

FARMGATE VETERINARY GROUP

December Newsletter

2024

Winter Dosing & Preparing for Spring

Housing gives us the opportunity to reduce parasite burdens in animals over the winter months without any risk of reinfection while housed.

The most important parasites are Liver Fluke, Worms, Hoose, Lice and on some farms Rumen Fluke.

Knowing your herds status is becoming more and more important. Ensuring you use the right product at the right time is critical for success and luckily we are here to help you and advise you in this regard.

Too often we see clinical disease and even deaths where product selection and timing have resulted in failure to control parasite burdens in animals.

When winter dosing it is also an ideal time to look forward to spring and plan what ways we could improve your outcomes for Spring 25. If you have had issues in previous years now is the time to plan for risk reduction.

Vaccine programmes that have lapsed for any reason can be re-evaluated and recommenced if necessary. Contact us for any assistance required—"Dial Before you Dose"!!!



Contact us if you need help

Do you need help at

- *Planning for next year*
- *Preventing known problems*
- *Ideas how to get more output from your livestock*

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Castration & Dehorning

It is best practice to disbud calves as the horn buds appear in early life. This is the most welfare friendly outcome and it is much easier on the farmer/vet doing the job. Where this was not possible for any reason or if you have purchased animals with horns, the majority of these require dehorning. Dehorning animals as weanlings is easier and more welfare friendly than doing yearlings and certainly than try to dehorn older animals of 1.5-2 years. Castration by burdizzo is limited legally to animals less than six months of age.

It is commonly the case that we have large numbers of animals >1 year to dehorn and castrate in April at turnout. These animals will be anything to 150kg heavier than they are now. It is well worth considering to dehorn and castrate such animals in the next two months rather than wait for April. They will be less swelling and less weight loss at lighter weights and will be an easier task to complete for all involved.

Animals should not be castrated or dehorned at the same time as weaning—in these cases delay the procedure for 2 weeks.

Control of Pneumonia

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°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 advice.

Dry Cow Therapy

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 and ideally 8 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. New regulations are insisting that only cows that need antibiotics should get them - 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 >100,000) 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.
- The cure rates over the dry period using Selective Dry Cow Therapy vary widely and this is because the selection process is flawed. We can select the correct cows.

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 the first year of KT suggest that only 25% of sheep farmers met their mortality targets. By 2020 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.

Ram Management

The last raddles are going on most rams now. Plan when the breeding season will end and take the rams away. Rams are a significant investment and many need some TLC over winter.



FarmGate Vets Annual Christmas Event

We are holding our annual Christmas Event on Saturday 7th December at the office in Mountbellew from 9am to 6pm.

For clients of the Ballygar Practice we will hold the annual event from 3pm to 8pm on Friday 6th December in the Ballygar Office.

Everyone is welcome to attend what we hope will be an informative and fun day. All the staff will be present to meet you and go through any issues you have on farm.

There will be significant special offers and discounted product lines on the day also.

The vets will be present to do a free consultation with you on any issues you have and to advise you on winter dosing and vaccination plans for the coming spring.

Join us for some fun, special offers and refreshments

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information.

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