Summer Mastitis

Summer mastitis, often known as “August Bag” is a common problem in the UK in grazing animals. As the name suggests, it is usually in the summer months from June to September. As the numbers of flies increases, the risk also increases as the disease is spread between animals by biting flies. Unsurprisingly cases will often be found in fields with ponds or trees, which provide a good environment for the flies. It is an acute disease of the non-lactating udder and is common in both dairy and beef herds. Dry cows and heifers are particularly susceptible, but calves can also be affected. The primary causative agent is Trueperella pyogenes, but mixed infections can also occur.

Affected animals will suffer acutely with a hard, hot and painfully swollen udder. They will often be separated away from the rest of the group, will be anorexic and have a significantly raised temperature. They can also show hindlimb lameness, especially on the affected side. Pus-like secretions, which may be tinged with blood, can be seen discharging from the affected teat. Cows can occasionally die from septicemia as a consequence of summer mastitis.

Whilst the typical presentation is relatively simple, it is also worth considering heifers that calve down with a ‘blind quarter’ may have previously suffered from summer mastitis, which went undetected.

Prompt treatment is essential in order to save the cow. Unfortunately, affected quarters will very rarely recover. Attention should be focussed on saving as much as possible – namely a pregnancy, a viable calf and as much milk production as possible from the remaining quarters. Regular stripping out of the affected quarter is essential to remove as much infected material and pus from the udder as possible. This discharge can be infective so should be collected and disposed of safely, not purely left on the ground.

Treatment should comprise of anti-inflammatory and antibiotics. Anti-inflammatories are necessary to reduce swelling and reduce the cow’s temperature, thus alleviating discomfort. Antibiotics are equally important, to counteract the infection. Trueperella is sensitive to penicillin-based drugs, and affected cows should be given injectable systemic antibiotics, as well as intra-mammary antibiotics if possible.

Prevention of the disease is important due to the constant threat that is posed on grazing herds and the low chance of recovery of infected animals. Ensure a robust fly control policy is in place. Apply Stockholm tar weekly to at risk animals. Protect the udder with teat sealants and/or long acting dry cow antibiotics. Speak to your vet about the best plan for your animals.
Sheep FECs

Feecal Egg Counts are strongly recommended in the SCOPS guidelines (www.scops.org.uk) when it comes to controlling gut worms and coccidiosis in sheep and lambs. We process these samples in our own lab at Hartford for £10.50 for worm and cocci counts and results are usually available the same day or next day. Regular sampling from a group will help identify when treatment is required and resampling post treatment will identify any resistance issues developing in the flock. Parasite forecasts all regions in the UK continue to predict a high level of challenge. For more information speak to one of the vets or Mark Pass at Beeston Animal Health.

Foot Trimming

Contact Steve Austin
01565 723036

Visit per cow
£12 – 4 feet £10 – 2 feet
Block – £9.50
Bandage – £2.50
No Call out fee for 12 or more cows

Freeze Branding

Contact Malcolm Pheasant
01565 723036

Prices for 3 digits
Up to 15 Cows – £80
15 – 50 Cows – £4.50 per cow
50+ cows £4 per cow
Every extra digit £1 per cow. Both sides +75%

Hartford Office
267 Chester Road, Hartford, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 1LP
Telephone: 01606 723200

Alsager Office
The Point, Crewe Road, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 2GP
Telephone: 01270 872670

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For further information or to book your place please telephone 01565 723036

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