



# Newsletter

## January 2020

### Mastitis tubes

Please be aware that there are currently some supply issues with many intramammary treatments. This is a national issue affecting production.

Tetra Delta should be back in stock at some point this month, but many of the other treatments have no date as of yet. We have, however, been able to source two types of intramammary treatments in the short term.

Albionic is a broad spectrum antibiotic. One tube every 12 hours for up to 3 treatments. Milk withdrawal 84 hours

Orbenin LA milking cow is also available for gram positive infections.

As always, the best antibiotics are the ones left on the shelf, so a proactive preventive approach is always best. Please speak to us about the AHDB mastitis control plan if your case rate is higher than you'd like.

### Medicines course

Many of you will have had advice during recent Red Tractor audits that you should attend a "use of medicines" course - this is now compulsory for the Dairy standards and recommended for Beef and Lamb, though what is recommended one year is often made compulsory the next.

Charlie and Alice will be holding our next medicines course for farmers on **Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January**. If you would like to attend, please give the office a ring to book a place. We're limiting numbers to 20 per meeting, but don't worry if you can't make it, we'll hold them every few months until everyone who wants to attend has done so. The cost is £5 per person which will include lunch and a certificate of attendance.

The meeting is not about teaching you how to suck eggs, and will include some recent research to keep it relevant.

## Focus on Mastitis

When it come to mastitis, the real benefit both financially and in terms of cow welfare is in prevention. Certainly there's a lot more to it than which colour tube you use. First it is important to know where the cases come from. To help with this it is possible to build up a pattern of disease from milk-recording data or clinical records.



Clinical records could be either through our bureau service, keeping records of clinical mastitis in a book on-farm or, with a bit more effort, from medicines records, but for a true picture clinical records and cell-counts need to be looked at together. If you don't already milk-record, its well worth considering. The cost is small in comparison to the benefits it can bring. There are a few companies who do milk recording, so ring around for a quote!



From your records we can work out whether cows are picking up udder infections during lactation or the dry period, and whether it's a seasonal problem connected with the housing or pasture environment, or if it is more likely to be contagious pathogens passed from cow to cow in the parlour. We have had a hand in development of the AHDB "QuarterPro" tool which can help make these decisions and allows a more targeted approach to improving management for mastitis control.

To confirm an environmental cause versus a contagious one, it is often helpful to take milk samples. To get the most benefit from milk samples, take 10 aseptic samples from clinical cases before treatment (you are less likely to find the bugs responsible from high cell count cows which don't have obvious mastitis). Label them with the date, cow and quarter and freeze them. Once you have 10, drop the frozen samples into us and we'll organise getting them tested.

It is very important that the sample is aseptic. Contaminated samples will just show what bugs are living normally on your hands or the cow's skin (or in her dung!). Without wanting to give a lesson in sucking eggs, I take samples in the following way:

- 1) Wash and dry hands
- 2) Wear disposable gloves.
- 3) Scrub the teat end with a medicated swab or cotton wool dipped in surgical spirit
- 4) Strip out a few squirts of milk onto the floor.
- 5) Repeat the teat-end scrub with a clean piece of cotton wool and spirit
- 6) Strip another few squirts onto the floor
- 7) Do one final scrub.
- 8) Take the top off the sterile sample pot holding the lid facing downwards (I hold it in the curl of my little finger). Do NOT use the preservative tablets as you would for milk recording.
- 9) Take a few quirts of milk into the pot (you don't need to fill it up - just a few squirts will do)
- 10) Replace the cap, label and freeze.