POST MORTEM

By Becca Price

One of the most important diagnostic tools we have available to us in farm veterinary practice is a post mortem. Spring especially, with an influx of newborn lambs and calves and all the problems that can occur with them, is a really important point to be considering herd and flock health, as much as just an individual sick animal.

Fairly often, when one animal becomes ill or dies in a group, there are many others sub-clinically affected, which may not be showing clinical signs – a study in 2020 indicated that 61% of calves with clinical pneumonia had subclinical pneumonia, on average 10.5 days earlier (Binversie et al 2020). They may progress to becoming ill, or may be able to cope with the disease. In these cases it is important to identify the cause of death to protect the rest of the group.

Although clinical examinations are very important, sometimes they are not as sensitive as we would like them to be due to limitations in our diagnostic tools. A study in 2019 tested the accuracy of Dutch vets on identifying calf pneumonia via auscultation (listening to their chest) versus lung ultrasonography. Only 4% of these vets had a "perfect" score (Pardon et al 2019) Obviously there is more to a clinical exam than listening to the lungs, and there are other factors to take into consideration – temperature, demeanour, heart rate, dehydration etc. which were not part of this study, but it shows the importance of having a closer look.

Because of these limitations, a definitive diagnosis via post-mortem is very important, especially if there is any doubt about the cause of death. It also allows us to take samples which can be sent to the lab to test and culture to determine the pathogens causing disease, which can guide treatment choice (such as whether antibiotics are indicated, and which would be most effective) or whether prevention with a vaccine would be possible.

Sometimes it is an individual animal problem – a wire or congenital deformity for example, which can put minds at ease that there shouldn't be a problem about to sweep through the group.

For best results from a post-mortem, it is best to have the animal brought to the surgery – we have more facilities here, and can create a cleaner environment for taking samples. For adult cows, carrying out the Post Mortem at the deadstock collector (Secanim) gives us the ability to lift the animal and have a more thorough look.

ROMANIAN MASTERING MEDICINES

This is a great opportunity to increase the knowledge and skill set of your wider team, who may previously not have had many options of courses that they could attend. It will cover identification and treatment of common conditions in both adult and young stock

TUES
19
MARCH
2024

SHEEP SCANNING

Do you need your sheep scanned for pregnancy? Alex is available to book by calling the office on 01258472314. For best results to confirm fetal numbers; ewes should be 70-80 days in lamb.

NEW BUILD UPDATE

We are very excited to have our roof on at the new site!

UK HOOF HEALTH REGISTRY

Sharing Data For Healthy Hooves

We have been asked as a practice to take part in some amazing lameness research with The University of Liverpool, AHDB and Vet Impress.

CLICK OR SCAN BELOW

Please can we ask clients that are using our foot trimming services to scan QR code. This will take you to information about the study and an online consent form that will allow your foot trimming data to be used to help develop the genetic lameness traits. The more they have access to, the more accurate the trait will be going forwards, to help you breed cows in the future that are much less susceptible to becoming lame.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

13 MAR

LAMBING COURSE

Wednesday 13th March 2024, 10am-4pm. Held at a farm near Sturminster Newton – details given on booking. Participants will learn how to prepare their flock for lambing. Using a lambing simulator, we will teach people when and how to safely intervene with a lambing ewe. £100 inc VAT, lunch included.

19 MAR

ROMANIAN MASTERING MEDICINES

Wednesday 19th March. Locations TBC. The course will be held in Romanian. The course will include identifying the condition you are treating, the best medicine to administer, the dose rate, route of administration and the withdrawal periods and storage and disposal.

25 26 27 MAR

PRACTICAL AI COURSE

DAY 1: Monday 25th March @ Sturminster branch. DAY 2: Tuesday 26th March - Location TBC. DAY 3: Wednesday 27th March - Location TBC.

This is a three-day training course, which consists of one theory training day followed by two practical training days.

12 APR

FOOT TRIMMING COURSE

Friday 12th April, time TBC. One day, foot trimming refresher/ foot first aid course. Location on farm - TBC.

26 APR

FOOT TRIMMING COURSE

Our farm vets and foot trimmers run a three-day foot trimming course. The course involves a morning of classroom-based theory followed by a further two and a half days of practical trimming in small groups.

DAY 1: Friday 26th April DAY 2: Friday 3rd May DAY 3: Friday 10th May

For more information/to book on our courses please contact the farm office on 01258472314.