



3 September 2010

VLA launches first UK cattle health improvement service for Neosporosis

Neosporosis is the most commonly diagnosed cause of abortion in cattle in the UK and is responsible for significant financial loss to the industry.

HerdSure[®], VLA's cattle health improvement service, announces the launch of the UK's first *Neospora* testing programme suitable for all herds. This service enables farmers to control this disease in a cost effective, user friendly and efficient way.

HerdSure[®] works in partnership with farmers and veterinary practices in providing a sampling, testing and management regime to establish the health status of the herd at three different levels:

- Level 1 provides an indication of the herd's neosporosis status.
- Level 2 aims to improve the health status of the herd for neosporosis.
- Level 3 monitors the herd's improved health status.

Blood samples are collected from cattle during a specific period of pregnancy or when they are calves of less than two week old. Two negative tests are needed to be confident that an animal is free of infection. HerdSure[®] issues health status statements on the completion of each level.

Bob Monies, Regional Veterinary Manager at VLA comments:

"This is the first commercially available disease control programme for neosporosis. There is widespread interest from both vets and farmers. Neosporosis is the most commonly diagnosed cause of abortion in dairy and beef cattle and this programme offers a way forward for those infected herds which have been struggling with control for a number of years."

HerdSure[®] keeps a record of animals and test results for the farm so that administration and recording is kept to a minimum. Positive animals are not to be used for breeding but may be removed from the herd at a time that suits their management, for example at the end of lactation. All abortions in the herd are investigated and a number of specific bio-security measures are recommended.

HerdSure[®] supplies handbooks for registered vets and farmers with details of the disease, management recommendations, biosecurity, added animals and testing protocols. A helpline is available for vet practices to support their clients with a team of consultants on hand to offer advice.

HerdSure[®] members pay a small annual subscription per year depending on the size of their herd for each disease. VLA offers competitive testing prices as part of the service.

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Notes to Editors

Neosporosis

Neosporosis is disease in cattle caused by *Neospora caninum*, a protozoon parasite with worldwide distribution. The definitive host is the dog, and cattle are an intermediate host of the parasite. The organism causes abortion and can infect cattle by either the horizontal (exogenous) route where the pregnant cow ingests oocysts from dog faeces, or the vertical (endogenous) route- which is the most common mode of infection- from dam to calf.

Herdsure[®]

Herdsure[®] is a national cattle health improvement service launched by VLA to address the issue of providing cattle herd health planning to multiple herds, offering multiple disease control over a long time period.

The Herdsure[®] Management System (HMS) is an IT system used to record animal test results and provide prompts when testing is due thus offering a service with minimal recording on the part of the farmer and vet.

Herdsure[®] currently offers the option to test for six diseases: BVD (bovine viral diarrhoea), Johne's disease, liver fluke, leptospirosis, neosporosis and IBR (infectious bovine rhinotracheitis). The programme is suitable for all herds including beef, dairy, commercial and pedigree.

Herdsure[®] is one of the commercial services provided by VLA Scientific.

For further information, contact Herdsure[®] on [01789 750972](tel:01789750972)

VLA Scientific

To enhance its scientific activity VLA has, in recent years, sought to develop commercial products and services and to make them available to organisations around the world. These services have now been brought together under VLA Scientific, based in the VLA main site at Weybridge, Surrey.

VLA Scientific includes business development, customer services, research and production groups to ensure the products and services offered are delivered effectively to our customers. They also bring scientific expertise, high quality service, innovative methods and, in many cases unique products and services to the market.

For further information see www.vlascientific.com

VLA

VLA is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. It is a UK network of veterinary laboratories and is internationally recognised as a centre of scientific excellence.

The Agency provides a wide range of applied research and consultancy on livestock diseases and surveillance of new and emerging diseases for the Government and animal health industry. Other services include animal health related research, specialised testing, epidemiology and risk assessment to support policy-making.

It also maintains an emergency response capability to ensure protection from disease outbreaks. VLA is a national and international reference laboratory for many farm animal diseases including avian influenza, bovine tuberculosis, classical swine fever and TSEs.

For further information see www.vla.gov.uk