

# Vet Viewpoint

A regional round-up of key veterinary issues

## Bill Pepper

Cliffe Vet Group  
East Sussex

\* An outbreak of mastitis saw three cows die within three days of being dried off. This highlights the need for sterile conditions when drying off.

The gangrenous mastitis was caused by the environmental bacteria *Bacillus cereus*, presumably inadvertently introduced and sealed into the udder at drying off. The source has yet to be established.

In these days of promoting a reliance on internal teat sealants alone to prevent infections during the dry period for uninfected cows, we dare not forget the associated risks.

These cows had been double tubed, so neither can we always rely on antibiotics to cover any errors at drying off, as some virulent bacteria are quicker off the blocks than the long-acting antibiotic present.

## Ed Powell-Jackson



Synergy Farm Health  
Dorset

\* Weather has meant a varied workload with wet spells disrupting the cows' daily routine. Cattle have been housed one day and out at grass the next. Intakes of feed have been very variable. Left-displaced abomasums have been common, as have diet-related gut upsets.

We have already seen the first outbreaks of tick-related diseases in bought-in cattle – redwater and tick-borne fever being common.

Ticks seem numerous and active earlier in the year than normal – is this a legacy of the mild winter?

## Ian Bates



Fenwold Vet Practice  
Lincolnshire

\* Cattle work normally tails off about now as most of our farms are mixed arable and beef. However, we seem to be dealing with a few more lameness problems, such as bulls with foot abscesses and injuries while serving cows.

There is always a balance between treating or sending for slaughter, but they often can't be transported and "on farm slaughter" only applies if they have suffered

being taken away for incineration is frustrating and shows the importance of early treatment.

## Roger Scott



Scott, Mitchell and Associates  
Northumberland

\* We've seen a few more cases of drunken lamb disease this spring and has been frustrating, as even early treated lambs died. Tests often showed they had kidney failure and we called it "nephrosis".

Treatment was always futile, until now that is, as we have learned a bit more about this condition.

Possibly linked with a change in

milk consumption or quality and perhaps with cryptosporidiosis or coccidiosis, these lambs are thought to have an abnormal fermentation in their large gut. This makes them not just drunk from the alcohol, but also acidotic, hence the kidney failure.

Treatment with bicarbonate of soda in a water drench helps, as does an injection of long-acting amoxicillin – an antibiotic that passes into the intestine and knocks out the fermentation.

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A regional monthly round-up of key veterinary issues from members of the XL Vets group.  
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