

GERAGHTY & NEARY VETERINARY

November Newsletter

2019

“An Extra One per Load”

Farmers are selling cattle at this time of year and looking at your sales dockets you will see the number of cattle sold and the weights. For example if a farmer sells 10 weanlings the weights will range typically 425kg to 295kg (average 326kg). On average, farmers sell 0.85 weanlings per cow. According to that for every 10 cows you will sell 2775kg of weanlings. If we raise survival rate to 95% and tighten the calving spread with better fertility, then that same farmer would sell 3325kg of weanlings. That's 550kg extra which is almost 2 extra weanlings. Next year aim to sell one extra per load!

The same principles apply to store and beef cattle—better thriving cattle gain more weight and finish quicker. How do we apply this in



practice?

- Planned winter dosing
- Calving & calf management
- Fertility planning
- Thrive at grass

Contact us between now and January for a simple plan for your farm

An Extra One per Load

Calf Survival

Cow Fertility

Calf Thrive

A few simple changes could result in an extra 550kgs per 10 cows to sell

Contact us for a plan

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Planning for the year ahead is important to achieve better results



Liver Fluke in a lamb's liver last week

Sheep Management in Winter

Each year many farmers find sheep dead in the field. These are significant losses as they are potentially carrying an average of 1.9 lambs as well as their own value. Our figures from KT 2 years suggest that only 25% of sheep farmers met their mortality targets. Last year that doubled to 48%. Therefore these losses are easily preventable. The most common issues are

- Acute and sub-acute fluke
- Stomach worms (lambs)
- Clostridial disease
- Going on their back
- Pneumonia
- Lameness

Most of these can be prevented with a proper flock health plan. If you want a flock health plan contact us and we will draw one up for you and advise you on strategies to minimize losses.



Scanning Cows

Calves are being weaned at the moment and dairy cows are entering the last month of lactation. If you haven't scanned your cows already it is time to do it. Empty cows are unproductive and should be set aside for fattening or in the case of dairy cows in winter milk herds, milk them on further than normal.

The next question answered by scanning is the degree of calving spread and the percentage empties. There are some reports of up to 27% empty rate in dairy herds this year, while calving spread is a huge issue in suckler herds. This represents a serious loss to you, the farmer.

Use your scanning results to benchmark your herd—assess where you are. Then plan for where you would like to be regarding fertility.

We are proficient at conducting fertility investigations and have the advantage of being able to look at cows and examine the records to understand the complete picture.

We are available to scan cows, discuss the results and design a simple action plan for improvement

Winter Dosing

Post housing is the best time to treat for fluke and worms and if you choose the right products, a single treatment will do the job.

Lice are a common cause of ill-thrift and lower fertility.

Cows generally do not need a worm dose. Young or thin cows are the exception.

Products that will kill all fluke two weeks after housing include

- Endofluke
- Fasinex/Tribex
- Cydectin Triclamox pour on

Products that can be used six weeks after housing include

- Trodax
- Closamectin pour on
- Flukiver

Products that kill adult fluke need 13 weeks of housing pre dosing to kill all fluke.

All weanlings and yearlings should be treated for worms with a white drench or an ivermectin.

Contact us for advice now.



Body Condition scoring at drying off allows better management of dry cows. Decisions taken now will determine spring health and fertility outcomes .

Drying Off Cows

At drying off we have two main concerns

- 1) To allow the udder and cow regenerate before the next lactation
- 2) To cure any existing infections in the quarters (reduce SCC)

Cows need at least 6 weeks of a dry period for regeneration and to come back up to a BCS of 3.0-3.25 at calving. First lactation heifers probably need more time. Thin and/or lame cows need more time also—this is critical.

Most farmers are used to using blanket dry cow therapy with antibiotic tubes. Some farmers use sealers also. A few are using Selective Dry Cow Therapy. Important points to make are

- **All** dairy cows should be sealed at drying off to prevent new infections entering the teat end during the dry period.
- Cows with existing infections (high SCC >150,000) or that had a case of clinical mastitis this lactation should be treated with antibiotic + sealer. If you don't have this information then selective dry cow therapy is not a runner.
- Because of the risks I would strongly advise anyone thinking of selective dry cow therapy to contact us for advice in advance of drying off.

Pneumonia in Weanlings

Cattle have small lungs compared to their body size - they are prone to respiratory disease or pneumonia.

Most winters in the west of Ireland are particularly bad for pneumonia due to warm and poorly ventilated sheds.

- Freshly weaned animals should be bedded on straw and eating meal.
- Watch for signs of pneumonia – early treatment is important. Grade weanlings into 3 categories. Grade 1 are eating normally. Grade 2 are “picking” at food. Grade 3 are not eating.
- Grade 2 animals need treatment and the majority of them need veterinary attention. Grade 3 animals need immediate veterinary attention. Delay in treatment can result in losses, lung damage and ill-thrift.
- Monitor temperatures of coughing animals –those with temperatures $>104^{\circ}\text{F}$ (39.5°C) need treatment as well as animals not eating.
- Treatment should continue for 48hours after the reduction in temperature—that means at least 3 days. Not completing treatment can result in relapses and lung damage.
- Vaccination reduces the incidence of pneumonia and cattle thrive better. Contact us for help.



Contact Us

Give us a call for more information.

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