FriarsMoor Livestock Health

MAY NEWSLETTER

CHARITY GOLF DAY - FRIDAY 3 JULY

SUPPORTING YELLOW WELLIES & LET'S FARM FOUNDATION

FOLKE GOLF CENTRE / BOOK ONLINE FMLH.CO.UK

Responsible antibiotic use on farms: Protecting herd health and the future of farming

Article written by Jade Mowlem, Vet

We all want healthy, productive animals and sustainable businesses. Antibiotics are an important part of the toolkit to help us achieve this goal.

Why Responsible Use Matters

Antibiotics are essential for treating bacterial infections such as mastitis, metritis, and pneumonia. However, overuse or misuse can contribute to antimicrobial resistance (AMR), where bacteria evolve and are able survive treatments that were once effective. This is a growing global concern, affecting both human and animal health.

On farms, the consequences of AMR include reduced treatment success, increased costs, and potential restrictions on medicine use. There is also increasing scrutiny from milk buyers, assurance schemes, and consumers, all of whom expect high standards of antibiotic stewardship.

Understanding Antibiotic Categories

Not all antibiotics are equal. In the UK antibiotics are grouped into categories based on their importance to human medicine, which helps to guide responsible use.

Category D ("Prudence") antibiotics are considered first-line treatments and should be used first where appropriate. These include amoxicillin (e.g. Redymox) and oxytetracycline (e.g. Alamycin). Many intramammary tubes also fall into this category such as Ubropen and Orbenin Extra DC.

Category C ("Caution") antibiotics can be used but only when there are no suitable Category D options. Examples include gamithromycin (e.g. Zactran), and cefalonium (e.g. Cepritect). Products such as Synulox also fall into this category.

Category B ("Restrict") are critically important groups of antibiotics used in human medicine. Use in animals should be restricted to mitigate risk to public health. Examples include marbofloxacin (e.g. Marbocyl) and ceftiofur (e.g. Excenel). These should only be used when necessary and always guided by culture and sensitivity testing. We do not stock any of these drugs.

Category A ("Avoid") products are reserved for human use ONLY.

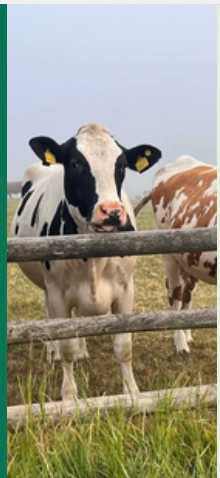
Category D antibiotics should always be used unless there is evidence for the individual farm that it is not effective. Higher category drugs should be reserved for specific cases where they are truly needed.

Continued overleaf

UPCOMING COURSES

- **STOMACH DRENCHING COURSE** 5 JUNE
- **DUNG BEETLE WORKSHOP**
  CATTLE FOCUS 3 JUNE / **SHEEP FOCUS** 4 JUNE
- **DIY WORM EGG COUNTING** 12 JUNE
- **LANTRA INTERMEDIATE**
  FOOT TRIMMING COURSE 29 JUNE - 1 JULY

fmlh.co.uk/events



STOMACH PUMPING COURSE

5 JUNE / 11AM - 2PM / £50 +VAT INC LUNCH

Learn stomach tube placement, when oral rehydration therapy is indicated and what to sachets to use when.

SELEKT PUMP SERVICING CLINIC 19 MAY

Drop your pumps off at West Stour HQ before the 19th May to get a free service.

Continued from front page

REDUCING ANTIBIOTIC USE ON FARM

Good herd management is the cornerstone of reducing antibiotic reliance. Key areas include:

- Mastitis control: Focus on hygiene, milking routine, and dry cow management. Selective dry cow therapy should now be used on all farms.
- Calf health: Ensure adequate colostrum intake, ventilation, and vaccination protocols to reduce pneumonia and scour.
- Nutrition and housing: Balanced diets and comfortable, clean housing reduce disease risk across all age groups.
- Prompt and accurate diagnosis: Treat the right animal, with the right drug, at the right time.

Working with your vet to review herd health plans and medicine use annually is an important step in identifying opportunities for improvement.

Change to Gamaret Availability

You may be aware that Gamaret (intramammary antibiotic) has been used on some farms as part of mastitis treatment protocols. As a practice, from the 1st June we will no longer be routinely stocking Gamaret on our shelves. This is because it is an imported product and does not hold a UK marketing authorisation. Gamaret also contains 3 components that fall into the Category C ("Caution") classification.

While it may still be prescribed in certain circumstances under veterinary direction, its use falls under stricter regulatory frameworks (see below). Our focus remains on using licensed products wherever possible, ensuring compliance and maintaining high standards of responsible prescribing. There are plenty of other options available!

A Note on the Prescribing Cascade

The prescribing cascade is a legal framework that allows vets to prescribe off-label medicines, when no suitable authorised product exists.

1. Use a product licensed for that species and condition.
2. If unavailable, use a product licensed for another species or condition.
3. If still not suitable, use an imported or specially manufactured product.

While the cascade is an essential tool, it must be used responsibly and only when justified. Increased scrutiny means we must be able to demonstrate clear clinical reasoning when prescribing outside licensed options.

Looking ahead

Responsible antibiotic use is not about denying treatment — it is about using these valuable medicines wisely to ensure they remain effective for years to come. By focusing on prevention, careful drug selection, and close collaboration between farmers and vets, we can protect both animal health and the future of our industry.
If you have any questions about your farm's antibiotic use or would like to review your herd health plan, please get in touch with the practice.

DUNG BEETLE WORKSHOP

CATTLE FOCUS 3 JUNE / SHEEP FOCUS 4 JUNE
10:30AM - 4PM / £50 +VAT INC LUNCH
An informative workshop to learn what dung beetles do for us and what we can do for them. The workshops are suitable for any commercial beef, dairy or sheep farmers.

Book online or contact the office for more details.

ON-FARM EMERGENCY DISPATCH

5 JUNE / 11AM - 3PM
£125 +VAT INC LUNCH
This course is targeted at experienced herdspersons/shepherds looking to ensure compliance with Red Tractor and DEFRA welfare guidelines for emergency dispatch of farm animals.

Book online or contact the office for more details.

01258 472314 farmoffice@fmlh.co.uk friarsmoorlivestockhealth.co.uk