

Teagasc Notes for week ending Friday 27th November 2020

Parasites at Housing on Beef Farms

Housing cattle is the most expensive time of the year. So it's important that they perform at their best. Once housed, cattle will not pick up any new parasites, this means with the correct and effective treatment, cattle will be free from harmful parasites until they return to pasture next year.

The parasites to be concerned about for cattle of all ages are lungworms, stomach worms, liver fluke and external parasites such as lice.

Lungworm

Lungworm infections can be identified by the characteristic "hoose" cough. Different colour doses will have different periods of persistency, so make sure to take note of this. Levamisole and white drenches will take out what parasites are there on the day of treatment and but will have no residual effect. Macrocytic Lactones such as ivermectins will give longer protection (28-120 days is typical).

Stomach worm

Stomach worms will result in scour and as the condition progresses scouring will become more prolific and can become bright green and watery. Levamisole and some white drenches are now not effective doses for stomach worms, so it is important to read the label to see if the dose is suitable. It is a worthwhile exercise to complete a drench test on your farm to become aware if there is a resistance issue present. You should send a faecal egg sample to be tested and then dose. If using a white or clear dose, retest after fourteen days post dosing or, if using yellow dose, retest after seven days. Consult with your vet or advisor on your results.

It is always important:

1. To dose to the heaviest animal in the group,
2. The dosing gun is calibrated and expelling the correct amount and
3. The dose has been stored and shaken properly.

Liver fluke

Liver fluke has been estimated to cost farmers in Ireland €90 million. The timing of dosing for liver fluke will depend on what product is being used but usually will be 2-6 weeks after housing. Drugs that kill the adult stage only are suitable for cattle that have been housed for about 12 weeks when all the infection that may have been picked up at pasture will have reached the mature stage.

Products containing Triclabendazole (Fasinex) which are effective against early immature flukes can be given about 1 week after housing. Products containing Closantel (e.g., Flukiver), Rafoxanide (Flukex, Rafazole, Ridafluke) and Nitrozynil (Trodax) can be given 5-6 weeks after housing when any larvae picked up immediately prior to housing will have reached the immature stage which is the susceptible stage for these drugs.

Lice

Animals that are suffering from a lice infestation can become distressed and restless and will focus on their discomfort and feed intake will drop. If the skin is broken through itching then a secondary infection can occur. Adult lice lay eggs, the eggs hatch and become nymphs and then mature and become adults about 28 days after hatching. None of the treatment products kill the eggs, and most of them don't have a long enough residual effect to kill the lice that will hatch out after treatment.

The two types of products to control lice are pour-ons and injectables. Injectables and pour-ons control mange mites and sucking lice but only pour-ons will control biting lice. It is best practice to clip the backs of cattle when using pour-on products. Cattle should be checked two to three weeks after the initial treatment just to make sure there are no signs of infestation. The reason you may have to treat again after 2-3 weeks is to kill off any of the lice that have hatched from eggs since your last treatment.

Derogation Courses

Teagasc are currently running derogation courses for all Teagasc derogation clients. Derogation courses are mandatory for farmers in derogation. If you have not yet booked your course, please contact your local Teagasc adviser today.

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