

SUDDEN DEATH IN CATTLE

AUGUST 23



The
GEORGE
Farm Vets



Sudden death in cattle is a worrying but fortunately rare event on farm. However, it is important to be able to recognise, prevent and sometimes treat the causes of unexpected deaths. This is only a brief overview of some of the more common or important causes, but if you have any concerns or would like to discuss these further, please feel free to contact us.

Anthrax

The last outbreak of anthrax in the UK happened back in 2015. It is thankfully a rare disease, but rapidly fatal and also harmful to humans.

There may be no obvious cause of death on the carcass, though blood from the nose and mouth or in the faeces around the body is highly suspicious. If you do not know the cause of a sudden death in an animal **call us ASAP for advice.**

Clostridia

Blackleg, Tetanus, Pulpy kidney and others

There are many different types of clostridia bacteria and they can live in the soil for years. With blackleg the animal may suddenly become lame in the hind legs shortly before death and the carcass will look bloated or swollen very shortly after. Other kinds of clostridia often don't show any other signs.

Outbreaks of Clostridia often occur after flooding or excavation work in a field, or can follow cuts or injection sites if the wound gets infected. There is no effective treatment, but there are vaccines available. In the case of an outbreak, all animals should be vaccinated and treated with antibiotics to reduce losses.

Pneumonia

Pneumonia is usually a slow disease which causes deterioration over time but some diseases can cause unexpected deaths. Pasturella and respiratory viruses are especially aggressive, and can cause death in animals of any age, though usually those under 2 years old. Signs to look out for in the group include dullness, lack of feeding, rapid breathing and snotty noses, but it's important to remember that there might not be any obvious respiratory signs. Prompt treatment can often prevent loss, and there are many vaccines available for the more common causes.

MEETINGS COMING UP...



MEDICINE HANDLING COURSE

@ The Practice on

Thursday 17th August

11am to 12.30pm

(Suitable for beef and sheep)



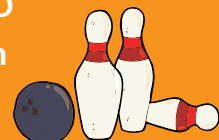
SKITTLES EVENING:

@ The Peterborough Arms,

Dauntsey Lock, SN15 4HD

Tuesday 8th August, 7pm

(Nos. limited)



MEDICINE HANDLING COURSE

@ The Practice on

Thursday 14th September

11am TO 12.30pm

(Suitable for diary, beef and sheep)



COURSES IN SEPTEMBER:

FIRST AID FOR FEET:-

Wednesday 6th September. Old Sodbury.
£300+VAT

AI COURSE:-

13th-16th September. Newent, Glos.
£515+VAT

**If you are interested in any of the above
please contact the office on 01666 823035**



Fog Fever

Fog fever is a respiratory condition which occurs in adult suckler cattle (more commonly in Herefords), often shortly after being moved onto lush autumn grass which is high in the plant protein "tryptophan." Signs include difficulty breathing, coughing and frothing at the mouth. There is currently no specific treatment although anti-inflammatories (e.g. Metacam or Ketofen) may help with symptoms.



Grass staggers

Grass staggers is caused by low magnesium, and is most commonly seen in spring and autumn with lush grass growth. Before death animals may stagger around, show muscle spasms or collapse. If found dead, there will often be signs of debris, flattened grass or kicked up soil where the animal has been thrashing. If you see an animal you suspect of having low magnesium, it can be treated by giving Magnesium (Magniject 9) under the skin never in the vein, though by the time the animal has collapsed they may die before treatment can be given.

The animal will thrash with their legs so it is best to approach quietly and safely from the direction of their back if treatment is attempted. Prevention by supplementation with licks or boluses in spring and autumn is much more effective than treatment.

Gassy and Frothy bloat

Acute cases of bloat can occur if cattle have access to large amounts of barley and concentrates (gassy bloat) or if they have eaten large amounts of clovers and legumes (frothy bloat). In both cases the cows abdomen will look distended and the skin becomes incredibly taut, however, they both require different treatments. Gassy bloat needs a tube to be passed into the stomach or in extreme cases insertion of a red devil into the rumen. Frothy bloat requires the cow to be drenched with a non-toxic oil (vegetable oils or mineral oils). Once the bloat has been corrected, supportive fluids, antibiotics and pain relief need to be given.

Blood loss

Blood loss is not a common cause of death in cattle, but a wound to the neck or milk vein can cause extreme bleeding leading to death within 20 minutes. Usually there is an obvious wound but some bleeds can occur internally, for example during a prolapse, or with caudal vena cava syndrome. Some of these may only be diagnosed after a post mortem exam. As mentioned at the beginning, any unexpectedly dead animal with blood coming from or around any orifices should be left untouched until you've been in contact with your vet.

Toxins

Cattle will not usually voluntarily eat poisonous or toxic plants but they are curious animals and can often lick or eat things they shouldn't. Lead from paint, batteries or roofers' putty can form sweet tasting compounds which cows will lick up. If hungry, they will also eat yew, hemlock (pictured) and other poisonous plants. If you suspect an animal has eaten something toxic, prevent the animal and the rest of the group from the danger, and ring us immediately. Treatment with fluids and anti-inflammatories can sometimes help to reduce the symptoms.



Vet Tech Update - Youngstock Package

The Youngstock Package is designed to take the pressure off around disbudding time. Works very well for all year round calving or for autumn blocks to do a large group. Give the office a call to book a visit with one of our Vet Techs.

Calf Housing Grant due to open soon!

A new calf housing grant for updating existing buildings or creating new builds will soon be available and seems very flexible. The aim is to improve health and welfare, be sustainable and encourage innovation. The minimum grant you can apply for is £15,000 (40% of £37,500), up to £500,000. If you are interested please talk to us or message Kat on 07887654898.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/calf-housing-for-health-and-welfare-2023/how-the-calf-housing-for-health-and-welfare-grant-works>

Did you know we stock Kilcox Extra?

- Heavy Duty disinfectant
- Broad spectrum antibacterial
- Effective for Coccidia and Cryptosporosis
- DEFRA approved

Call dispensary for more details



If you have any concerns or questions about this newsletter, please contact us.
All the Best, Ben



COMPASSION RESPECT INTEGRITY SUSTAINABILITY PROGRESSION CARE

T: 01666 823035 Option "1" for visits or enquiries, "2" for medicines or shop, "3" for TB testing