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EMERGING DISEASE:

Schmallenberg Virus

There have been reports of a **brand new disease in cattle, sheep & goats in the Netherlands & Germany**, which is insect transmitted. Animal Health VLA are asking for **any calves, lambs or kids with severe & multiple contracted joints and/or 'dummies' to be reported**. In addition, they want to investigate **ANY calves, lambs or kids which were stillborn, weak or show nervous signs and which came from dams imported from mainland Europe in 2011**. Currently, the **risk for the UK is seen as LOW**, but please help our ongoing surveillance by telling us of any cases which match these signs.

I hope you all enjoyed Christmas. 25°C difference since last year for much of Dec!!

Problem Breeders – Any Other Ideas?

There are lots of reasons for a problem breeder, but there are a few things you can try. On average, **90% of well-timed services result in a fertilised egg, but most get lost before 21 days or at bulling**. How can we stop the loss?

First off, check she doesn't have **clinical whites**. Unfortunately, **subclinical whites is also a very common disease**, is very difficult to diagnose and there is **no known treatment, so prevention is the key**. If she has no obvious whites, there are a few tricks we can try. Firstly, you can try Receptal at or just before service to make sure she ovulates. This is perfect for delayed ovulators, but this condition is probably quite rare. Secondly, Receptal at day 12 helps to delay the next bulling, giving a few extra days for the calf to be detected. However, neither of these will give reliable results in every cow.

Some people try a Metricure washout on the day after service. This will work fine if there is a bit of whites left deep in the horn, but it does nothing for subclinical whites.

The most recent ideas are aiming to increase Progesterone on days 3-5 after service. **Problem breeders have a much slower rise in Progesterone after service**. People have tried PRIDs or CIDRs at all sorts of times, but they **only** work if you put them in **on day 3-5 for 4-5 days**. **Don't try it straight after an OvSynch/CIDRSynch**, and don't put it in before day 3 – it will make things worse. **If you get it right, you can expect a 10% increase in conception rate, even in problem breeders!!** Don't forget that even handling a cow after service can reduce conception rates, so **only try this on problem cows**, but it may well be worth a go.

Instead of a CIDR, you could try **5ml Chorulon** on day 5 after service. This works in exactly the same way as the CIDR at day 5, so it should be used on the same types of cows, but research is still ongoing to see how big the benefit will be.

Finally, **don't forget about embryo transfer for problem breeders**. You could expect around a 40% conception rate for ET in problem breeders on average. You need to **serve the cow when bulling** and give us a call, and we'll come down and put in a Holstein embryo a week later. The implanted embryo will help to tell the dam not to bull again. Twins aren't as common as you'd think! Four of us put in embryos, so there'll be somebody free when needed, so long as you give us fair warning. **£50 for one service, with discount on multiples**.

If all else fails, flushing for embryos helps diagnose blocked tubes and allows you to at least get calves from a good cow. In the next few years, commercial IVF will become available again, and this may have significant benefits even for the commercial farmer. Watch this space...

Orbeseal

Unfortunately, **due to a problem with production, the UK supply of Orbeseal may be limited for around 3 months**. We expect to have a good delivery in the middle of January, but the supply between then and March is less certain. Just in case, we are sourcing a replacement from overseas under a special licence. In the meantime, our **stocks will have to be sold on a first come, first served basis**, so if you are running short of Orbeseal, **please call us to add your order to the list**.

Keep reading the newsletter over the next few months. You'll see some exciting new things at Nantwich Farm Vets in 2012!

Stuart