



**nantwich**  
**farm vets** LLP

**NEWSLETTER**

**A P R I L**  
**2021**

**This Month:**

**Team News**

**In Focus: Lungworm**

**Spotlight: Anthelmintic options**

**BVD Stamp it Out**



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# FAREWELL FROM SARAH



Spring is well and truly here! We're seeing more warm sunshine, fields (mostly) drying up, daffodils out, and the days are longer. As a practice we have been busy with many lambings and calvings, and everyone has a bit more of a spring in their step.

This comes in good time alongside the progress that appears to have been made with ongoing Covid vaccination - a real reminder of how effective vaccines are in controlling disease in a population, whatever species! We are looking forward to some of the changes that will come with gradual rule relaxation this month, though please do remember that social distancing continues to be important even at this stage.

With turnout coming up, thought has to go in to how you are going to protect your grazing stock (especially first-time grazers) against gut and lung worms. We have an article on lungworm and antiparasitics in this issue to help you plan for this coming season.

It is with great sadness that I am writing this in my last week in Cheshire and working with NFV. As many of you will know I have made the difficult decision to leave a job that I love to relocate back to Cumbria to be closer to my family, something that has become more and more important to me over the very strange year that 2020 became.

After four amazing years of working with an outstanding team of vets and farmers alike, I am leaving with some fantastic memories, fabulous friends, and a huge breadth of knowledge, for which I am eternally grateful.

I am sure my routine clients will not miss my constant nagging over cleaning calf buckets and making sure milk powder is mixed and fed properly though!

I will miss working with you all. It has been a real pleasure to work alongside you all and be part of the NFV team.

*Sarah*

## BVD STAMP IT OUT

A huge thank you to everyone that has engaged with the BVD Stamp It Out Project. Sadly (for me!) this project which began in 2018 will finally come to an end in June 2021. All the check testing is now complete on the 200 farms that took part. 50 farms found evidence of BVD infection and were given the extra funding for a PI hunt. There are a few farms that have funding for a PI hunt but have not yet spent the full £440 on BVD testing. Please spend it if you can before the money runs out! If you think that you may have funding left please get in touch. If you have any outstanding BVD eartag results and invoices please email them to [lauradonovan@nantwichfarmvets.co.uk](mailto:lauradonovan@nantwichfarmvets.co.uk) as soon as possible as all the money must be claimed before the June deadline.



More than 80 farms are now using heifer BVD antibody check testing to monitor herd BVD status. More than 50 farms are using BVD eartags on all newborn stock. This is the legacy of the BVD Stamp It Out scheme and thank you again to everyone that has participated.

Going forwards, for Red Tractor assurance visits the herd health plan must now contain a 'BVD eradication plan and BVD test results'. 'The BVD eradication programme must be designed in conjunction with the farm vet and may include participation in the National scheme (BVDFree) or membership of a CHecs accredited scheme'. We have over 200 farms now registered on the BVDFree website and when a farm has achieved two years of negative test results they receive one of my specially designed and laminated BVDFree Test Negative certificates! I also have around 15 farmers that have signed up to cattle health schemes and met the criteria for CHecs BVD accreditation. I am pleased to hear farmers taking all this information along to auctions and achieving recognition for BVD testing.

I have set up a reminder system now for the heifer check testing but please have it in the back of your mind that if you are handling cattle for a TB test it might be a good time to do the blood sampling. Check testing requires blood sampling 5 animals for BVD antibodies from each separate management group of 9-18 month old unvaccinated animals. Also, if you vaccinate with a BVD vaccine down to 3 months old please think about timing so that heifers are still available for antibody testing when we need them.



Thanks!

*Laura*

# LUNGWORM - AN UNPREDICTABLE PARASITE



The one thing that we can say with certainty about lungworm is that it's unpredictable! The impact this parasite has on cattle is a balancing act between the parasite, the immunity of the animal and the weather.

## CLINICAL SIGNS

Parasitic bronchitis, or husk, is caused by a highly pathogenic nematode called *Dictyocaulus viviparus*. It commonly causes an intermittent cough and rapid breathing, particularly after increased activity. More serious signs of struggling to breathe and coughing at rest can be seen in severe cases, and untreated affected animals can die. The lung damage caused by even a mild infection makes them more prone to a secondary pneumonia. Severely affected calves are unlikely to ever reach mature bodyweight.



Fig 1: a calf showing signs of husk

## LIFE CYCLE

Lungworm has a very different life cycle compared with gut worms (see Fig 2). The female worms produce eggs containing fully developed larvae, which hatch within the host's digestive tract. These larvae are passed out in the muck, where they mature and then make their way onto the grass. The speed of this process depends on the weather, but can be as short as 5-7d in ideal conditions. Rain helps the larvae migrate from the cow pat on to the grass, and there is a particular fungus that helps to disperse the larvae more widely on the pasture too. So lungworm outbreaks can often be seen in summer/autumn after rainfall following a dry spell.

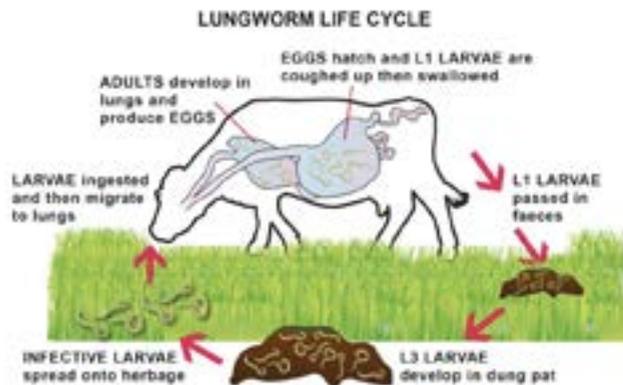


Fig 2: Lungworm lifecycle  
(from [www.cattleparasites.org.uk](http://www.cattleparasites.org.uk))

The threat from lungworm starts at turnout, when grazing animals ingest infective lungworm larvae on pasture. Low levels of over-wintered larvae will be present if the pasture was grazed the previous year. After this year's mild winter we may see some regional variations, with areas that didn't have prolonged sub-zero temperatures having higher infection levels than normal.

## WORMERS AND NATURAL IMMUNITY

Lungworm is present on the majority of farms but whether clinical disease is seen depends on the balance between challenge and immunity. Vaccination with Huskvac prior to turnout is a great way of providing immunity before animals are exposed, but lifelong protection relies on animals being exposed to natural infection as well. Wormers should be used strategically in the first year of grazing to prevent the build-up of lungworm larvae on the pasture but should also enable some natural exposure. This can be done by selective treatment of only certain animals or groups of animals, rather than dosing the lot of them. Overuse of anthelmintics can limit the exposure to a level that means animals remain susceptible to lungworm infection in future grazing seasons. Careful planning is needed to maintain this balance.

First season grazing cattle are the most susceptible to disease because they have not had the chance to acquire any immunity prior to exposure, but

adult cows can also be at risk. They may have built up some immunity to lungworm as youngstock, either naturally or through vaccination, but this only lasts for 6 to 12 months.

## REINFECTION SYNDROME

In recent years we have seen lungworm as an increasing problem in adult cattle. This is often known as *reinfection syndrome* when there are either high challenges that overwhelm the animal's immunity or where their level of immunity has waned. This results in an excessive immune response within the lungs, similar to an allergic reaction, and this in itself produces significant tissue damage.

## TREATMENT

Treatment is effective with a wide range of anthelmintics (see next page). Be aware that this can cause death of the worms in the lungs, and treatment could lead to a pneumonia in some animals. Antibiotics and NSAIDs (Metacam/Ketofen) may be indicated in animals with a secondary pneumonia depending on veterinary advice.

Lungworm is a complicated disease but due to its potentially serious consequences all farms need to be vigilant and consider lungworm as part of their parasite control plan. The details of your plan may well be different from other farms, so speak to your vet in good time before turnout, to make sure that you protect your herd for this year and the years to come.

We have made a few changes to the wormers and other anti-parasitics on our shelves this year. To enable us to be competitively priced, while ensuring we offer a complete parasite control package to our farms, including best practice advice, faecal sampling and supply of product. The cattle pour-ons and sheep drenches we stock are in the tables below.

With increasing concerns about cattle wellbeing, the environment, biodiversity and the development of resistant parasites, promoting the responsible use of antiparasitics is essential. Best practices aim to protect herd health and productivity, whilst maintaining a long-term sustainable balance in parasite control on farms. When putting together a worming program, you have to consider the characteristics of the animal, the parasites, the environment, and the parasiticide.

There are three underlying principles:

- correct pasture/grazing management
- optimising livestock immunity
- the correct use of antiparasitics.

#### Strategic treatment

Plan the treatment of groups of animals based on previous experience/history to minimise worm burden, pasture contamination and disease.

#### Targeted treatment (TT)

Treatment of groups of animals based on assessment of current parasite risk (e.g. treating at first grazing season when FEC indicates it).

#### Targeted selective treatment (TST)

Treatment of individuals or subgroups based on an assessment of current parasite risk (e.g. treating only poorer doing calves). Often discussed is leaving a small proportion of animals untreated so a resistant worm population doesn't develop.

#### Therapeutic treatment

Treatment in response to clinical disease.

The responsible use of all medicines is a hot topic in the industry and wormers are no exception. Please give our team a call to discuss plan for the grazing season ahead.

For further advice on the responsible use of wormers please see COWS <https://www.cattleparasites.org.uk/> or SCOPS <https://www.scops.org.uk/>



SHEEP DRENCHES	Wormer group	Active ingredient	Pack sizes
Endospec	White wormer	Albendazole	2.5L, 10L
Noramectin	Clear wormer	Ivermectin	1L, 5L, 10L
Levacur	Yellow wormer	Levamisole	2.5L, 5L, 10L

CATTLE POUR-ONS	Comments	Active ingredient	Pack sizes
Enovex	Shorter acting	Ivermectin	2.5L
Taurador	Longer acting	Doramectin	1L, 2.5L, 5L
Eprizero	No milk withhold	Eprinomectin	2.5L, 5L, 10L

## AN ADDITIONAL ATT

As we mentioned in last month's newsletter, Charlotte Male has joined the Nantwich Farm Vets team to start her Approved Tuberculin Tester (ATT) training. She has already completed all the theory side of her training and will be out on farm with her supervising vets John Manson, Steve and Lewis over the next few months while she carries out the practical side of her training.



Charlotte is originally from Wolverhampton and recently moved to Nantwich. She is keen to get to know more people in the area and is hoping to join Cheshire YFC once COVID restrictions ease. With numerous current and former members of several clubs within our team, there is much debate within the practice over which is the best club to join. If you meet Charlotte on farm and want to tell her more about why your YFC club is the one to join we are sure she would love to know.

She has a Bioveterinary Science degree from the University of Liverpool. She loves the great outdoors, in particular hiking, skiing and camping.

Will has his final TB assessment booked for the end of March, hopefully by the time this newsletter lands on farm he will be a fully qualified member of our TB team. Both Will and Charlotte will be helping out with vet tech work around their TB testing work, so you may also see them out on farm disbudding or mobility scoring.

## SO LONG, SARAH!

So, Sarah is off to pastures new back up north. She has been a much loved and appreciated part of the practice for the last four and a bit years, both professionally and socially! She will be missed by clients, vets and office staff alike. Alongside the routine work, she carved out a great niche for herself with the calf health side of things, and it's a shame Covid came along just when she was starting off the Bite-Size Calf Learning sessions early last year. The calf health mantle is being passed on somewhat to Gwen, who is aware she has big shoes to fill!

Sarah, thanks for all your hard work and many contributions to Nantwich Farm Vets. We wish you all the very best for this next chapter!

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