

Press Release from COWS

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COWS updates its guide to parasite control

The Control of Worms Sustainably in cattle group (COWS) has released updated chapters of its technical guide to parasite control, at the Animal Health Distributors' Association conference in Birmingham last week (Wednesday 15 January 2020).

The new sections, covering round worms, lungworm, liver and rumen fluke and ectoparasites such as flies, lice and ticks, provide a sound basis for advice for farmers and their advisers.

The guide was originally written more than 20 years ago and last revised in 2014. The new chapters, updated by research groups from universities across the UK, can be viewed on the COWS website at www.cattleparasites.org.uk

Each topic has been edited by vet Andrew Montgomery, working with leading researchers including Professor Diana Williams and Dr John McGarry from the University of Liverpool and Professor Eric Morgan of Queen's University, Belfast.

Each updated chapter includes life cycles, clinical signs, high risk conditions, diagnosis, testing, treatment, control and quarantine.

Rise of resistance

One of the biggest changes to the content has been where resistance is concerned.

"We know a lot more about liver fluke resistance to products containing triclabendazole than we did five years ago," says Professor Diana Williams. "This is one of the areas where the up-dated chapters have changed most.

"Triclabendazole resistance has now been reported in cattle in the UK, so it is vital that the resistance status is established for each farm before a control programme is developed. A Faecal Egg Count Reduction Test (FECRT) can be used, especially where there are also sheep. If there is resistance, a plan using alternative products must be drawn up."

The section on rumen fluke is also more comprehensive than when the original COWS Guide was written.

“Rumen fluke have been found increasingly in British cattle over the past five years, and DNA analysis has found the species involved is new to the UK,” explains Professor Williams. “Recent research suggest this species uses the same mud snail for its intermediate host as that used by liver fluke.”

The newly edited chapters also encourage farmers to include parasite control in their herd health plans.

“We want farmers to take a strategic approach to parasite control,” says Professor Williams. “Having a plan minimises the risk of infections and prevents ‘fire-brigade’ treatments when vets have to be called in to treat sick animals.”

Ends

Image:

Front cover of updated guide

Professor Diana Williams of the University of Liverpool

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