Preventing Lungworm in Cattle

Webinar written and presented by

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Plan for health – ask your vet for a veterinary health plan
Overview

• What is lungworm / husk?
• How is the parasite transmitted?
• How can we prevent lungworm?
• How do we use the vaccine?
• How else can we control the disease?
What is lungworm / husk?

• Clinical signs: coughing, fast breathing, milk drop, sudden death
• Long term impact
• Expensive: infected cattle produce up to 4kg less milk every day \(^1\)
• Lungworm outbreaks cost \(\sim £17,000\) (110 cow herd) \(^1\)

\(^1\)Holzhauer et al., 2011 Vet Record

[Photograph: Ben Strugnell, Farm Post Mortems Ltd]
Cases are becoming common in Scotland and Northern England.

Also becoming MUCH more common in adult cattle (sudden death also possible).
How is the parasite transmitted?

• Cause: *Dictyocaulus viviparus*
• Cattle get infected from larvae which grow within cow dung
• Larvae develop quickly within dung (1 week)
• Larvae die quickly in the cold / dry weather

Explosive and unpredictable
How can we prevent lungworm?

• Vaccination (huskvac) is one of the most effective ways of preventing an outbreak

• Disease is shorter and much less serious
How do we use the vaccine?

- Do NOT use the vaccine and a long-acting wormer at the same time (wait ~ 2 months before worming)
- Turn vaccinated cattle out onto *contaminated* pasture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worming strategy</th>
<th>Vaccination strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calving early enough AND occasional use of short acting (SA) wormers (for example, dose and move)</td>
<td>Full course of vaccine prior to turnout on contaminated pasture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calving too late to vaccinate / relying on long-acting (LA) wormers in 1\textsuperscript{st} grazing season</td>
<td>Full course of vaccine before the second grazing season and/or replacement heifers before they enter the adult herd</td>
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How else can we control the disease?

• **Careful** use of wormers (with vaccination)
• Knowing when disease risk is highest in your area. Be extra **vigilant** from August - October
• Fence off any stagnant water (**ponds** or ditches)
• **Test** cattle before they enter the farm (or treat with short-acting wormers and then vaccinate)
Summary

• Lungworm is an **expensive** disease (milk drop and growth beef)
• Disease often **explosive** and unexpected
• Use the lungworm **vaccine** to encourage a strong healthy immunity
• Consider using the vaccine in **second season grazers** and replacement **heifers**
• **Test** and treat cattle before they enter the main herd
Further information

*In Practice* article:
Controlling lungworm disease (husk) in dairy cattle
C. McLeonard and J. van Dijk

*COWS* website: