

# FARMGATE VETERINARY GROUP

April Newsletter

2020

## Covid 19 Challenges on Farms

We are all four weeks into the restrictive measures imposed to deal with the considerable threat of Covid 19. Travelling around the practice carrying out essential services, we see the issue of reduced help on farms to do many of the seasonal jobs that must be done at or around turnout to ensure good farm management and animal welfare. Many farmers are in the high risk category and/or depend on help returning from cities at weekends or neighbours to do the various cattle handling tasks at this time of year.

Lots of you are already using us for such services such as

- Disbudding calves/ castrations/ dehorning
- Vaccinations and dosing and mineral bolus administration
- Scanning & fertility work
- Hoof paring

We have been able to manage the majority of this work with physical distancing since the start of the pandemic often by using two vets. If you need help to do any cattle handling/management tasks you can call us for assistance. In addition we will also offer a few extra services to facilitate your needs such as

- Tagging: calves or genomic samples
- Weighing cattle for BEEP

Call the office for assistance, for more information or to book in an appointment.

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### *Do you need help at*

- *Tagging, disbudding calves*
  - *Castrations/ dehorning*
  - *Vaccinations/dosing/ boluses*
  - *Weighing*
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- Nematodirus/Coccidiosis
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- Dairy Cow Fertility
- Mineral Supplementation

Contact us if you need help



Nematodirus outbreaks are occurring at the moment

## Nematodirus Warning—Lambs

We want to issue a Nematodirus warning as the weather conditions have been ideal for the parasite. Numerous outbreaks have been diagnosed in the practice this week. Lambs typically have scour and a “humpy” appearance. The disease is often confused with coccidiosis (which requires different treatment) but a simple dung sample will tell the difference in 36 hours. Lambs should be treated in late April/early May as losses are likely. Treatment should be with a white or yellow drench as the more modern ivermectins are not effective against this parasite. *Zerofen* is recommended. Adding in a thriver to the can helps boost lamb thrive such as *Vet Tech Elite*.

## Coccidiosis

Coccidiosis is caused by a persistent parasite with likes moist conditions. Signs include blood stained scour, black dung, straining (forcing) or no signs at all.

If one animal has coccidiosis in a group then the entire group should be treated. If the animals are infected and then treated normally they are immune to future infection. Many farmers strategically use *dycoxon* or *chanox* in this way to prevent outbreaks/losses. Timing is critical for success. Typically in calves a week after disbudding is the ideal time.

Coccidiosis has a three week life cycle so calves/lambs under three weeks are unlikely to have coccidiosis. Bought in calves are likely to be infected so blanket treatment is advised. Contact us for advice.

## Clostridial Disease

Many farmers vaccinate their cattle and sheep against clostridial diseases. However very few do this correctly

- Animals need to be vaccinated twice 4-6 weeks apart in their first year.
- A single shot booster is required the following year.
- A single shot in the first year is **ineffective** and will not protect animals against disease
- Ten in one vaccines are better than Blackleg vaccine in cattle as many animals die each year from *Clostridium sordelli*, malignant oedema and Black's disease.
- If ewes are vaccinated properly to start and boosted a month before lambing, lambs will not need vaccination until 3 months
- Vaccination is the only effective way to control clo-

## Pre-breeding Examination of Cows

Dairy cows that are at risk of not going in calf in a ten week breeding season should be examined two weeks before the start of breeding season.

Cows that are deemed “at risk” include cows that

- Retained cleanings
- Are dirty
- Hard calving
- Twins
- Thin
- Calved after 17th March
- Haven't had a heat

These cows can be examined using the scanner and metricheck to increase their chances of going in calf and therefore reducing culling rates.

Contact us to arrange a visit in mid April.



Using a vasectomized bull increases submission rate

## Getting cows back in calf

Getting cows back in calf is one of the most important jobs on the farm. The two main things to be concerned about are firstly, submission rate (cows coming into heat) and secondly, conception rate.

### Submission rate.

Cows should be back cycling by at least 42 days post calving. Things that delay this include excessive weight loss after calving and low energy intake, uterine disease, the effect of suckling in suckler cows and poor heat detection. Any dairy cow not seen in heat by 42 days post calving should be examined by us using both the scanner and metricheck to ensure that she is not dirty, has a cystic ovary or other problem. This pre-breeding exam can significantly improve breeding performance and has been very worthwhile on farms in our practice. Contact us for details.

Poor heat detection is very common as it is very difficult to have time to observe cows adequately to pick up cows with short or silent heats. Tail paint and scratch cards are useful and available from the practice. Using a vasectomized bull with a chinball marker has transformed the fertility rates on farms in the practice and is the best way to detect cows in heat. A lively well developed Friesian animal is the best candidate to use. Vasectomy only costs €80 and is very successful.

### Conception rate.

Poor conception rates may be caused by bulls with poor fertility, mistiming of AI, negative energy balance, diseases like Lepto, IBR and BVD, copper and iodine deficiency and other causes. If you think you have an issue with poor fertility contact the practice for advice.

The old saying “a stitch in time saves nine” is very true with fertility—a little veterinary intervention in May can make a big difference to the outcome of the breeding season.

## Mineral Supplementation at Grass

Cattle are going to grass and on many farms now is the time to supplement them for mineral deficiencies rather than realizing in 6-8 weeks time that the coats aren't shedding or cows are repeating.

Copper deficiency is the most common deficiency locally. Options for supplementation include bolus and injection. The traditional copper injection is short acting and raises lumps. Copper boluses last 6 months. A new injectable form of supplementation called *Multimin* is a viable option for farmers that don't want to bolus cattle.

Iodine and cobalt deficient can also affect fertility like copper does. Some farms are using multivalent boluses to rectify these deficiencies and should continue to do so.



For mineral profile testing and/or advice on minerals contact us.

## Dosing at Turnout

If cattle were dosed at the correct time and with suitable products after housing they will not need a turnout dose. If you know the products you used and when we can work out very quickly if turnout dosing is necessary.

Farmers buying in store cattle should treat them for fluke and worms on arrival. At this time of year Ivo-mec super is an ideal option for this task.

## Have We Your Correct Mobile Number?

Prescriptions and other practice updates are sent via text message. If you are not receiving them please call us so we can update our system.

## Contact Us

Give us a call for more information.

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Visit us on the web at

[www.farmgateveterinarygroup.ie](http://www.farmgateveterinarygroup.ie)

## Herd Testing

Herd testing is planned on Friday for the following week

Get your request in before Friday—we will confirm Fri/Sat

In vast majority of cases requests will be facilitated



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