Coombefield Veterinary Hospital
Farm Newsletter
January 2016

Have ewe heard?

Tom is taking a 9 month working sabbatical from 1st July 2016 and returning to Coombefield on 1st April 2017. His aim for his time away is to work within a New Zealand Veterinary team to gain experience, knowledge and understanding of different farming methods and veterinary techniques. He is hoping to visit Greg Hall who was a vet at Coombefield in the early 90's, I'm sure some of you will remember Finn, his black Labrador.

On the way to NZ he will be visiting Indonesia and on the way back South America this will ensure the travelling bug lays dormant as well! Tom will consult with all the farms he visits routinely to ensure they receive the level of veterinary input they require during his time away. We wish him and his wife Beth a safe and enjoyable trip.

The Importance of Milk Sampling

With increasing pressure on the agricultural industry to reduce antibiotic use and prevent resistance, it is becoming more important that veterinary surgeons and farmers work together, ensuring the correct drug is used to treat a disease and reduce antibiotic resistance. This is especially true in any mastitis outbreak. There are several different bacteria which can cause mastitis in cattle. These can broadly be put into two groups (although not always constrained by these definitions in reality, it is a useful start). Historically contagious varieties of bacteria (*Staph. aureus* is the one you are most likely to have come across) has been the most commonly diagnosed cause of mastitis. However, with improved parlour and udder hygiene and the wearing of gloves at milking time this has reduced in recent years. The other group which includes *E. coli* and *Strep. uberis* is the environmental variety. This is the group most frequently found to be causing clinical mastitis cases. It is usually picked up at housing due to overstocked/unhygienic straw yards or cubicles. Alternatively it can be picked up when out to grass and spending too much time lying in one place to get away from the heat of the day in the summer or during wet weather when the animals poach the ground either in gate ways or sheltered areas to escape bad weather.

With the cost of mastitis thought to be around £70-£250 per case, the benefits of bacteriology are that the causative bacteria can be identified. This means a prevention plan can be put in place to reduce the chances of further infections to other animals. Also, with sensitivity results the correct treatment protocol can be put in place to bring about a cure or identify if the treatment failed due to bacterial resistance to the antibiotic.

Samples should be taken from animals when:-

- Animals have clinical mastitis (prior to treatment).
- High SCC at milk recording or a positive result to a Californian milk test.
- A treatment has failed to work either reappearing with:-
  - Clinical signs - once the milk withdrawal period has elapsed from the antibiotics.
  - A high SCC 7-10 days post treatment - This indicates that there is still a bacterial infection present in the udder without presenting as a clinical mastitis - It is likely to become a clinical infection again in the future if left untreated.

To take a sample the teat of the infected quarter should be sterile, the milk is collected into a single use sterile pot (will say sterile on the side of the pot) whilst wearing clean gloves from a clean dry teat:-

- Fore strip three streams of milk out of the udder.
- Spray a pre-dip on the teat and leave on for 20-30 seconds followed by wiping the residue off with a clean paper towel/single use cloth.
- Prepare the teat in a sterile manner , this involves:-
  - Using surgical spirit on cotton wool to be applied to the teat end
  - Sterility is only achieved when the surface of a clean swab remains clean after applying it to the teat end.
  - The cap should be removed from the sample pot without touching the inside of the pot and the cap placed face down to prevent contamination.
  - The pot should be held at an angle such that debris from the outside of the teat won't fall into it.
  - Milk can then be squirted into the pot at an angle so that the teat does not come into contact with the pot.
  - 5ml of milk is enough, filling the pot to the top is unnecessary!
  - Once the milk is in the pot the lid should be applied immediately to prevent any contamination.
  - Teat dip afterwards.

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FARM DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

If you would like to speak to a Farm vet or arrange a visit, please call 01297 630515

Medicines can be requested via email or by telephone

Email: farm@axvets.co.uk

Product Info

Mamyzin is now available