

Are your AI results not quite what you would hope?

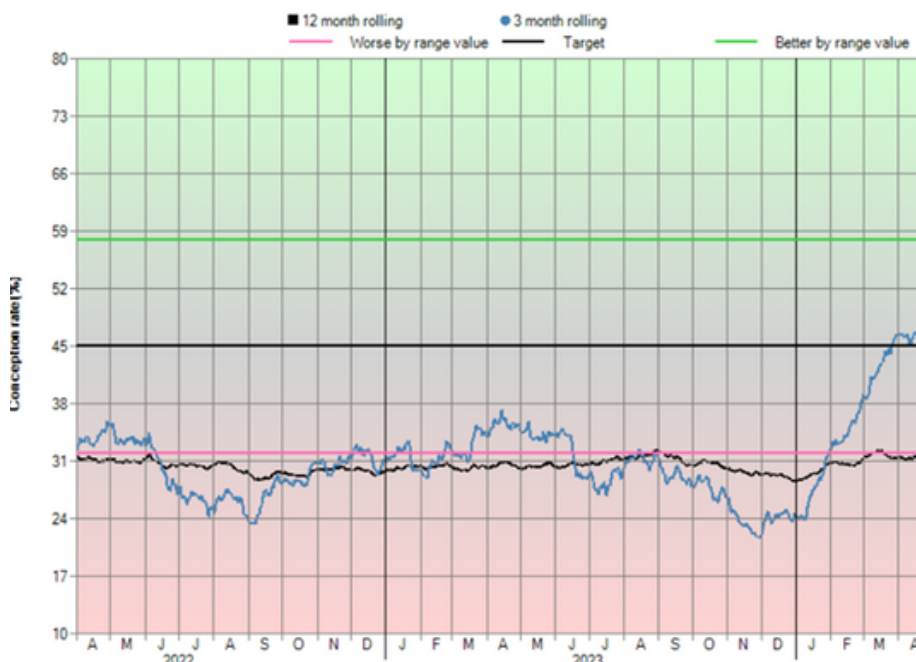
Many things can impact conception rate on farm, from nutritional issues, disease, to any form of stress, and it can be a difficult figure to improve.

One relatively quick and easy thing which may have a surprising effect is to have an AI refresher on farm. We have completed quite a few of these recently with some really rewarding results.

The refreshers cover semen handling and placement. We use artificial straws filled with cream which is visible on the scanner so that accurate placement can be assessed. This provides much more detailed feedback than just checking placement manually, which is really important in fine tuning technique.

A couple of examples of positive results following refreshers:

- On one farm, a team member had been struggling with their conception rate for a little while and following an AI refresher, their CR improved by 15% in the 3 months following the refresher compared to the 3 months prior to the refresher. Overall herd CR remained stable showing that this was not just an improvement in herd fertility.
- The graph shows an increase in rolling 3-month conception rate (blue line) following an AI refresher course undertaken in January this year where both the staff members involved in AI tweaked their technique slightly.



To put this into context, a one percent increase in conception rate equates to around £4 per cow, so if we can get a 10% increase in herd CR for a 200 cow herd, this would equate to:

$$10\% \times £4 \times 200 = \text{£}8000$$

We have also seen cases where there have been other issues identified at AI refresher courses such as incorrect calibration of temperature in the thawing flask.

The refreshers only take an hour or so, depending on number of attendees, and can be done on your farm, providing you have barren cows available.



Another thing to bear in mind is that we have the Dynescan machine available for testing semen straws at the practice. Since using this technology, we have had quite a few batches with sub-fertile straws. This can have a huge impact on conception rates and can take a long time to become visible in results. If you have a large batch of straws it is worth considering having one tested prior to using them, particularly for block calving herds. Similarly, if you have had lower than expected results from a particular bull(s), then we can check the straws for signs of damage to the health of the semen.

Don't forget the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway funding is still available and can be put towards either of these things! If you are interested, then have a chat with your vet or give the office a call.

Deaths from Lungworm seen in the last couple of weeks.

In the last couple of weeks we have seen numerous cases of clinical lungworm in cattle. The risk is extra high this year due to the wet conditions.

First season grazing animals are most at risk, but animals can be affected at all stages if they have a period where there is no exposure, leading to a drop in immunity. Disease patterns are more difficult to predict than with gut worms and we often see disease on farms that have never seen issues with the disease in the past meaning it is easy to get caught out.

Affected animals will show difficulty breathing and often, but not always, the classic 'husk' cough. Disease can progress from relatively mild signs to severe disease and death within a couple of days and with risk of secondary infection, losses can be high.

How to spot disease?

Lungworm should be considered in any animals at pasture showing coughing or difficulty breathing and if you have suspicion of disease in unvaccinated animals treatment is recommended. A good way to assess animals is to get them to run about a bit and see if they show coughing or signs of respiratory distress. Disease can be seen in lactating dairy cows and may present as loss in condition and reduced yields, as well as widespread coughing. Unfortunately, lungworm eggs do not show up on routine worm egg counts, meaning it is difficult to diagnose before clinical disease is present.

Any class of wormer should work treatment wise, but there have been reports of resistance recently, so please speak to your vet before treating or if there is any suspicion of lack of response to treatment. We have seen a case this week where an animal died 4 days after treatment with an ivermectin-type wormer and live worms were found on postmortem, indicating failure of treatment. These cases should be reported to the VMD (your vet will do this).

Any clinically affected animals should be removed from pasture to avoid further infection and if animals are treated with a white or yellow wormer they should be removed from the high-risk pasture following treatment to prevent reinfection, as these wormers have no residual activity.

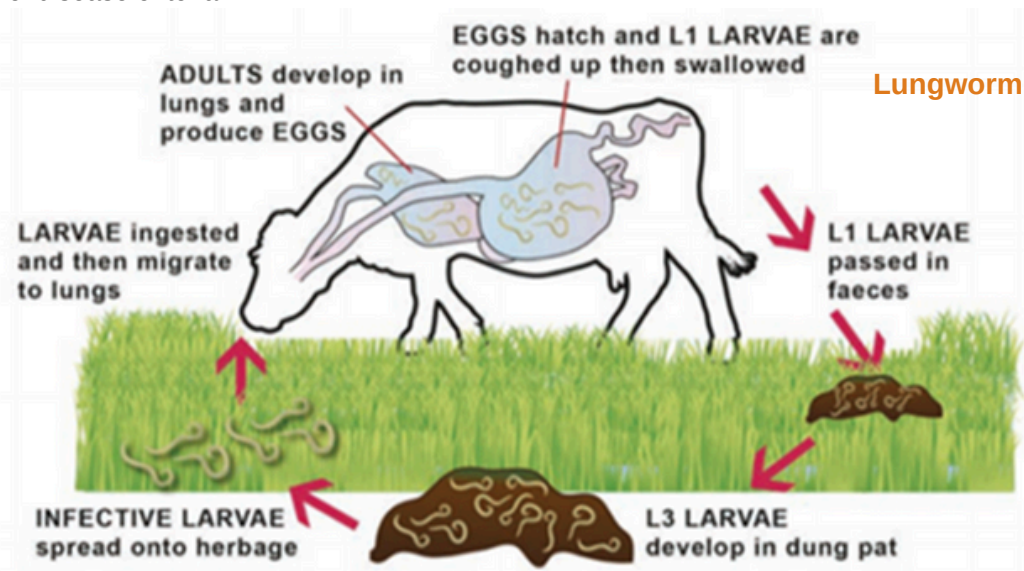
Some animals may not improve and may even deteriorate after treatment, due to secondary bacterial infection and treatment with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories may be required.



Prevention

Disease can be prevented by vaccination of first season grazers using 'Huskvac' and this is already being done on many farms. The vaccine consists of 2 oral doses, 4 weeks apart and must be completed 2 weeks before turning out. Vaccinated animals should not be mixed with unvaccinated animals. Following the primary course, vaccination should not need to be repeated if animals are grazing annually, as some level of exposure is expected to maintain immunity.

Farms with no history of disease should consider quarantine treatments of any bought in animals to try and avoid introduction of disease onto farm.



all the best,
Sarah Smith

MEETINGS COMING UP...

****Summer Course Programme - 2024****

AHPA Approved AI Course, 3 days, £515+VAT:

- 11th-13th September - Location TBC

BCVA CHCSB Lantra Approved Intermediate Foot Trimming with Tom Morris, 3 day, £800+VAT:

- 18th-20th September - Old Sodbury & Pewsey



For more information or to book a place on any of our courses please contact the office on:

01666 823035 Ext. 1 or E:technical.training@georgevetgroup.co.uk



***** Sheep benchmarking meeting *****

**At the Old Royal Ship, Luckington SN14 6PA on Wednesday 7th August
and**

Whittington Lodge Farm, Whittington, GL54 4HB on Tuesday 20th August



if you are interested in either of the above contact the office for a data collection form

VET TECH UPDATE...



Our Vet Techs are ROMs accredited mobility scorers

Scoring can be done hassle free during milking



Please call the office if you would like more information and availability

COMPASSION RESPECT INTEGRITY SUSTAINABILITY PROGRESSION CARE

T: 01666 823035 Option "1" for for visits & general enquiries, "2" for medicines, "3" for TB testing