

Homeopathy & New Forest Eye ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE

Article WS128/07

Christopher Day - Veterinary Surgeon

Copyright © 2007 AVMC

Chinham House, Stanford in the Vale, Oxon SN7 8NQ UK

01367 710324

This is a page from www.alternativevet.org

HOMEOPATHY & NEW FOREST EYE

As we look towards summer we hope that nature will combine the best of an English summer with sufficient rainfall to ensure adequate grazing and good support for growing crops. It is a time of great optimism. However, all too soon, we can be brought down to earth with a bump by outbreaks of disease in young stock, whom we always hope can be managed disease-free at grass.

One of the most distressing and time-consuming problems to beset the busy farmer, probably with hay-making or harvest at its busiest too, will be that of 'New Forest Eye' disease, breaking out in a bunch of promising young heifers. This disease affects one or both eyes, causing tears to flow down the face, the eyes to be tightly shut, conjunctivitis, corneal inflammation and even ulceration (ulcer formation), with kaleidoscopic colour changes occurring with reds and yellows, adding to the horror.

There are many opinions as to exact cause, in a scientific sense, but bacterial infection, aided by involvement of other micro-organisms, spread by the ubiquitous summer flies, are commonly thought to be the culprits. *Moraxella* is one of the implicated bacteria.

The disease is able to, and often does, spread rapidly and inexorably through a bunch of young stock, one on the first day, three on the next, five or six on the following day etc. It is usually fairly long-lasting, two weeks of treatment by conventional eye ointments containing antibiotics being nothing out of the ordinary. Alternatively, a series of sub-conjunctival injections of antibiotic can be administered (*since this article was written, in modern veterinary practice, one injection may now serve*).

The treatment, while usually preventing any loss of eyes and hopefully hastening eventual resolution, is not only time-consuming, it is also very absorptive of numbers of farm staff at a very busy time of year on the farm and can be extremely frustrating as, no sooner are one or two in a bunch cleared than more

join the ranks of the afflicted. One solution is to bring the bunch in, adding to feed and bedding bills, with grazing going to waste. While this represents an obvious cost, it does, of course save enormously on farm staff time.

Happily, there is another solution, which has been used on farms for many years with great success. That is the [homeopathic](#) way of treatment. It appears that once a farm has embarked on this method of treatment for New Forest Eye, it will never go back to the conventional approach. Homeopathy works by stimulating the body's own healing mechanisms, thus enhancing and hastening healing in affected animals. It also has the apparent ability to prevent the spread of the infection, so forestalling the outbreak, to the enormous welfare advantage of the rest of the bunch and to huge but calculable savings for the farmer's pocket.

Homeopathic remedies on the farm have several key advantages. Their use is free from side-effects. They can create no tissue (or milk) residues if used in the usual potencies. They are very easy to administer to a herd of cattle, even at grass, because they can be added to the drinking water in the field (provided the cattle don't drink from a stream) in very small quantities. They can not only treat any affected animals, without handling of those animals, they also appear to be able to [prevent](#) well animals becoming affected. They are extremely economical to use by the drinking water method (more costly if individual dosing proves necessary).

What we often see in an outbreak of New Forest Eye, after commencing dosing with homeopathy, is that:

- early cases seem to just resolve, in a day or two, without trauma.
- more advanced cases seem to have to go through the full spectrum of symptoms but on a very condensed time scale. This is dramatic but effective and the eye returns to normal. We have never seen an eye lost by this method.
- unaffected cattle usually remain clear as long as they have received doses for about two days prior to their becoming challenged.

Since the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 prevents the diagnosis or treatment of animals by anyone other than a vet, your cattle must be treated by a veterinary surgeon. Since there are so very few veterinary surgeons versed in homeopathy in the UK, it is very difficult and can be expensive to call in another vet to consult on your farm. This makes the use of homeopathy on the farm a rare luxury. However, since the condition is so easy to describe, your farm's own veterinary surgeon, if willing, can enlist help from a veterinary surgeon qualified in the use of

homeopathy via letter or telephone, if he or she is prepared both to take on the advice and treatments prescribed by the veterinary homeopath and to continue to monitor the welfare and progress of the cattle under his or her care. This system seems to work well in the case of veterinary surgeons who do at present contact others for such treatments, and most of those following this route seem well satisfied. It is important however, that a local veterinary surgeon is involved from the outset, since it is he or she who has responsibility for the medical care of your animals and needs to know and understand what is being done. Over-the-counter purchase of homeopathic remedies, without proper qualified veterinary advice and without the knowledge and consent of your own veterinary surgeon, is both unwise and potentially dangerous. It is also quite wrong to seek homeopathic advice from a veterinary homeopath, without first discussing it with your own vet.

Homeopathy advocates a [holistic](#) approach, looking at diet and management in their broadest sense and how they impinge on an animal's welfare and health. It can be a refreshing approach on the farm when used for the first time and can gradually alter the whole outlook and philosophy of the farm, after a while of personal experience. This can be a very important trend for the future when we know so much about the potential evils of over-intensification of our farms and over-manipulation of our animals. Management and handling must be welfare-orientated and feeding must have common sense, ethics and evolutionary relevance as its main guides. We must always strive towards sustainable methods of agriculture. The BSE crisis could not have occurred, had broader philosophies been the norm, and it should serve as a valuable and salutary lesson to us all for the future pattern of farming as a whole in the UK.

Christopher Day – May 1996

To return to the web site of the AVMC, click the 'BACK' button of your browser or click www.alternativevet.org

This site is subject to frequent ongoing development and expansion - please revisit to view new material