



nantwich
farm vets LLP

NEWSLETTER MAY 2022

This Month:

Integrated Fly Control

Avian Flu update

Golfing for Ukraine

First Aid / H&S Courses



01270 610349

nantwichfarmvets.co.uk

CONFLICT, COVID AND COST CRISIS



After a cold start to April, spring now seems well upon us with lots of you looking like getting good early first cuts.

Aside from having mother nature to contend with and constantly looking over our shoulder to see how far away the latest wave of COVID is, we now look like we have a cost of living crisis and war in Ukraine to deal with. The positive to come out of this must be the consumer becoming used to the price of produce on the shelf increasing and the public realising the importance of home grown produce.

With costs increasing on what seems like a daily basis we are seeing many different strategies to try and reduce them. Examples of these are reducing concentrate use or grazing a group of animals that perhaps are not usually turned out. Remember these animals may need some form of mineral supplementation, especially if not being fed compound feeds. Not least of concern here is magnesium; we have started seeing staggers cases as a result of this deficiency. It is also important to consider other trace

elements in pregnant animals to help avoid abortions and still births later down the line. Many of these minerals are important throughout pregnancy and not just in the dry period.

The COVID hangover along with the war do seem to be causing continuous issues with supply of certain products. Please continue to bear with us if you have problems with this, we are doing all we can to keep stocked and keep you supplied.

One product we are struggling with is Gamaret milking cow tubes which have been out of stock for a few weeks now, I suspect the war is influencing supply of these but should the situation improve I think supply will be sporadic. With a similar product (Multiject) looking unlikely to be back in manufacture this year this may be a good time to have a conversation with your vet about mastitis treatment and choice of drugs going forward.

John

IN FOCUS

INTEGRATED FLY CONTROL



The return of warm weather also brings the return of the fly population. This year we are stocking another weapon to introduce to your fly control arsenal.

PROBLEMS FLIES CAUSE

The commonly seen nuisance flies (head flies and horn flies) contribute to a number of problems in stock:

- irritation and distract from eating, reducing feed intakes and yield.
- Flies in the parlour increase irritability (in staff as well as cows), leading to increased kicking, tail swishing and mucking.
- causation and spread of diseases such as Summer Mastitis and New Forest Eye.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Muck heaps and areas of waste silage, along with damp, low lying ground, are environments flies are particularly fond of and will breed readily in. Keeping cattle away from such areas in fly season will certainly help.

In housing, keeping air moving with the help of fans can reduce the influx of flies, and having water sprayers in the doorways going into and out of parlours can also be a helpful deterrent.

The problem with these is that they don't have an impact directly on the fly population, so effectiveness is limited.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

The most common method of controlling flies has been through application of insecticides, specifically pyrethrins or synthetic pyrethroids. Spot-On and Swish are two frequently seen examples of chemical applications for cattle, either topically or in impregnated eartags. Avermectins (such as Ivermec) used as wormers do also work against flies, but have a shorter duration. Other chemicals can be used as aerosols in parlours and collecting yards, or applied directly onto breeding areas to try and prevent the population from growing.

These chemicals are often unpleasant and hazardous to handle, require significant handling of cattle, and need to be repeated throughout the fly season. There is also evidence of developing resistance to these chemicals in some fly populations, so their effectiveness may decrease over time.



BIOLOGICAL CONTROL

Biological control is simply using the pests' natural enemies to keep the population down. This isn't a new technique, having been used to control insects on food crops and trees for centuries. Even in the UK, fly parasites have been used for a number of years, but mainly within the poultry industry.

In the case of nuisance flies, their enemy is a parasitoid wasp, *Spalangia cameroni*. They are tiny compared with normal wasps, only 3mm in size, but can have a significant impact. The adult females lay their eggs inside fly pupae. These eggs then hatch and the wasp larva eats the fly in its pupa before it can hatch. Eventually an adult wasp will emerge from the pupa, and find further fly pupae to lay eggs in, so the cycle continues. Each female wasp is able to lay eggs in up to 350 fly pupae each day. So the fly population is controlled and reduced at the developmental stage, rather than killing adults that may have already laid hundreds of eggs before landing on a cow treated with a chemical product.

This method enables a reduction (over time) of use of chemical products, decreasing the speed that resistance can develop and the negative environmental (and health) impacts. There are also long-term cost saving (and animal handling) benefits with the reduced need for these treatments. There are also significant savings when it comes to the improved health and welfare of the cattle as a result.

WHAT ARE THE CONS?

Biological control takes time for its results to show. It's not a 'single application, job done' solution. The parasitic wasps need reapplying every couple of weeks during the fly season for consecutive years to allow the population to build up sufficiently.

The wasp lifecycle is around 3-4 weeks, considerably longer than the nuisance fly at 2 weeks. So once the fly population gets going, it is very difficult for the wasp population to catch up. Hence it is recommended to start applications of the wasps now rather than once flies have already started hatching and the population is established. This slower reproductive rate is another reason why it is important to reapply the parasite wasps every couple of weeks, to maintain their population.

BIOWASP

Biowasp contains already parasitised nuisance fly pupae and rice husks (to protect larvae from damage). The number of packs required depends on herd size - we generally recommend one pack per 50 cows, or one for every 25 youngstock in a straw yard. However, if you have significant muck piles building

up in the summer months, a greater quantity will be required. Each pack should be spread over 12-20 locations around the farm, in muck build ups that won't be disturbed or trampled, around but not in liquid manure or damp areas where the larvae might be submerged and not hatch. Application should be repeated every 2 weeks over the whole fly season, and best effect will be reached after 2-3 seasons.

FEEDBACK FROM THE FARM

Vet Becky Williams' family are already using Biowasp on their farm at Wrinhill. So let's ask her about it:

How long have you been using Biowasp?

We started using it a couple of years ago because we wanted to reduce the chemicals we were using for fly control, both for the environment and the benefits to human health.

How often do you apply it?

We are still applying Biowasp every two weeks around the farm during fly season (April to September). Hopefully we might be able to reduce the amount of applications next year.

Where do you apply it?

We target areas of standing muck like straw muck heaps, around scrapers, under water troughs and in straw yards (especially corners or edges that don't get cleared out thoroughly).

Do you use any other forms of fly control?

We use Electron (cypermethrin-containing) ear tags on everything, but find they are most effective for grazing heifers. We hope to stop needing to use them in the future if we see sufficient reduction of fly population by the Biowasps. We have electric fly zappers around the robots as well. It's important to continue to use other forms of fly control, especially in the first couple of seasons when the parasitic wasp population is still building.

SUMMARY

Biological fly control through a product like Biowasp provides a sustainable and safer option as part of a mixed approach to fly control, reducing the overall fly population rather than just decreasing what is on your cattle. For more information or to order for your farm, contact the office.



Fig 1: the contents of a Biowasp bag - parasitised fly pupae and rice husks

Fig 2&3: application of Biowasp bags in multiple locations of standing muck - including straw muckpiles and scrapers

TEAM NEWS

GOLFING FOR UKRAINE

Last year five of us from the practice took part in the **Great Golf Challenge** (72 holes, or four rounds, in one day) to raise money for Cancer Research UK. We are rising to the challenge again, this time raising money for British-Ukrainian Aid, a charity that is providing medical equipment and supplies along with other humanitarian aid to people displaced, injured or directly affected in other ways by the war in Ukraine. Please donate generously using the Just Giving link on the right.

We also know there are many keen golfers among our clients, so are planning a **Client Golf Day on Wednesday September 7th**. This will also be a fundraising event, and include a round of golf followed by a meal, with prizes for various challenges on the day. For those not interested in the golf, there will still be an opportunity to donate (and win) through a raffle. More details will follow on social media, but do register your interest by ringing the office.



COURSES

EMERGENCY FIRST AID AT WORK

Thursday 9th June

A one-day, Lantra-approved course provided by an external trainer, learning the key techniques to administer first aid. A certificate of training and Skills Identity Card will be awarded on completion of both the theory and practical assessment.

H&S - AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE

Thursday 8th September

The agricultural sector sees some of the highest numbers of accidents in the UK, which can lead to serious and fatal injuries. So it's critical that we all use good health and safety practices. This Lantra-approved day course will help you identify, assess and deal with potential hazards and dangers in your farm environment, and improve the safety of your workplace.

Lunch and refreshments provided on both courses. £120 per person for NVG clients. Contact the office to book a place.

SPOTLIGHT

AVIAN FLU UPDATE

Over the last six months the UK has experienced its largest ever outbreak of Avian Influenza. Since last November an AI Protection Zone has been in place across the entire UK. So it has been a legal requirement to keep all domestic birds and poultry housed (whether a commercial enterprise of thousands or just a small hobby flock) and follow strict biosecurity requirements. This has all been aiming to reduce contact with or infection from wild bird populations and between domestic flocks.

There have been over 100 confirmed infected flocks in this outbreak (compared with 26 last year), resulting in a lot more surveillance visits on all flocks (even if only one or two birds!) in a 10km zone around each infected premises. This has led to the APHA drafting in privately practicing vets to help with the increased work load, and for us as a practice has meant that one of us vets has been on 'bird duty' every day for the past few months, with a couple of vets carrying out visits each weekend too. These surveillance visits have simply been to check that flocks are following correct biosecurity and housing measures, and that there haven't been signs of disease at all. Some of you have encountered us on these visits wearing our 'poultry vet' hats - not one that any of us wants to be wearing too often (or at all!).



All that said, the good news is that *from Monday 2nd May the poultry housing requirement is being lifted*. It's important to stress that the outbreak isn't over (there was another infected premises reported just this week), and the nationwide AI Protection Zone is still in place, along with the requirements to maintain strict biosecurity measures and vigilance for signs of disease.

A major aspect of this is continuing to minimise potential contact between domestic poultry and wild birds, especially waterfowl. This includes fencing off or netting ponds or standing water, cleansing and disinfection of hard standing areas, keeping feed inaccessible to wild birds, and introducing wild bird deterrents.

More info and can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu.

Contacts

Vets

Dave Shaw
07836 335185

Rob George
07773 384450

John Manson
07813 690860

John Yarwood
07814 879109

Steven Crowe
07891 843694

Stuart Russell
07770 448179

Peter Duncalfe
07717 780604

Laura Donovan
07800 647608

Joe Mitchell
07773 342345

Lewis Hodgson
07972 463365

Craig Scarisbrick
07958 361378

Eleri James
07958 361194

Zoe Waterson
07891 843573

Gwen Davies
07949 576107

Jack Randle
07866 257014

Ieuan Paske
07812 173942

Becky Williams
07951 268223

Vet Techs/ATTs

Chloe Harding
07572 145554

Sarah Holt
contact office

Will Bailey
07949 521642

Charlotte Male
07951 268222

Hurleston, Nantwich,
Cheshire
CW5 6BU



Nantwich Farm Vets



@NantwichFarmVet



@NantwichFarmVets



nantwich
farm vets LLP



01270 610349

nantwichfarmvets.co.uk