FriarsMoor
Livestock Health

Newsletter
August 2024

ABORTIONS IN CATTLE

By Eleanor Livingstone VSc MRCVS DBR

As autumn calving approaches we hit a time of year where abortions are unfortunately becoming more common. Abortions should occur at a prevalence of less than 3-5% of the herd, irrespective of the type of system that is run.

Abortions can be categorised into infectious or non infectious.

Infectious causes of abortion:

·Bacterial (ie Leptospirosis, Bacillus, Q Fever, Salmonella, Listeria)
·Viral causes of abortion (eg IBR, BVD, Schmallenberg)
·Parasitic (eg neospora)
·Fungal

Non infectious causes of abortion:

·Toxins
·Trauma
·Nutritional (eg Iodine deficiency)
·Genetic defects

What to do when suffering from abortions?

Please contact us if you suffer from abortions. APHA should be notified of all abortions and will choose to investigate in many situations, usually when more than one abortion has occurred on a holding or if a heifer aborts. The APHA sampling will test for Brucellosis using a combination of vaginal swab, blood sample and composite milk sample.

Beyond the DEFRA testing we are keen to undertake a thorough investigation to ascertain which abortive agent is responsible and whether there is anything that can be done to protect the rest of the herd. Unfortunately the cause is often undiagnosed but the chance of success in diagnosis can be significantly increased with multiple tissue samples.

The fresher the samples the better! In order of 'usefulness' tissue that can be sampled includes the aborted foetus, the placenta and blood sampling the dam. Please don't forget your own hygiene when sampling aborted cows and aborted material.

Many of the infectious agents that can be responsible are also transmissible to people with a few also being transmitted through unpasteurised milk.

The cow is more likely to retain her placenta and may have a subsequent infection and temperature.

What can we do for the cow?

One of the things we must consider is that often aborted cows, especially towards the end of pregnancy, can become quite unwell following an abortion.

Supportive care of NSAIDs (pain relief) and fluid therapy (pumping with a stomach pump) will hopefully encourage the aborted animal to continue eating and decrease the likelihood of her suffering from any fresh cow diseases such as metritis or a DA.

Remember when making future decisions that Neospora is transmitted to the unborn foetus and a dam won't always abort so it is sensible to breed any aborted cows, if not culled, to terminal sire.

Please do contact us if you have experienced any abortions or would like any further information.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

14th 15th Aug

GILLINGHAM & SHAFTESBURY SHOW

Come join us in the stand for a burger & drink

21st Aug

SHEEP MEETING

Meeting fertility targets for your flock.
3pm - 5pm. Location to be confirmed
Topics include:

- Optimising ewe fertility
- BCS
- Use of teasers and breeding technologies
- Ram power and fertility
- Bluetongue and Schmallenberg virus
- Breeding ewe lambs vs. shearlings

22nd Aug

MELPLASH SHOW

The Melplash Agricultural Society Show is one of the South West's premier agricultural exhibitions and is held at The West Bay Show grounds, Bridport, Dorset on the last Thursday before the August Bank holiday.

9th Sept

CLOSWORTH BBQ

From 6.30pm. Venue to be confirmed

16th - 18th Sept

AI COURSE

Three days of theory, specimen and practical training. 10.00-2pm at the Sturminster Branch and Longmoor Farm.

24th Sept

REGENERATIVE DISCUSSION GROUP - IN CONJUNCTION WITH LEIGH CLIMATE GROUP

Join us for the film showing of Six Inches of Soil, a story of courage, vision and hope. The film, tells the story of remarkable farmers, communities, small businesses, chefs and entrepreneurs who are leading the way to transform how our food is produced and consumed.
Presented by Leigh Climate Group.
7.15pm for 7.45pm showing.
Tickets £5. Admission by ticket only

To register your interest, or for any further information about our meetings, please contact the farm office on 01258 472314

G&S SHOW BBQ!

You should receive your BBQ tickets with this Newsletter or your invoice. If you require more tickets than we have sent do not hesitate to get in touch and we will get more sent out so everyone gets one.
We look forward to seeing you all!

STAFF NEWS

We welcome our new Vet Tech Sophie White who joined the Friars Moor team at the end of July.

You may already have met Celeste, our new intern. Celeste joined the team at the beginning of July.

This month we say goodbye to Lucie, who is returning to contract shepherding. We wish her well for the future.

Genomics Dairy Pilot Study

Have you been thinking about using genomic testing in your herd?

Neogen, a leading genomic company are offering 20 testing kits per farm at half price for herds who would like to participate in a FMLH pilot study.

The selected cows should be Holstein, Jersey, Brown Swiss, Ayrshire, and Guernsey breeds, in their 2nd lactation or older. Cows should be more than 87.5% pure bred.

Please chat to Helen if you are interested in participating.