



The  
**GEORGE**  
Farm Vets

**FEBRUARY 2023**

## **Lungworm in Cattle**



As we head towards Spring and turning out cattle there are lots of things to think about pre-turnout. One of these is lungworm. It is worth thinking about what cattle are at risk and how best to prevent disease. Although primarily a disease of late Summer/Autumn, now is a good time to think about how to reduce the risk to your first season grazers.

### **Lungworm**

Cattle lungworm also known as “Husk” or Parasitic Bronchitis, is a severe respiratory condition caused by *Dictyocaulus viviparus*. It occurs when naive animal (most at risk- first season grazers) ingest infective larvae from the pasture. The infective larvae then migrate from the gut to the lungs, where they develop into adults and begin to produce eggs.

These eggs hatch into “L1” larvae within the lung at which point they are coughed up by the calf or cow, swallowed and pass out in the faeces.

### *Meetings coming up...*



#### **Pre-turnout meeting**

**23rd of February - 7pm  
@ The Bell Inn, Yatton  
Kennel, SN14 7BG**

**Food and drink  
provided**

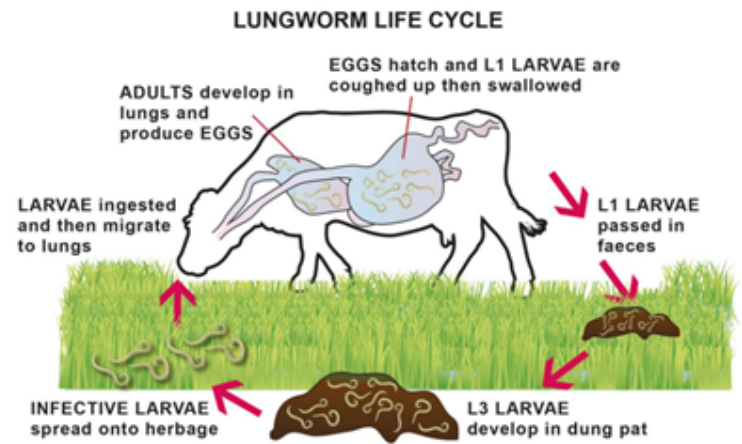
**SAVE THE DATE!.....**



**Cow Convention  
15th March,  
@ Royal Agricultural  
College, Cirencester  
Further details to follow..**

These “L1” larvae develop in the dung pat until they develop into infective larvae, where the cycle begins again. This life cycle normally takes around 3 weeks.

Because of this 3 week life cycle, it takes time for worm burden to build up in the naive animal. As the animal grazes throughout summer this burden keeps building at which point clinical signs become evident.



## Clinical signs of Lungworm

Initially parasitic bronchitis will present with pneumonia signs roughly in late Summer/Autumn in your first season grazing calves. Although primarily a disease of youngstock, it is becoming much more common in adult cattle.

Symptoms can quickly develop into severe respiratory signs such as open mouth breathing and extending their neck. Below are the most common symptoms:

- • Widespread coughing in grazing cattle
- • Loss of body condition
- • Increase in respiratory rate
- • Difficulty breathing
- • Reduced milk yield in adult cows
- • Death

Lungworm in yearling dairy heifer post mortem in November 2022 by Joe Reskelley



## Pre- Turnout Meeting -

Now is a good time to think about parasite control in the run up to the grazing season. An evening covering gut worms, lung worm and fly control- with various speakers.

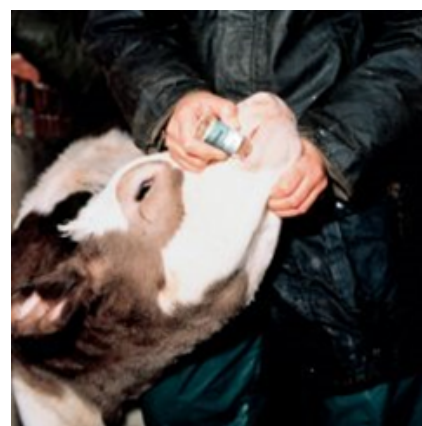
Date: 23rd of February 2023, Time: 7pm, Venue: The Bell Inn, Yatton Kennel  
Food and drink provided

## Treatment

Lungworm, if untreated, can result in significant losses. We have options to treat lungworm like gastrointestinal worms, however with an increased pressure to reduce anthelmintic use, prevention is becoming much more important.

Currently, all available anthelmintics are effective against adult *Dictyocaulus viviparus*. There is a risk, despite effective treatment, that the lungs will be permanently damaged resulting in ill-thrift and even death in severe cases.

Due to the risk of reinfection from known “dirty pasture”, historically use of long acting macrocyclic lactones or clear wormers has been the choice of many farmers and vets. However, use of long acting wormers or regular prophylactic use of wormers throughout summer interferes with the development of the calves natural immunity. This will control lungworm burden throughout the season, however can limit exposure resulting in the animal remaining susceptible to infection in subsequent grazing seasons.



## Huskvac

Huskvac is an oral vaccination used for the prophylactic immunisation of young cattle against *Dictyocaulus viviparus*. It can be given to healthy cattle from 8 weeks of age and consists of 2 doses approximately 4 weeks apart. Ideally, to allow immunity to develop, calves should be protected from challenge until 2 weeks after their second dose.

**Currently Huskvac is only being sold in 12 x single dose vials (in previous years we could buy in single doses). Therefore to avoid confusion we will only be selling Huskvac in packs of 12. If you have any concerns please ring Bridget in the Pharmacy.**

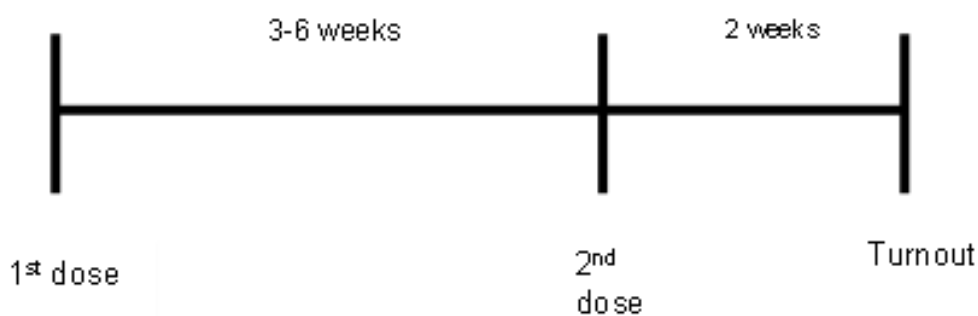
This is, of course, the ideal situation however with various farming systems this may not always be possible, e.g. spring calving herds where the second dose may be after turnout because of age or size. In this case it is worth discussing with your vet to discuss different approaches.

The vaccine contains irradiated L3 larvae which do not cause any problems however it primes the immune system so that when the naive cattle ingest the infective larvae, their own immunity can get rid of them before they cause an issue. Therefore it is important that cattle given Huskvac are exposed to lungworm to build their own immunity for future grazing seasons, which is why it is important to **vaccinate early in the season** to allow 2-3 months of infective larvae exposure.

After the first season, re-infection by pasture larval challenge is necessary to boost immunity.

As the vaccine contains larvae, there is a risk that using long acting wormers or boluses can interfere with the development of immunity. It is important to:

- 1) Avoid vaccinating animals when under their activity
- 2) Do not use until at least 14 days after the second dose.



For Sale:

5 – 20 pedigree Holstein Friesian Spring calving heifers, springing now! Can be sold down calved.

Closed herd 70 years, 77% VG & EX, Heifers well grown and will have longevity, good feet and udders, milk quality and are very quiet.

Pedigree fertile Friesian bull (82%) Brinkworth Buster 6 generations VG & EX, 3 gens EX. Sire Barncluth Arrival. In breeding % 1.4. Dam & granddam (05 8188 5.25 3.36%) currently in herd 8th lactation. Longevity line with plus production throughout– 5th dam EX93 (5) 10 lactations, 6th dam VG88 11 lactations.

Tel: 01666 510261 or 07769280671

All the best,



Keir Hamilton