

# SOUTH DEVON HERD BOOK SOCIETY

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PATRON: HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES



## APRIL 2008 NEWSLETTER

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### ***Dear Member***

Please find enclosed your copy of the catalogue for the Midland Club Sale – a good level of entries which should attract plenty of buyers. Please note the booking deadline for the pre-Sale supper – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April (bookings with Pat Rickett).

Also enclosed is a short questionnaire which I would urge you to spend a few minutes filling in and returning to us. From time to time members ask what the Society is doing about pursuing a beef marketing scheme for the breed, and here is your opportunity to equip us with the necessary information. The trial with Tesco stores last year did not, unfortunately, lead to anything and Tesco have gone down the local sourcing route, rather than generic supply. Waitrose, however, have been successfully selling Angus and Hereford beef for some years – and the door is open for us to make a proposal to add a new line for South Devon beef.

The cold weather is helping with holding back the predicted spread of the bluetongue disease, although also delaying Spring growth of grass. There is information inside about the vaccination policy – if you have not already done so please place your order for vaccine with your vet, even if

you are told they are not holding a waiting list – just insist! The first supplies should be available for distribution in the eastern counties in a very few weeks, and all cattle and sheep producers are urged to protect against a potential economic catastrophe by vaccinating.

It is possible that some shows will be affected by bluetongue – either directly through zoning restrictions, or indirectly through anxieties about non-vaccinated animals. If you are able and willing to support the shows, which are an important promotional shop window for us, please do so. Dates are inside, and I would be very grateful if those members who kindly acted as coordinators between exhibitors and show offices would be generous enough to do so again this year.

The TB tabular valuation chart issued by DEFRA for April is inside. Please take note, and if you are threatened by casualties and are not up to date with registrations, please speak to me. The compensation payable makes pedigree registration an absolute necessity. We welcome the Welsh Assembly's announcement to pursue a trial cull in a TB hotspot area, and continue to press government to issue licenses in selected problem areas in England.

I hope to see many of you at the Midland Sale, and look forward to the rising beef prices being reflected in a continued rise in pedigree prices.

***Caroline***

## **BLUETONGUE UPDATE**

DEFRA has agreed its vaccination strategy with industry stakeholders with the main objective of 'facilitating the rapid transfer of vaccine into animals as soon as it becomes available'. Of course, this might need to be changed depending on further outbreaks determining zone boundaries.

Intervet are expecting 3 million doses to be ready for distribution in May, and have said this might be increased to 5 million doses. The remainder of the 22.5 million doses are expected to be received in June, July and August.

Under EU law, vaccination can only be carried out in a Protection Zone, which will be rolled out as more vaccine becomes available. Vaccine will be distributed on a County by County basis. At the current time this means that it will follow a pattern of 'Counties at the highest risk of receiving infection' first (ie East Anglia and the South East), followed by Counties in the remainder Restricted Zones, and lastly Counties in the remaining areas of England.

### **Guidelines issued by Intervet**

- Bovilis BVT8 is the vaccine manufactured by Intervet for cattle and sheep
- The dose is 1 ml. Cattle require two doses, and sheep one. There should be three weeks between the two doses.
- The vaccine will provide protection three weeks after administration, ie for cattle this means three weeks after the second dose
- The duration of protection is currently unknown, but current recommendations are to give booster injections two weeks before the anticipated 'risk' period (early March)
- Do not use in cattle or sheep under one month of age
- The vaccine is available in 20 and 50 ml vials
- For vaccination, a vaccine gun is recommended and the equipment to be clean and sterile before use
- The vaccine should be stored between 2 and 8 degrees C, and once opened used within 8 hours
- The vaccine should reach room temperature before use and be shaken intermittently during use
- The vaccine should not be mixed with any other medicine and its use with other vaccines has yet to be investigated
- Only healthy animals should be vaccinated
- The use in pregnant or milking animals has yet to be fully investigated but Intervet are not anticipating any problems
- Side effects may include a temporary rise in temperature, and swelling at the injection site
- There is no withdrawal period

A map of the vaccination strategy map, and a map showing the current demarcation lines for the restriction zones, can be found at this link: [www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/bluetongue/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/bluetongue/index.htm)

## **NFU EAST MIDLANDS BLUETONGUE MEETINGS**

We have been told of a series of open meetings to discuss the bluetongue vaccination strategy, to be held in early May, as follows:

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May, 7 pm, Conference Centre, Riseholme, LN2 2LG

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May, 7 .30 pm, Concourse, ABC Bakewell, DE45 1AQ

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May, 7 pm, Banqueting Suite, Melton Market, LE13 1JY

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 7 pm, Function Room, Kilworth Springs, LE17 6HJ

If you would like to attend (they are open meetings) book your place with Laura Harrison, 01572 824250.

## **BEEF EXPO 2008**

**Perth, Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May**

We hope to fill five pens with cattle at the NBA's Beef Expo in a few weeks' time – crossbreds and pedigrees.

Habitually we need a lot of helpers on the stand to chat to enquirers about the breed's attributes, so if there any members who are planning to visit the Expo and can give a few hours of their time on the day it would be much appreciated.

Please let Caroline know.

## **HOLDING LINKS**

If you have cattle running on several units, you should ensure that there is a holding link to your farm to avoid incurring possible penalties. The RPA and DEFRA ought to be able to advise on this, but I am told it is not always possible to reach the right adviser!

# COMPENSATION TABLES FOR TB

**THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NON PEDIGREE AND PEDIGREE IS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT – IT IS IN YOUR FINANCIAL INTERESTS TO CHECK THAT YOUR REGISTRATIONS ARE UP TO DATE!**

## **NON PEDIGREE BOVINE**

| <b>Male</b>                       |                         | <b>Female</b>                  |                         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Age</b>                        | <b>Compensation due</b> | <b>Age</b>                     | <b>Compensation due</b> |
| Up to 3 months                    | 152                     | Up to 3 months                 | 114                     |
| Over 3 months up to 6 months      | 272                     | Over 3 months up to 6 months   | 256                     |
| Over 6 months up to 9 months      | 442                     | Over 6 months up to 9 months   | 356                     |
| Over 9 months up to 12 months     | 541                     | Over 9 months up to 12 months  | 452                     |
| Over 12 months up to 16 months    | 606                     | Over 12 months up to 16 months | 489                     |
| Over 16 months up to 20 months    | 652                     | Over 16 months up to 20 months | 569                     |
| 20 months and over                | 746                     | 20 months and over             | 655                     |
| Breeding bulls 20 months and over | *                       | Calved                         | 859                     |

## **PEDIGREE BOVINE**

| <b>Male</b>                    |                         | <b>Female</b>                   |                         |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Age</b>                     | <b>Compensation due</b> | <b>Age</b>                      | <b>Compensation due</b> |
| 6 months up to 12 months       | *                       | 6 months up to 12 months        | 1343                    |
| Over 12 months up to 24 months | 3817                    | Over 12 months up to 24 months  | 1305                    |
| Bull 24 months and over        | 1810                    | 24 months and over (not calved) | 1993                    |
|                                |                         | Calved under 36 months          | 1718                    |
|                                |                         | Calved 36 months and over       | 1504                    |

\* Compensation to be determined using individual valuation

Nigel Williams (region 6) has a 7-year old Angus bull available for sale, which is proven on South Devon heifers.

If you are interested please contact Nigel on  
01547 530319

Upper House Farm, Hopton Castle, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 0QF

## **CATTLE HEALTH INCENTIVE**

Don't forget that the Society is continuing its Herd Health Incentive by offering members who sign up to join one of the Industry approved health schemes (CHeCS standards), a discount on their calf pedigree registrations.

A credit of £5 per registration can be claimed from the office if you are a member of Biobest Herdcare of the SAC's Premium Cattle Health Scheme, and are taking measures to tackle at least Johnnes Disease. The other diseases included in the eradication programme are BVD, Leptospirosis, and IBR.

The commercial advantages of joining a health scheme are: an improvement in herd health and a consequent reduction in losses; reduced risks; the safeguarding of your business; and a potentially higher value to your animals.

For more information contact the office. An encouraging number of members are taking advantage of this proactive approach to disease eradication.

# **BOVINE VIRUS DIARRHOEA (BVD)**

(reproduced from a NADIS health bulletin)

## **Economic importance**

It is estimated that more than 90% of UK herds have had exposure to BVD virus. Losses result from reduced fertility, poor production and increased susceptibility to other infections especially in young calves. Major financial losses result where infection is introduced into a group of susceptible breeding cattle resulting in poor reproductive performance and the birth of calves with persistent virus infection (known as PIs). While elimination of infection from the herd is optimal, vaccination is highly effective and produces substantial benefits. Strict biosecurity measures and a robust herd health plan are essential.

## **Causes and background to disease**

The main transmission route is by direct contact with cattle persistently infected with BVD virus. Only one persistently infected animal introduced to a susceptible herd can cause significant financial loss.

## **Early clinical signs to watch out for**

Cattle exposed to BVD virus show transient infection producing protective antibodies within three to four weeks. BVD virus infection may temporarily lower immunity to other infectious diseases such as salmonella, respiratory infections, and coccidia exacerbating these clinical infections particularly in young calves. However, BVD virus is most important when it infects susceptible breeding cattle during early pregnancy causing embryonic death and return to oestrus, foetal death/abortion, mummification of the foetus, birth defects of the nervous system and eyes, weak/premature calves, and live persistently infected calves.

## **Pregnant animal**

Virus infection before 110 days of pregnancy results in the birth of a live calf but persistently infected (animals which carry the virus for life). This is caused by failure of the developing immune system of the foetus to function properly before 110 days. After birth these calves carry the virus for life and act as potential transmitters of BVDV infection to in-contact susceptible cattle. Virus infection may also lead to various defects of the developing foetus' eyes and brain. These calves may be born blind and lack co-ordination, respectively.

Virus infection after 150 days gestation has little effect with live calves born at full term. Abortion can occur following infection at any stage of pregnancy but this is not common.

BVD virus can be spread in semen of persistently infected bulls or in bulls experiencing acute BVD with transient virus infection. BVDV will lead to low pregnancy rate due to embryonic death or later foetal death/abortion. Bulls are vigorously tested for BVD before entering AI studs.

## **Mucosal disease**

Mucosal disease occurs when persistently infected animals become superinfected with cytopathic BVD virus. The cytopathic BVD virus arises from changes in the BVD virus within the PI animal. Most cases of mucosal disease occur in 6 to 12 month old calves where there results sudden onset of depression, salivation, fever and anorexia. Ulcers appear in the mouth and on the muzzle. There are purulent discharges from the eyes and nostrils. There is profuse diarrhoea with shreds of gut mucosa/blood present during the terminal stages. There is rapid weight loss followed by death within 5-10 days.

## **Diagnosis**

### *Accute BVD infection*

Paired blood samples 3-4 weeks apart to demonstrate rising antibody levels to this virus.

### *Persistent infection*

PI calves may be clinically normal but commonly present as chronic 'ill thriven' or stunted calves due to their susceptibility to bacterial infection such as pneumonia. Two positive samples taken 3-4 weeks apart confirm persistent virus infection.

## **Treatment**

### *Acute BVD*

Treatment of any concurrent infections if present.

### *Persistent infection*

Such cattle have often been treated several times for digestive and respiratory infections. PI animals should be disposed of as they act as a source of BVD infection.

## **Control and prevention**

Many herds have BVDV present within their cattle where disease/losses are partly controlled by PI calves acting as 'natural vaccinators' of herd. When most adult animals in the herd are immune disease losses are not so obvious to the farmer. However, this situation is not optimum as losses can be catastrophic if naive breeding females are introduced into the herd.

Vaccination – three inactivated BVD vaccines are available in the UK. Initial vaccination comprises two doses 3-4 weeks apart before first service followed by booster vaccination at 12 months' interval. If all breeding females are vaccinated then this will control disease by preventing BVD infection of the developing foetus during pregnancy and production of PI calves.

BVD eradication is possible following whole herd blood testing and elimination of all PI carrier animals. If farmers go for eradication then strict herd biosecurity measures must be maintained to prevent reintroduction of virus infection as the herd will soon become naïve and fully susceptible to infection.

## DNA PROFILES

Requests for kits to take hair samples from bulls have been coming thick and fast – thank you.

For those who have not yet done so, it is now a requirement for all bulls to be DNA profiled for parentage at time of pedigree registration, the cost being charged to the member registering the animal. (The registration fee incorporates the DNA charge).

The Society is also testing all bulls registered prior to 2008 to determine parentage, which will be free to members during this year. We have negotiated with Merial to test these older bulls at no charge to the Society *if the samples are received by them by the end of June*. This will save the membership a significant amount of money, so please send in your bulls' hair samples as soon as possible to help keep our costs down. This is an exciting opportunity to build an extensive databank of DNA profiles.

## SHOW LINK COORDINATORS

The following members very kindly provide a link with Show offices and exhibitors to help encourage entries, for example. They, or an appointed exhibitor, will be provided with promotional literature by the Society office, for handing out to enquirers at the shows where the Society does not already have its own stand (one-day and major)

|                        |                                       |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Devon County           | <i>Gordon Tully</i>                   |
| Suffolk                | <i>Richard White</i>                  |
| Royal Bath & West      | <i>Tony Wadsworth</i>                 |
| Royal Cornwall         | <i>Roger Clemens and Roger Rundle</i> |
| Three Counties         | <i>Keith &amp; Margaret Plain</i>     |
| East of England        | <i>Malcolm Broome</i>                 |
| Shropshire & West Mids | <i>Richard Hartshorn</i>              |
| Royal Welsh            | <i>Richard Hartshorn</i>              |
| Royal Norfolk          | <i>Charles Hood</i>                   |
| Great Yorkshire        | <i>David Irving</i>                   |

Totnes & Mid-Devon  
Liskeard  
Stithians  
Launceston  
Camborne  
Yealmpton  
Honiton  
Okehampton

*Gordon Tully*  
*Mervyn Rowe*  
*Hugh Lello*  
*Mark Thomas*  
*Stephen Penrose*  
*Chris Savery*  
*Jerry Horsman*  
*Ken Garrett*

## **JIM WEBSTER**

Jim is back on duty, fully recovered, and is very willing to help members and enquirers with advice, sourcing suitable cattle, and making contacts.

We hope to resume our programme of promotional meetings in Scotland later in the year, once bluetongue is (hopefully) not such a major issue.

Jim can be contacted on 01350 724365.

## **CALENDAR COMPETITION**

The recent snow gave some lovely opportunities for seasonal (or rather non-seasonal!) photographs which will be offered for selection for our 2009 Calendar.

Now that Spring is just around the corner, it's your opportunity to move to the next season with your camera. Don't be shy – we are not looking for professional shots, or any particular theme – the choice is yours!



- **EBV graphs**  
A graph showing the percentile distribution of an animal's EBVs can be accessed.
- **Ownership selection**  
By selecting 'My Ownership' you can access reports on animals in your herd, pedigrees and EBVs.
- **Report configuration**  
Change the display of screens of animals, EBVs, or member listings.
- **Update membership details**  
Members may update their own details – such as e-mail address, telephone number, etc

## **PERFORMANCE RECORDING**

The number of herds and animals being performance recorded continues to increase steadily.

If you would like information about EBVs and the benefits of recording your herd please contact the office. The Society is continuing its financial incentive to encourage more recording, by withholding the annual herd charge of £120 for the first year for new recording members. At the same time existing recording herds can claim £60 towards one scanning visit during the new year which began on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

## **AND FINALLY**

Annabel Ford very kindly undertook the task of providing catering facilities in the Pavilion at last year's Royal Show, a task that could more easily be done if shared between a number of people.

Please let the office know if you could help in the provision of food and drink!