



AHI BULLETIN

The risk of lungworm (hoose)

As we enter the second half of the grazing season, and following the recent wet weather, the risk of lungworm (hoose) in susceptible cattle is high. Lungworm is caused by a roundworm, *Dictyocaulus viviparus*, which completes its lifecycle in the lungs of cattle. Clinical signs of infection include coughing and difficulty breathing, and death can occur with very little warning. Therefore, it is important that farmers be vigilant for signs of lungworm and take action without delay.

Young cattle in their first grazing season, and older animals which have little immunity, are at greatest risk of infection. Animals grazing pasture that was grazed by infected cattle the previous year may become infected if the larval burden on the pasture is high, and animals can acquire a dangerous level of infection after even one day of grazing a contaminated pasture.

Close monitoring of animals for any sign of disease, with treatment of the entire group if coughing is observed, is recommended.

There are various tests available to confirm infection, including faecal sampling (albeit that deaths from acute infection can occur before larvae appear in the faeces). Alternatively, a veterinary practitioner can take samples from the lungs to detect lungworms. Post mortem examinations should be carried out if deaths occur.

Anthelmintics can be given in the face of a lungworm outbreak or as part of a strategic control programme. All three groups of wormers are effective against lungworm, however only the macrocyclic lactones (e.g. Ivermectin) have a

persistent action. This is important if cattle remain on infected pasture. Silage aftergrass will have a lower level of infection than pasture grazed since spring and can be used to reduce the risk of disease due to lungworm. A live intranasal vaccine is available for vaccination of cattle; however, it can only be given before turnout, which limits its usefulness.

Discuss lungworm control with your veterinary practitioner and be ready to act if signs of lungworm occur in cattle.

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Lungworm

- the facts



Lungworms in the trachea (windpipe) of an animal that died of hoose.



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