



# Tysul Vets

## Farm Newsletter

### September 2015

#### Streptococcus Uberis Mastitis Infection

By Elizabeth Harries, BVSc, MRCVS

*Streptococcus uberis* is a very common cause of mastitis in the UK, thought to cause up to 30% of all clinical cases. It is becoming an increasing and persistent problem in many herds. It has historically been considered to be an environmental pathogen. This relates to it being found in straw beds and yards. However studies have shown that the pathogen can also survive well in dry cow paddocks and in dirty trodden ground around gateways meaning that it becomes an all year round risk rather than only a worry during winter months.



Furthermore, cow adapted strains of *Strep. uberis* have manifested and behave in a similar way to contagious pathogens being spread cow to cow in the parlour and persisting in the udders of high SCC cows. This adds to the fact that *Strep. uberis* is no longer only a winter problem but is a yearlong threat and can have serious effects on the herds overall cell counts.

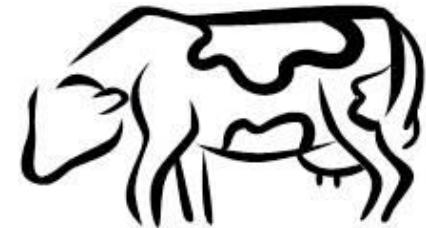
Infection most commonly occurs in older cows late in the dry period when Dry Cow therapy (DCT) has worn off and cows are likely to be heavily stocked in dry cow yards and straw pens. Possible causes for this increased risk of infection include:

- Opening of teat canals and leakage of milk allowing invasion of pathogens from the environment.
- Flies spread infection
- Teat end damage
- Warm humid weather.

Other causes of infection results from contamination of the teats and udder with water, mud and faeces. Poor cleaning protocols in the parlour increases the risk of infection and spread.

*Strep. uberis* can appear as an acute case of clinical mastitis but tends to manifest most commonly as subclinical mastitis where milk appears normal on stripping but the somatic cell count of the cow is elevated. These cows provide the biggest risk to the herd as they can act as reservoirs and spread infection to other animals. *Strep. uberis* has a recurrent nature usually due to high environmental challenges or more commonly because the infection can be very hard to completely clear, similar to

*Staphylococcus aureus* infections. A typical farm picture would be raised bulk milk counts with many recurrent cases and clinical cases which appear to poorly respond to standard treatments.



**Next month – diagnosis, control and treatment.**

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**[www.tysulgvet.co.uk](http://www.tysulgvet.co.uk)**



# Acorn poisoning

By Helen Phillips

**Species affected:** Cattle, sheep, horses and goats

**Parts that are poisonous:** Acorns, leaves and stems



## When does it happen?

- Typically in late summer and autumn when acorn fall is high
- Often worse after storms and gales
- Animals typically ignore acorns but if grazing is poor animals often take in more acorns. Some animals may also develop a taste for acorns

## Why are they poisonous?

- Digestion of the acorns produces tannic acid which damages the gut lining and kidneys
- Tannic acid concentrate in the milk, meaning that strong suckled calves often receive high levels and can be the first to show signs.

## What are the clinical signs?

- Sudden death
- Constipation followed by black diarrhoea
- Straining to pass urine

## Is there any treatment?

- No cure or antidote
- Supportive treatment: fluids, laxatives and antibiotic to prevent secondary infections

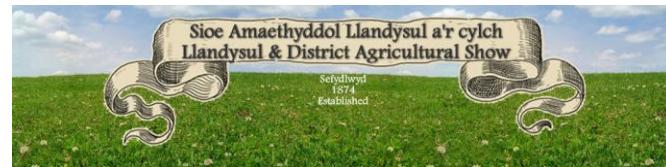
## Prevention

- Avoid grazing paddocks with oak trees in the autumn
- Fence off areas under oak trees

## Cynhelir Sioe Amaethyddol Llandysul a'r Cylch ar Ddydd Sadwrn 5ed o Fedi 2015.

The Llandysul & District Agricultural Show will be on Saturday 5th September 2015

We will be supporting Llandysul Show at Hengae Fields. Pop along and see us for a chat.



## Practice News

### Staff

Please give a warm welcome to our new vet Georgina Hartnell who joins us in September. Georgina graduated from RVC in July where she helped look after the Vet Schools small herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle. Georgina hails from Somerset and has a keen interest in mixed practice. During her time at vet school she had the opportunity to visit a clinic in California where she saw some of the 'mega-dairies' in action.

### Farm Meeting

We are currently planning our next on-farm meeting relating to "Youngstock" so look out for information on Twitter and Facebook as well as in the post. I am sure our vets and reception staff will also make update you when we have a date and venue confirmed.

