FriarsMoor
Livestock Health

Newsletter
November 2022

BEEF EFFICIENCY TARGETS - By Jo Child

With DEFRA's health and welfare pathway starting to emerge, and the cost-of-living crisis facing us this winter, now more than ever we need to think about efficiency of food production. What does efficiency mean to you?

It is becoming increasingly important that we consider sustainability measures such as carbon footprinting, which is essentially reduced wherever efficiency is improved. In the beef herd we look at calf weaning weights and growth rates compared to dam size. Calf rearing and finishing units want to be growing their animals quicker, on less feed, with less incidence of calf diseases. In sheep flocks we look at twinning rates and the ability of different types of ewes to rear their body weight worth of lambs, as well as performance of ewe lambs.

The common denominator is that we are looking for underlying evidence of disease that may be causing reduction in productivity and which genetics perform best in real life conditions and should therefore be retained in the herd/flock of the future.

BVD increases carbon footprint in the region of 130% due to increased ill health in the beef herd causing reduced growth and production.

Methane output is increased by 33% in sheep with a gastrointestinal worm burdens due reduced growth rates.

It has been shown that feed efficiency conversion factors are heritable. One AHDB study found that the difference between the top and bottom 10% of the of the dataset, was 1.93kg /hd/day of feed saved. This equates to £0.25/hd/day saving in feed costs, and over a 120-day finishing period would be £30 per hd. On a unit finishing 750 hd per year, the saving would be £22,500.

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR INCREASING EFFICIENCY:

- **Measuring growth rates** is vitally important for calculating feed conversion efficiency. In the suckler herd we can demonstrate this by comparing 200d weight of calves to dam bodyweight. Often reducing mature cow size can help.
- **Having a tighter calving block** will mean calves are more similar weights and sizes, reducing disease risks that come with having cattle of mixed ages and the calves will wean heavier. In the spring it might mean that more calves can be turned out to grazing at the start of season and therefore make the most of weight gain from grass.
- **Reducing age at first calving** reduces cost of production and increases overall lifetime cow performance. Ask us about pelvic measurements in heifers and selecting heifer for breeding at an earlier age.
- **Reduce disease incidence** by finding out your BVD status if you don't know it, vaccinate if you need to and use vaccines to reduce pneumonia in calves.

DRUG UPDATE:

We are currently only able to get Spirovac in a 5 dose pack size. We are hopeful that the 25 dose pack size will be re-available soon. Apologies for any inconvenience this causes in the meantime.

Last month we let you know that we were moving across to Rispoval IBR Live – this is just a further note regarding pack sizes – it is available in a 50 dose or a 10 dose pack size.

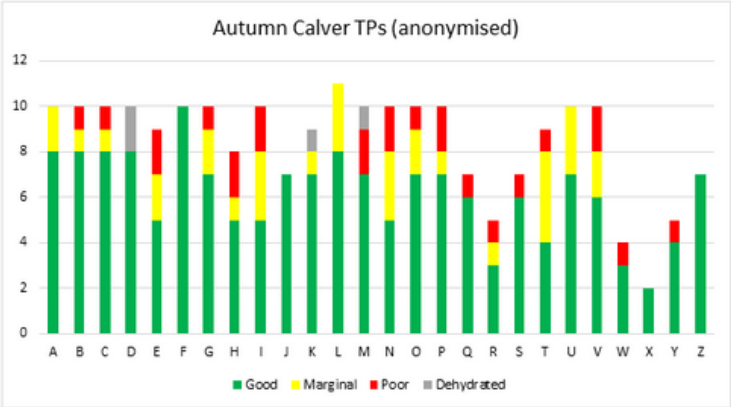
Fluke testing and treatment - Now is the time to think about testing your cattle and sheep for exposure to fluke. Blood, bulk milk and faecal tests are available and it's important choose the test which will be most sensitive for your management system.

Fluke treatments are capable of treating different stages of the fluke lifecycle. Before you invest time, energy and money treating your cattle and sheep, please check for the presence of fluke and that your choice of treatment is correct!

Please contact the practice to discuss this more.

#ColostrumIsGold

By Becca Price



Thanks to funding from Boehringer, we were able to run another #Colsotrumisgold campaign for our autumn block calvers, and we were pleased to see that 73% of calves tested across 26 different farms had "good" total protein results.

Total proteins are a measure of the quality of passive transfer of antibodies from the cow's colostrum to the calf in the first days of life. The antibodies are important for giving the calves protection against environmental and contagious pathogens. Monitoring total proteins are important to keeping track of how well your colostrum management is going throughout your calving period. Our youngstock group members (whose data is also included on the graph above) benefit from multiple total protein readings across their block/year to track progress.

We wrapped up with a meeting held at Longmoor Farm with the kind permission of the Rogers' family and had some interesting discussions on different methods of calf management suiting different systems, and what practical tips can be implemented on farm to improve colostrum management and ultimately calf health.

If you would be interested in running some total proteins on your calves, or joining the Youngstock Group, please get in touch with us at the practice.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

15TH DEC

Dairy Youngstock Meeting

Topic: How to maximise the chance of a live calf being born in the dairy herd. Tuesday 15th November, 11am-2pm. Causeway Farm, Sherborne Causeway, Shaftesbury, SP79PX by kind permission of Sam and Mary Chinn. Please bring clean wellies and dress warmly, hot pasties and soup lunch. Non youngstock members are very welcome - £10/person

22ND NOV

Vet Tech & Foot Trimming Open Day

To include; foot trimming and mobility scoring demonstrations, sheep scanning, freeze branding, services our youngstock group offer, a talk on genetics and how it influences lameness and a set up crush. Tuesday 22nd November, 10am-3pm. Hampreston Manor Farm, Hampreston, Wimborne. BH21 7LX

30TH NOV

Flock Discussion Group Meeting

Farm walk and discussion on manipulation of breeding cycles for increased productivity. Lunch included. Wednesday 30th November, 11am start. Gutchpool farm, Gillingham by kind permission of Rachel Hall and Alex James. Lunch will be provided.

9TH DEC

Regenerative & Beef Discussion Group

Reducing Fertiliser Use. Meeting to include opening up Bokashi compost, made with the group 8 weeks ago. Friday 9th December, 11am-2pm. Lunch will be provided. Mount Pleasant Farm, Woolland, DT110EX

CHECK OUT OUR BRAND NEW WEBSITE:

www.friarsmoorlivestockhealth.co.uk

STAFF NEWS:

Happy work anniversary to Lucy who has been working with us at Friars Moor for 15 years! We are so lucky to have Lucy on our team, always with a smile and a kind word. Here's to more happy years!

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