Preventing Lungworm in Cattle

Webinar written and presented by
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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 ~£17,000 (110 cow herd)\(^1\)

\(^1\)Holzhauer et al., 2011 *Vet Record*
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 1st grazing season</td>
<td>Full course of vaccine before the <strong>second grazing season</strong> and/or <strong>replacement heifers</strong> 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: