

TERN VETS LTD

“Supporting British Farming”



FEBRUARY 2015

NEW MASTITIS CULTURING SERVICE

Tern Vets are pleased to announce we are introducing a new service to culture clinical mastitis samples at the practice. This will allow us to identify the bacteria causing the case of clinical mastitis so we can help you to make faster and more appropriate treatment decisions.

Detecting a case of mastitis depends on the farmer detecting milk changes or cow changes which show the cows immune system is responding to an infection. Over a third of all clinical mastitis cases have no bacterial cause (“no growths” when you culture the milk) and do not benefit from antibiotic treatment. Another 17% of clinical mastitis cases are caused by bacteria which do not respond to antibiotics. To summarise, just over a half of all clinical mastitis cases do not justify treatment with antibiotics (Reugg, 2014).



Research by *Lago et al.* in 2011 has shown that delaying clinical mastitis treatment by 24 hours whilst the sample was being cultured, and then selective treatment of the mastitis based on culture results, made no difference to long term outcomes as measured by recurrence of mastitis in that quarter, somatic cell count, daily milk production and cull risk. But, as an effect of culturing the sample and selective treatment, the antibiotic use on farm decreased by half and the milk withholding time was reduced - both vital economic factors.

Clinical mastitis cases are graded on a simple 1-3 scale:

GRADE 1 (mild): changes in milk only (colour, consistency)

GRADE 2 (moderate): changes in milk and udder (heat, swelling, pain)

GRADE 3 (severe): changes in milk, quarter and sick cow

Around 50% of clinical mastitis cases are grade 1 and so only detected by fore-milking, 35% are grade 2 and 15% grade 3. The protocol for grade 1 & 2 clinical mastitis is to delay treatment by 24 hours whilst we wait for a culture result. Depending on the result we may advise “no treatment”, “short treatment” (4 tubes) or “extended treatment” (16 tubes). You may want to start treatment whilst you are waiting for the results, in which case we may advise changing or stopping treatment based on the culture results.



HOW DO I USE THIS SERVICE?

Bring a mastitis sample down to the practice before 12pm Monday to Saturday.

The milk sample must be:

- Collected **aseptically** so we grow the bugs in the milk and not the ones on your gloves or the cows skin (please see enclosed guidance on collecting milk samples for culture)
- Kept in the fridge until you bring it to us
- Must be from a cow with clinical mastitis - not a chronic high cell count cow

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

We can have a culture result for you within 24hours of plating up the sample at the practice, allowing rapid treatment decisions and the potential to reduce treatment costs and milk discard times.

ARE THERE ANY BUGS THE CULTURE WON'T GROW?

The culture system won't grow Mycoplasma bovis therefore it is advisable to monitor bulk milks quarterly (or monthly in herds >250 cows).

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

£7 + VAT per sample (offering a saving of about £5 on samples that we used to send away to be cultured).

We hope that you find this service a useful tool in improving decision making for mastitis treatment on a practical level and so reduce costs from treatment and milk with hold times. But smart treatment decisions are only a small part of improving udder health on farm—a cow that has a case of mastitis will be 5 times more likely to have another case of mastitis just by having that first case of mastitis so prevention of a first case of mastitis has still got to be the priority. Please speak to your vet if you need any further details.

MEDICINES UPDATE:

Diakur plus

Diakur Plus is a new treatment for scours in calves which is capable of binding up toxins and bugs in the intestines and preventing them from being absorbed. It is used instead of other rehydration powders or liquids and is suitable for use in all cases of scour. It also replaces lost salts and gives an energy boost as well as improving the gut health and reducing acidosis which improves recovery times and makes it a very cost effective remedy. Diakur can be fed with milk or milk replacer or water at the usual rate. It comes in 3 kg packs which is enough to treat 5 calves twice daily for 3 days.

Allewinix

This is a strong anti-inflammatory and anti-endotoxic painkiller which is available as an alternative to Finadyne. Unlike Finadyne it is licensed for intramuscular as well as intravenous use in cows and calves. It has the same low milk and meat withdrawal as Finadyne, is cheaper and comes in an unbreakable plastic bottle - just in case! It is useful in any toxic or painful conditions as it improves recovery rates and animal welfare.

BVD Vaccine Update.

A new BVD vaccine from Boehringer will be available to use from the beginning of March. It appears to have a lot of evidence to back up its safety and efficacy. It is a live vaccine which reduces the clinical signs of BVD and prevents the birth of PI (Persistently Infected) calves when used as part of a BVD control plan. One injection will provide 12 months protection against the common type 1 BVD and, unlike other BVD vaccines, the less common Type 2 BVD that is appearing more in Europe. We will let you know more information about availability and cost when we know more in the next month.

]Please call us to discuss BVD on your farm and how to control this costly disease.

Tel: 01630 656300