Eye Disease in Cattle

Infectious Bovine Keratoconjunctivitis (IBK), New Forest Eye

IBK is a highly contagious disease that can be found to spread quickly between cattle, mainly in the summer months. It is caused by a bacteria called Morexella bovis which is spread via flies.

Clinical signs

- Affects either one eye or both eyes
- Excessive tears
- Tear staining down the face
- Conjunctivitis (reddening of the lining of the eye)
- Clouding of the surface of the eye
- Ulceration of the surface of the eye

Treatment

Prompt treatment is essential and can be time consuming.
- Topical application of an antibiotic cream twice daily is the best treatment for IBK.
- If daily dosing is difficult, Drove Farm Vets can come and inject antibiotic into the eye to cause a slow release of antibiotic over the affected eye.
- Systemic long acting antibiotics such as Alamycin LA has been shown to be effective.
- If the eye is badly swollen, a dose of NSAID such as Metacam can help reduce inflammation.

Bovine Iritis (‘Silage Eye’)

Silage eye is caused by an inflammation of some of the structures within the eye. It can affect cattle of all ages during the winter months, especially those fed big baled silage/haylage.

Clinical signs

- Bluish-white opacity of the surface of the eye
- Excessive tear-staining, initially clear, becoming sticky and purulent
- Blinking
- Forced closure of the eyelids

Treatment

- An injection of antibiotics and steroids into the eye, administered by Drove Farm Vets.