



**farmVets**

**The Vet Centre**

# NEWSLETTER

April 2020

## Dairy Antibiogram

With an increasing focus on better use of antibiotics, knowledge of the resistance status of the common mastitis pathogens in your herd is important. It helps you and your Vet when making decisions about lactating cow mastitis treatments and dry cow antibiotic selection.

The Antibiogram allows early detection of emerging resistance on a farm, hence allowing changes in treatment approaches if required. Additionally, individual farms can be benchmarked against what is happening nationally in terms of antibiotic resistance.

More than 10% of farms nationally have now been tested. What this has identified is that about 40% of farms have evidence of penicillin resistance amongst the Staph aureus isolates, and a proportion of farms have Strep uberis isolates that have reduced sensitivity to injectable mastitis antibiotics.

For an individual herd, the results allow for more focused use of antibiotics, with many farms being able to use appropriate narrow spectrum antibiotics for mastitis treatment throughout the year. Conversely, there are a number of farms who have had to change away from injectable antibiotic for mastitis treatment.

The Dairy Antibiogram tests the antibiotic sensitivity of multiple isolates of Staphylococcus aureus and Streptococcus uberis gathered from a bulk tank sample. Using a bulk tank milk sample enables multiple bacteria to be tested and does not require sampling and culture of individual quarters across the herd, which was the way we historically had to gather this information. The test can easily be ordered and does not require any sampling by herd owners.

Having the Dairy Antibiogram information at the time of your milk quality consult allows your Vet to make more precise decisions about the approach to treating both clinical mastitis in your herd and selecting the best approach to drying off. If you have not ordered an Antibiogram test for your herd, talk to your Vet to arrange this important step in taking control of antibiotic resistance in your herd.

## Have you got CLOWNs in your herd?

**CLOWNs** are cows with **CL**aws **O**vergrown, but **W**alking **N**ormally.

Overgrown claws are an early indicator for lameness. Uneven weight bearing will shift the balance to one of the claws and predispose to lameness. When it starts raining, these cows are the first to get lame.

The solution to prevent this lameness occurring is corrective hoof trimming. Hoof trimming restores the weight bearing surface and existing lesions are removed, so the feet can handle increasing weight from a growing calf. Basically, you are hitting the reset button and it's a bit like turning your older cows' feet into heifer feet!

### Did you know?

- Rain itself does not cause lameness, it only exacerbates it
- Overgrown claws do not recover during the dry off period
- The average cost per lame cow is \$351 (based on 200 cow herd with 7% lameness, no antibiotic treatment and no culling for lameness)
- More than half of lameness is attributable to previous lameness event.



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## Keep an eye on your herd's Zinc and Copper trace element levels

### Zinc

Some farmers have been experiencing problems with facial eczema this summer, even in herds that have a good zinc supplementation programme. This has led to many people supplementing zinc at higher levels and some adding zinc to supplementary feed or using boluses when they traditionally haven't. There are two potential concerns that you should be aware of if you have made the decision to increase or change your zinc dosing.

1) **Zinc toxicity:** The levels of zinc recommended for protection from facial eczema are quite close to the toxic level, which means we need to be careful we don't push cows over the edge. Signs of long term zinc toxicity include cows off milk, milk fever like symptoms, constipation and in severe cases anaemia, jaundice and death. This is more likely when cattle are treated with zinc on a more infrequent basis.

2) **As zinc interferes with copper uptake from the gut,** supplementing zinc for longer or at higher doses may reduce copper levels more this year than previously.

### Copper

While zinc supplementation is increased it is important to be aware that this reduces the ability for cows to absorb copper. Low copper can affect production, reproductive performance and growth rates in younger animals.

Liver biopsies are the key to allowing you to make good and economical copper supplementation decisions. Liver biopsies are the only form of testing that can assess copper storage levels and predict if the levels are high enough to get cows through calving and peak production. They will prevent you from wasting money on unnecessary supplementation if your herd already has adequate copper levels, and prevent you from risking copper toxicity by supplementing without knowing the copper status of your herd. A few years ago, we heard of three herds with copper at toxic levels, because they were feeding PKE and supplementing copper together.

Therefore the important message this year is:

- Don't risk your animals becoming low in copper and suffering production losses.
- Don't waste your money on unnecessary supplementation if you don't need it.
- Don't supplement copper blindly and risk toxicity.

Contact your local Vet for advice on trace element testing and supplementation this season. We can also customise a mineral supplement program for you to meet the exact requirements of your herd, so that you aren't wasting a cent.

## Get Serious about fleas and tick protection for your working dogs. Get Seresto.

Having the right set of tools makes farm work all the more pleasurable and efficient. It's the same for working dogs. Bringing in a fractious mob goes much smoother when your dogs are concentrating on the task rather than stopping to scratch at fleas! As spring kicks in flea populations start to boom, so it's time to get your dog team set up with some serious tools of their own to prevent fleas distracting them from work...

We recommend Seresto, a long lasting 8 month flea and tick collar.

**Seresto®** collars allow the controlled release of tried and trusted active ingredients, which diffuse into the fatty layer of the dogs' skin in low doses, only replenishing when required. As these actives remain in the skin's lipid layer, the product is water resistant, so it stays effective when charging through rivers or working in downpours. Fleas and cattle ticks (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*) are killed on contact with your dogs' skin and coat, meaning that unlike systemically active treatments, fleas do not have to bite to die.

- Longest lasting flea and treatment on the market, with 8 months protection
- Safe, convenient, odour-free and water-resistant.
- Kills fleas on contact – they don't have to bite to die - better for dog welfare.
- Kills 99-100% of fleas before they lay eggs and kills flea larvae in the animal's environment.
- Repels and kills ticks on contact, preventing them from attaching to dogs.
- The emergency release ratchet system allows the collar to loosen or break without injury.
- Proven in the field on sport and working dogs.

