

# Frame, Swift and Partners Newsletter November 2013

## GOODBYE MATT; HELLO RACHEL



We are delighted to welcome Rachel Tennant MRCVS to our team, replacing Matt who is heading to the pharmaceutical industry. Rachel, originally from a beef and sheep farm in Lanarkshire, has been working for the last couple of years in Broughton-in-Furness. She is also the proud owner of her own small herd of pedigree Limousins!

## RED TRACTOR ASSURANCE SCHEME

From October 2013 it is a requirement for the vet to be involved in the annual review on dairy farms. Vets don't have to draw up the plan, but do have to visit the farm and review the following information, as a minimum:-

- Mastitis incidence
- Lameness incidence
- Cull cow incidence and reasons for culling/deaths
- Calf losses        0 – 24 hrs (including stillbirths)  
                             1 - 42 days

There is a new requirement for an inspection of the herd as well. There are no hard and fast rules but a brief look at the milkers, calves and dry cows would be most helpful.

This again means that we cannot complete a Herd Health Plan at the very last minute; time is needed for you to collect the information, and for us to have a look at it. The more accurate the information you provide, the more useful it can be for the future as we hope to improve the health and productivity of your herd.

As yet there is no requirement for specific vet involvement with beef and sheep health plans, but obviously we would be delighted to help.

For further information, we suggest you visit [www.redtractorassurance.org.uk](http://www.redtractorassurance.org.uk)

## PNEUMONIA

It is that time of year again. Don't forget vaccination- the vaccines are getting better all the time. The environment is even more important though. How often we go into calf sheds with pneumonia where the bedding 'squelches' under foot, where there are cobwebs (shows lack of air flow) and where there is condensation dripping off the roof and down the walls!

Do ask us to carry out an assessment of the buildings when we are there; if we are too busy we can come back and look at airspace, inlet and outlet area, drainage, stocking density etc.

If you are unlucky enough to get pneumonia this winter, there is subsidised blood testing on recovered calves to see what bugs were involved so that a vaccination programme can be drawn up for future years.

## DRUG RETURNS

Legally, we are not permitted to take back any dispensed drugs that need to be kept refrigerated (in practice, these are most usually vaccines). This is because we are not able to *guarantee* that the items have been kept at the required temperature for the whole time they have not been on our premises – even if they have been. Pharmaceutical cold chain and storage conditions regulations state that we can neither return nor re-sell these products.

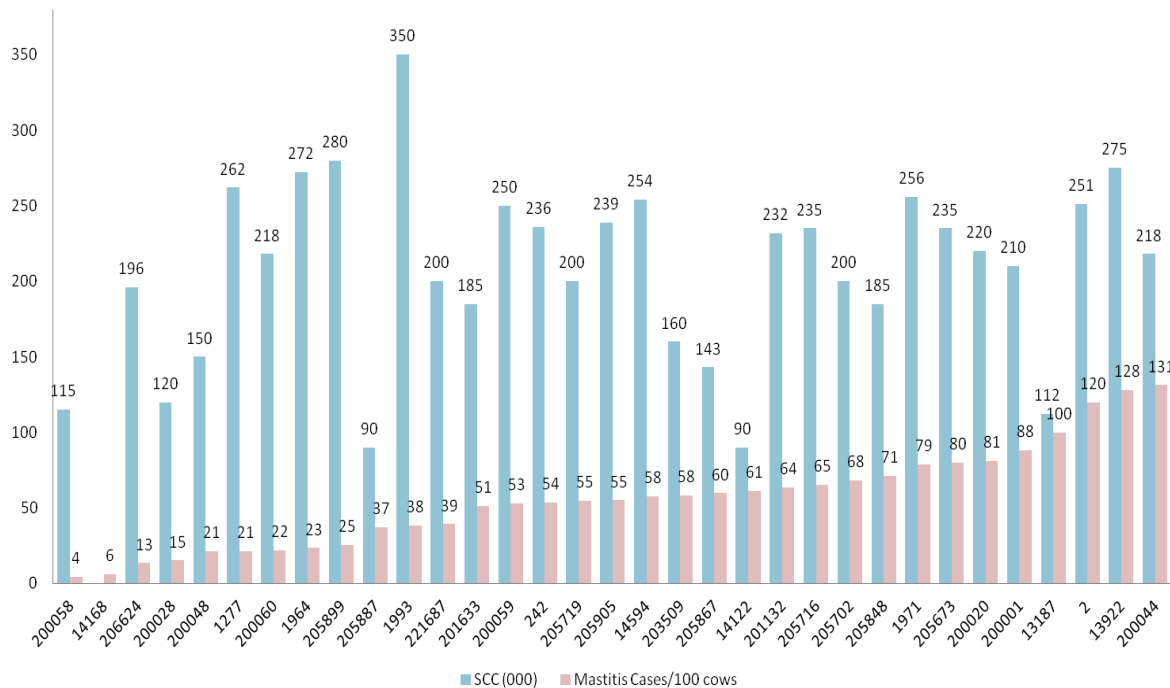
So please only order/take the exact number of doses you need, and make sure you keep everything in the fridge until you use it. You should also consider collecting them in a coolbox, especially if you are not taking them straight back home.

## MASTITIS MEETING

Thank you all for coming to the Mastitis Workshop last month. The morning session seemed to work well for a lot of people, and we saw faces that don't normally make it to evening meetings. Of course this was nothing to do with the wet weather that day! The emphasis was to look at farm mastitis incidence (estimated from intramammary tube use), bulk milk somatic cell count and relate them to hygiene measures.

**Practice Mastitis Incidence**  
(estimated at 4.5 tubes per case)  
National average 65 cases/100 cows/year;  
Practice average 60 cases/100 cows/year;  
Target 40 cases/100 cows/year

### Cell Count and Mastitis Incidence (within Practice Farms)



(Each number along the horizontal axis refers – anonymously – to each dairy farm. If you did not manage to make the meeting, and want to know exactly who you are, just ask!)

To summarise, there was no obvious relationship between somatic cell count and intramammary tube use: there are herds with high cell counts and low tube use, and low cell count herds with high tube use! Some low cell count herds get more severe mastitis cases, whilst some high cell count herds have a relatively low tube use because they are not as efficient at identifying cases due to the number of subclinically affected animals.

### Dry Cow Management

Recent research has shown the importance of the dry period in mastitis control. 70% of new infections seen in the 1<sup>st</sup> 30 days of lactation are picked up during the dry period. By cutting down these new infections picked up while the cow is dry, teat sealants can reduce mastitis incidence by 30% or more, and are cost effective in most

herds. Half of our herds now routinely use Orbeseal teat sealant, usually along with antibiotic tubes at drying off time.

With more pressure from Europe to reduce the use of antimicrobial drugs, in time it may be that teat sealants are the standard treatment, with antibiotic dry cow tubes only used in selected cases.

The control of mastitis is of prime importance to all dairy farmers, with different farms experiencing different problems – which have different solutions. There is no 'one size fits all' solution. So if you do have issues, please get in touch and let us help you out: there are plenty of things we can do!