

September 2026

NEWSLETTER



Dung Beetles: Getting to the Bottom of Healthy Pastures

Date: Tuesday 8th September 09:45 – 16:00

Host: Northumberland National Parks

Venue: Westhills Farm, Rothbury NE65 7XF

Refreshments/lunch provided

Join leading expert Sally-Ann Spence to explore how improving your dung beetle population can improve your soil health, animal health and pasture productivity.

For further details or book a place please contact Jane Riddell.

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Tup Testing Before Sales

Tup testing sooner rather than later allows time for tups to be retested if necessary and can inform which stock tups may need to be replaced before the tup sales begin in earnest!

Examination and preparation of tups for breeding should centre around the 5T's;

Toes, Teeth, Testicles, Tone and Treat.

Fertility testing tups, involving physical examination, semen collection and assessment, provides valuable information used to determine if tups can cope with solo mating group or would be better used in groups or not used at all.

Fertility is not fixed; a tup that worked last year will not necessarily work again this year. Fertility testing can provide peace of mind and should be considered for existing tups, as well as new purchases!

Tup testing may be more important than ever this year with bluetongue virus circulating though the UK.

From Surviving to Thriving at Weaning

Calves undergo significant stress at weaning.

Stress weakens immune system, leaving calves more susceptible to diseases such as pneumonia. Stress also reduced feed intakes, leading to lower growth rates.

FerAppease is a bovine maternal appeasing pheromone that can be applied to cattle to reduce the production of the stress hormone, cortisol. This pheromone is a naturally occurring substance that is secreted by the skin of the udder.

FerAppease can be used during stressful events such as weaning, castrating/dehorning/vaccination and moving/transportation/mixing to reduce stress.

A UK based trial involving 120 calves at weaning quickly demonstrated the return on investment. The group averaged 257kg at 185 days old, half were treated with FerAppease, and the other half were not. Daily Live Weight Gain (DLWG) in the group treated with FerAppease was 340g more at 21 days post treatment, and 180g more at 60 days, than the control group. This is an additional 7.1kg and a 10.8kg gain in body weight respectively. **Based on 2025 average prime stock deadweight prices, this additional gain resulting from Ferappease application is worth in excess of £35 a head. This is more than 10x the cost of a dose of Ferappease.**

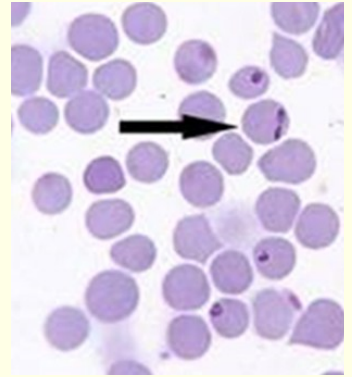
A good return on investment!

As it is not a medicine, the product has a nil withdrawal period.

Please get in touch with one of the vets if you'd like to try FerAppease or would like more information.

Redwater fever- on the march into Northumberland?

Babesiosis is an infection of the red blood cells that affects cattle. It is caused by a single cell parasite called babesia. The disease is spread between cattle by ticks. Once in the blood, the parasites invade red blood cells (black arrow) and begin to multiply, making red blood cells more fragile and breaking the oxygen-carrying cells down- this is referred to as haemolytic anaemia. The red urine (haemoglobinuria) is seen as a result of red blood cell breakdown products. With red blood cells breaking down, the oxygen carrying capacity of the blood is reduced and organ damage occurs as a result.



Clinical signs begin around 2 weeks after initial infection:

- Increased temperature
- Diarrhoea which ceases after around 36 hours and then becomes constipation
- **Red urine** (due to haemoglobin produced by the rupture of the red blood cells) which becomes darker with time
- Anaemia; pallor and increased pulse rate
- Abortion
- Depression and death

Treatment can be attempted; blood transfusion from a donor cow to replace the blood cells being destroyed, and imizol (Imidocarb Dipropionate) to treat the parasite. Treating with Imizol is not to be undertaken lightly, it comes with a 213 day meat withdrawal period and so its use has to be reported to DEFRA. An animal can also only ever receive one dose of imizol in its lifetime.

Control of babesia is based on either preventing tick challenge or by promoting exposure.

- Preventing tick challenge is largely not practical, it would involve frequently repeated tick treatments.
- Promoting exposure can be very effective; calves less than a year old have innate immunity to babesia, i.e. they can become infected but do not become unwell or develop red water fever. Exposure to babesia during this period of innate immunity will provide the animal with protection against babesia for life. This relies on each calf crop being exposed in its first year, which is difficult given the sporadic nature of the disease in our area.
- Vaccination? A babesia vaccine can be imported into the UK under an experimental status, but there can be no guarantee of efficacy of the vaccine.
- Imizol- Where tick challenge and babesia exposure is very predictable, a preventative dose of imizol can be given before anticipated exposure. It will provide protection for 60 days, but it is essential that cattle are exposed to babesia within the protected period in order to gain immunity to the parasite. This makes the use of a preventative dose of Imizol impractical in Northumberland, as cases are sporadic.

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