



PNEUMONIA SEASON

DECEMBER 23

I hope you are getting on well and that you see some dry days soon!

Pneumonia season is well underway - I'd like to encourage prompt use of a thermometer whenever you have the slightest suspicion that a calf is looking under the weather. Early treatment with an anti-inflammatory and antibiotic when temperatures increase above 39.5 degrees C can make a huge impact on reducing the seriousness of a bout of pneumonia, and the lasting damage it can cause. Once you've had a case, check on the rest in the group: if more than a third are showing signs, speak with your vet regarding treating them all.

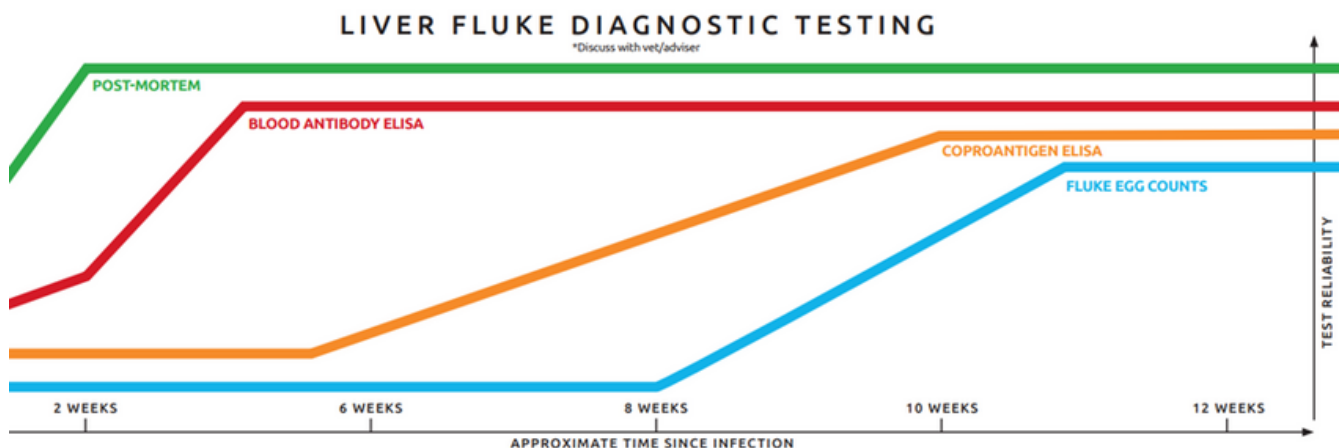
Following on from last month's newsletter discussing liver fluke, I wanted to look further into costings and recommend housing as an opportunity to perform diagnostics as well as treatment.

Consider the following:

In a 40 cow suckler herd, you might use a common triclabendazole[CW1] (Fasinex 240, Tribex; or a combination product Cydectin Triclamox; Combinex) drench at 35ml to treat a 700kg cow. You also treat the forty 450kg store cattle from the previous year with 25ml each. This comes to 2400ml and a 5L bottle will set you back around £380 (ex VAT).

The benefit of using the triclabendazole is that it is licensed to kill immature fluke as well as adults, so that when you drench housed animals 2 weeks post-housing you can be relatively confident that the cattle are now free of liver fluke. However, as Joe R mentioned last month, there are disadvantages to using triclabendazole based drenches. We know now that the frequency of incomplete cure rates is increasing – there is growing resistance in the fluke population[CW2] to this chemical, in the same way that there is widespread resistance to white wormers in the gutworms affecting the UK sheep flock. If we can save this product for when we really need it, we might extend its usefulness.

Triclabendazole is also on the list of chemicals which are more toxic to the dung beetles on your pasture. Whilst you are dosing at housing so this doesn't immediately affect them, it is important to bear it in mind - the FYM will need to go somewhere at some point!



Here are some testing options which can further inform your choices to confirm if treatment is necessary.

Diagnostic options include:

- An antibody blood test (red line) from the youngstock would roughly incur a £10 lab fee per blood. Usually, we would recommend testing 10% of each management group. Results will tell us reliably whether the youngstock have been exposed to liver fluke during this grazing season, and so whether they need treatment or not. The result also tells us whether the pastures they have grazed this season have a fluke risk or not, for subsequent years. If there was ever a year for pasture to host liver fluke, after such a warm and wet autumn, this would be it! Using youngstock as a litmus test, over time you can map which of your available pastures are low risk and prioritise them for the growing stock. High risk pastures can be saved for adults, and decisions made regarding whether they can be made lower risk or not (through fencing etc).
 - Antibodies are produced and detected in the blood for a long time following exposure, so this test isn't as worthwhile in adults (it may throw up doubt as to whether the exposure is recent and treatment is necessary, or historic and already been treated for).
- A faecal sample (orange line – coproantigen) from an individual would come to a £15 lab fee. The infection must be more established before the test will detect it, however there aren't additional costs associated (no need to call a vet to come and collect the sample!).
- Fluke egg counts (blue line) can be completed in house at £20 (ex VAT). Fluke eggs are not constantly shed so there may be false negatives, hence the reduced reliability. Less reliable faecal tests can be improved by repeating them every 4-8 weeks.
- All of these tests can be pooled, however you must discuss with your vet the usefulness of this. You may save money by only performing one test, however, the sensitivity of that test is reduced and may lead to false negatives.

With these diagnostics we can advise an appropriate treatment schedule which may make use of novel flukicides (closantel and oxyclozanide) that have the additional benefit of being cheaper. Therefore, you may be able to save yourself the time and money associated with blanket treatments.

REMINDER

Further reminder that the change in legislation that requires all producers selling livestock for slaughter have an annual veterinary visit will be enforced from the 13th December. This annual veterinary visit can be in the form of assurance, completed animal health and welfare pathway or an attestation visit.

Thank you to everyone who attended this year's skittle evenings at Wilcot, Luckington and Guiting Power. The evenings were in aid of the Farming Community Network and the DPJ Foundation, aiming to raise awareness around mental wellbeing. Through the raffle tickets you raised £835 for these two charities! We had a great time hosting you, we hope you enjoyed the great lack of coordination on display.

DPJ Foundation helpline 0800 587 4262

FCN helpline 03000 111 999



Joe Pescod MRCVS



**Wishing you all
Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!
The Farm Team**

