredited herds have very often not been vaccinated against BVD, Leptospirosis or IBR. This means that they are at high risk of developing disease if they come into contact with any of these diseases when moving to your farm. Bulls should be vaccinated prior to purchase if at all possible and quarantined for 4 weeks following arrival on your farm.

Bull Breeding Soundness Examination

All bulls should have a bull breeding soundness examination carried out prior to purchase, or if this is not possible then within a month of purchase. This should be repeated prior to each breeding season as just because a bull has worked well in the past does not guarantee that he will work well again in the future. One in three bulls in the UK are estimated to be sub-fertile, meaning that whilst they will get cows in calf it will take them longer to do it resulting in an increase in calving to conception. In a beef herd this leads to an extended calving period making management of both calves & cows more challenging and reducing profitability of the herd. In the dairy herd the increase in days open leads to a reduction in milk produced per cow per year, which again impacts on profitability.



The bull breeding soundness examination also includes palpation of the scrotum and testicles to detect any issues with these and measurement of scrotal circumference. Finally, semen is collected to assess sperm quality and motility.

Lameness

All bulls must be regularly mobility scored to ensure that they are not lame. Lameness is a very common cause of poor fertility as bulls with painful legs or backs won't want to serve cows. Lameness must be treated promptly and the bull allowed a rest period to recover before being expected to work again.

Health Management

Bulls must be included in all routine herd health programmes such as vaccination and parasite treatments. Parasite management is particularly critical in young bulls who often won't have had a full season at grass before being brought onto your farm. This means that they are at high risk of gutworms, lungworm and liver fluke.

Remember that sperm production takes a full 60 days and is dependant on a stable body temperature. Any infection that results in a bull running a high temperature will impact on fertility, potentially for the following two months.

Condition Scoring

The body condition score of stock bulls should be maintained at 2.5-3. A higher or lower BCS is likely to result in reduced semen production and poor libido.

Maintaining body condition is particularly important in young bulls who will often lose condition in their first season. Young bulls should be allowed to acclimatise to herd life before they are expected to work. They should then enter the breeding season on a rising plane of nutrition.

Any loss of condition should be investigated promptly. It could have a range of causes including parasite burden, disease or teeth issues.

Breeding Observation

Regular monitoring and condition scoring of stock bulls throughout the breeding season is essential to achieving good results. Key points include:

- Observe mating to monitor libido and check for physical problems such as injuries to the penis.
- Record matings to give an indicator of potential returns-to-service or calving dates.
- Ensure that bulls are not expected to serve too many cows at any one time. It is recommended that bulls under 30 months of age should be put with one cow for every one month of age that they have.

AGE OF BULL	ADVISED COW NUMBERS
Under 2 years	15-20
2-3 years	20-30
Over 3 years	30-40

- Monitor bull mobility to detect lameness
- Monitor bull body condition and act promptly in cases of condition loss



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