

Your Pre-turnout Checklist

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Vaccinations

Make sure your vaccination programmes are up to date. Leptospirosis is an important pre-turnout consideration as it can commonly be transmitted through open water courses.

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) and Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR) vaccinations should also be up to date particularly if your stock boundaries are not secure from neighbouring livestock. Heifers should be vaccinated against BVD pre-service to protect the fetus against infection as it can pass through the placenta to infect the unborn calf, potentially causing abortion or deformity.

Foot health

Pre turnout is an optimum opportunity to trim overgrown feet and treat lameness. Lameness can contribute to lower conception rates due to reluctance to move and stress. We have two qualified foot trimmers, Ed and Dom, who have a wealth of experience. Using our hydraulic squeeze crushes which provide a safe, modern system, they can ensure the whole experience is as quick and low-stress as possible for the cow.

Lungworm

Every year we see clinical cases of lungworm in youngstock and adults that haven't developed a good immunity. Risk level will differ from farm to farm, but if you are at high risk, vaccinating prior to turnout for calves over 8 weeks and adults remains the best way to provide this immunity and minimise the risk of lungworm outbreaks affecting first season grazing animals this year and in subsequent years. It is important that the vaccine course (2 doses, 4 weeks apart) is completed a minimum of two weeks prior to turnout and it is critical you don't administer any other wormer treatments during this time and up to two weeks after the last dose.

Worming protocol

There isn't a one size fits all approach to worm control, every farm and herd will have different requirements. Therefore, it is important to discuss with one of the farm vets or our qualified SQP Philip Bowes, what the most appropriate worm control strategy is for you this summer.

Fluke precaution

In liver fluke infected herds, minimising the contamination of pasture by animals post turnout is an important step in minimising pasture infestation levels. If post housing treatments have been effective then there should not be any adult flukes in the liver, but it is useful to check some faecal samples for the presence of fluke eggs so a treatment pre turnout can be given if necessary. If your cattle have been housed for at least 10 weeks then most flukicides should cover more mature stages of fluke, however, if your cattle have not been housed for at least 10 weeks it is worth discussing with your vet to consider which flukicide is most appropriate.

Body condition score your cattle

Body condition score (BCS) should be the starting point of any health checklist. It is not uncommon for cows to be under condition coming out of the winter and it may be worth having your forage analysed if you haven't done it already. You can then feed accordingly and introduce trace element boluses or mineral licks if required. BCS is important for fertility in your breeding stock too. Your bull should have a BCS of 3-3.5 before breeding season and your cows need to be at the correct BCS 6 weeks prior to bulling to ensure they are cycling properly.

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