

West Lakeland Veterinary Group

Farm newsletter December 2016

REMINDER. We will be speaking about Johnes at a meeting hosted by AHDB and sponsored by Boehringer (the makers of the new BVD live vaccine 'BOVELA'). The meeting will be held at the **Santon Bridge Inn on Tuesday 13th December**. Arrival at 7pm, supper will be provided at 7.30 followed by a Johnes presentation. In order to get numbers for catering please reserve your place no later than the Friday before the meeting. The link to the action Johnes website which can provide more details of the scheme is: <http://www.actionjohnesuk.org/>

CONTROL RINGWORM AFTER HOUSING

Ringworm is a superficial fungal skin infection of all animals (including humans) that occurs mainly in calves 2-8 months of age. It can cause continual irritation, which distracts affected animals from feeding and if cattle are in close contact the condition will spread easily. It shows up as grey/white circular skin lesions that typically appear around the eyes, head, muzzle, neck and trunk.

Ringworm is certainly unsightly and unwanted for pedigree producers showing cattle and it causes permanent hide damage. It can also check dairy youngstock growth rates and slow beef production throughput significantly; in one recent French study affected calves were up to 12.9kg lighter after a 155-day finishing period¹.

Ringworm is a self-limiting disease so it's tempting to do nothing, but affected cattle will remain infectious to transmit the skin condition to other animals. Spores from the *Trichophyton verrucosum* causal fungus also remain viable for years in cattle housing and can be difficult to eradicate even with thorough disinfection. Consequently, it is well worth controlling ringworm, particularly when you appreciate that it can also infect people working with housed cattle over the winter.

Vaccination provides an effective disease control option. Bovilis® Ringvac can be used both to prevent ringworm and treat the skin condition to shorten the recovery time in affected cattle. The vaccination course is two intra-muscular injections 10-14 days apart. Calves can be vaccinated from two weeks of age and should be immune to ringworm three weeks after the second injection. Farmer feedback suggests that correctly vaccinated cattle are protected for life without the need for boosters.

If you do see signs of ringworm this winter please contact the practice for advice as soon as possible.

Low protein silages for beef and sheep farmers again this year?

SAC Consulting carries out silage analysis for farmers in Scotland and Northern England. A summary of the results for October are as follows: 49% are below 10% Crude Protein (CP), 37% are between 10-12% CP, 14% are above 12% CP.

Crude protein levels below 10% can be production limiting if not supplemented and in the most severe cases can cause rumen impaction. The reasons for this trend are not fully known, but may include faster growing more nitrogen efficient grass varieties, lower levels of fertilizer application and the weather conditions in the late spring. It is recommended that all Suckler herds have their silage analysed and if protein levels are low seek nutritional advice for feeding over the winter period. Table showing SAC 2016 beef and sheep pit silage analysis :

	Average	Minimum	Maximum
Ash g/kgDM	71.2	50	97
CP g/kgDM	103	58	159
DM g/kg	291.7	154	626
D Value (%)	67.2	50	76.9
ME MJ/kgDM	10.8	8	12.3
pH	4.3	3.8	