



NEWSLETTER

In this issue:

- ◆ Seasonal reminders
- ◆ Beware heliotrope poisoning
- ◆ Coping with a wet summer
- ◆ Eye cancer detection

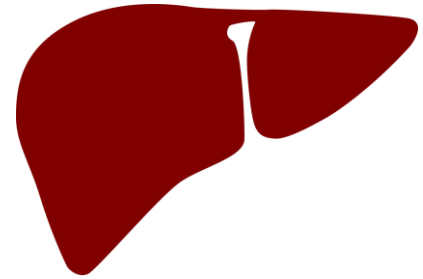
Seasonal reminders:

- Early removal of eye cancers is much easier and more likely to be successful. If you are not sure if an eye problem is cancer or not get the eye checked promptly.
 - Bulls should be vaccinated against vibrio and pestivirus at least 2 weeks before you plan to use them. Ear notch test all bulls for BVD when you first acquire the bull
-
- Calves born to late calving cows get sicker more quickly when the weather is hot. Prompt treatment with electrolytes is essential as calves born in hot weather often do not get adequate colostrum. They also dehydrate a lot more quickly than calves born in cool weather.

Beware heliotrope poisoning

The forecast for this summer is above average rainfall. If we do get a lot of rain, then summer weeds will follow particularly Heliotrope (potato weed). Heliotrope contains a substance that is toxic to the liver.

Every wet summer we see cases of heliotrope toxicity.



Cattle that eat too much heliotrope often do not show clinical signs until many months have passed. The symptoms are often vague but include weight loss, poor appetite, drop in milk production and occasionally neurological signs such as head pressing and stumbling.

It is a difficult syndrome to diagnose in a live animal but relatively straightforward once we get a piece of liver either from a liver biopsy or from a post-mortem.

We have even seen heliotrope toxicity in newborn calves. The only exposure these calves had to heliotrope was before they were born when their mothers were grazing heliotrope. The calves were happy and healthy when they were born but became sick one by one over a period of months. Their symptoms were vague and included loss of condition and scouring and eventually death.

When we examined the dead calves, it was obvious that they were jaundiced (yellow) and had abnormal livers.

There is no treatment for cattle affected by heliotrope poisoning and the symptoms may not surface for



many months or even years after heliotrope has been grazed.

Whether or not heliotrope will be a problem this summer is unknown. We recommend that you avoid grazing cattle on heliotrope as the effects are difficult to diagnose, impossible to treat and potentially disastrous.



shutterstock.com • 280818053

Coping with a wet summer

Mastitis

Warm wet conditions are more likely to cause problems than cool wet conditions. Bacteria multiply more quickly when it is warm, and cows are more likely to wallow in mud to get relief from the heat.

Putting cups on wet teats that have been washed to remove mud increases the amount of environmental mastitis.

One strategy that will help is to apply teat spray **before** milking. DeLaval has the only product that is registered for use both before and after milking. After the teats are sprayed it is recommended to wait 15-30 seconds and then wipe the teats dry.

We recommend wiping the teats dry with a fresh paper towel rather than using a cloth towel that will inevitably get dirty and help to spread mastitis.

Pre-milking teat spraying adds time and effort to milking but we believe if you do it strategically just before and during wet periods you will be able to significantly reduce the amount of environmental mastitis in your herd.

People who have used pre-milking teat spraying have noticed that teat condition improves and that cows let down better because they are better prepared before cups are put on.

Lameness

Over winter and spring, we found that the best short-term fix for lameness caused by wet and muddy tracks was to throw some straw on to the worst affected areas. Straw can absorb a lot of moisture and provides a much softer surface for cows to walk on.

Stagger syndromes

The two main stagger syndromes that we see in this area are rye-grass staggers and paspalum staggers. Both conditions are more commonly seen towards the end of summer when there has been some rain.

Paspalum staggers seems to occur more often in young stock, so it is important to keep an eye on young stock to make sure they are not affected by staggers.

Most deaths are due to misadventure such as falling in drains or getting stuck under fences. There is no specific treatment for these stagger syndromes other than gently moving stock from problem areas and giving them time.

Worms and fluke

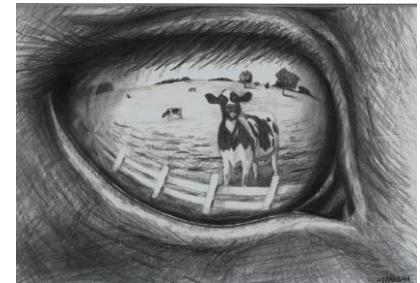
Wet conditions will make worm and fluke infestations more likely. We recommend that calves are treated for worms at weaning and at 6-8-week intervals thereafter until they are 12 months old. Yearling cattle should be treated for worms every 3 months until they calve.

Another option is to bring us in calf manure so that we can perform a faecal egg count. This will tell us if drenching is necessary.

All young stock should be treated for fluke every 6 months until they calve. We recommend that you drench young stock with either Fasinex or Flukare C as it is

important to treat immature fluke. It is OK to use the injectable treatments like Ivomec Plus or Virbamec Plus on older cows.

In dry years it is OK to stretch out the interval between worm treatments, but we recommend more frequent treatments as outlined above if conditions are wet.



Eye cancer detection

Eye cancers of the left eye seem to be worse on some farms and on other farms the right eye seems to be more severely affected.

Our theory is that on rotary dairies that spin anti-clockwise the right eye is observed twice a day by the cups-on person. The left eye is not seen as often, and so eye cancers have progressed further before they are noticed.

The opposite is true for platforms that spin clockwise.

Cows in herringbone dairies may have a similar problem if they only go in one side and that is the side where their eye cancer develops.

So, what is the answer? It may be worthwhile to designate one milking a month to eye cancer detection of the eye that is normally hidden. On anti-clockwise platforms, for example somebody positions him or herself in a position to observe left eyes. This may best be done in the exit race.