

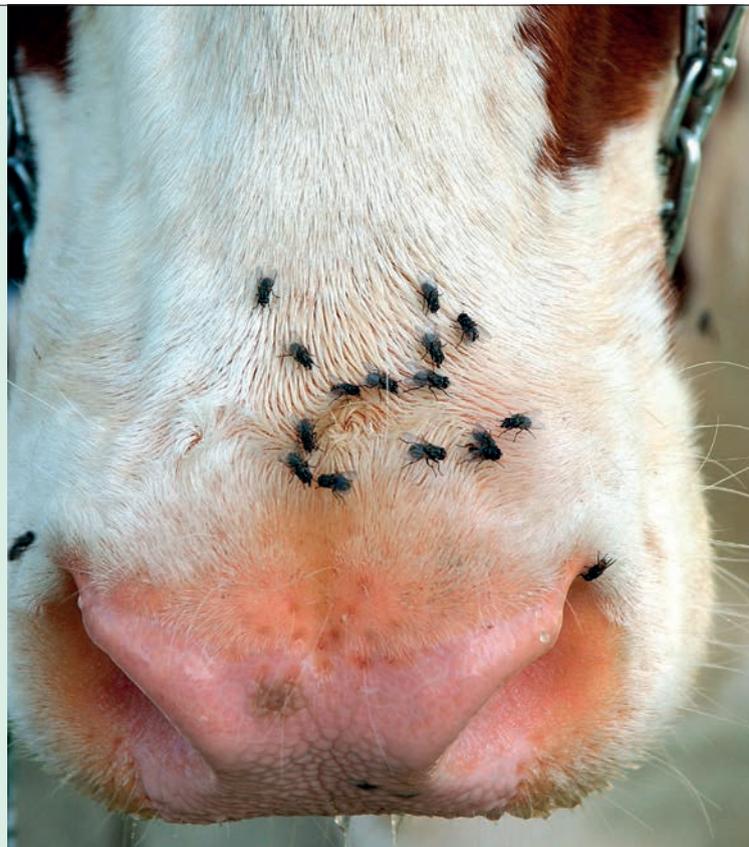


A particularly unpleasant and unusual strain of *Mycoplasma* has been seen in some UK herds – and further cases are expected this summer and autumn. We spoke to Ben Strugnell, a livestock vet based in Co Durham, to find out more.

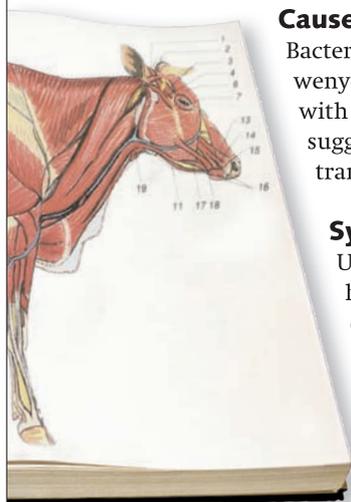
Control flies and administer NSAIDs to help reduce swelling

Look out for milk drop

There have already been several cases of *Mycoplasma wenyonii* infection in UK herd this year – typically there are several sick cows in one herd. And not only is this infection difficult to diagnose but it is also tricky to treat. *M wenyonii* is not yet completely understood, but it is increasingly recognised, particularly in dairy cows, during summer and early autumn. Symptoms, which accompany a hot and swollen udder, typically include a high temperature, oedema in the hind feet and lower legs and, most notably, a severe and sudden drop in milk yield. Cows present as listless – tail swishing and foot stamping are common physical signs. They can appear unwell and go off their feed. There could be several exhibiting symptoms, but it would be unusual for the whole herd to be infected at once. This is probably a fly-borne infection, which may also be transmitted via vaccination needles and other surgical equipment, and symptoms are varied, but the combination of hind-limb and udder oedema, with fever and milk drop, should raise *M wenyonii* infection as a possibility. PCR for the organism performed on a blood sample from an acutely affected cow is the best bet for diagnosis, consult your vet for further information. The infection is not particularly responsive to antibiotic treatment. Anti-inflammatories are the best option, but it's best to talk to your vet to first rule out other possible causes and then devise an effective treatment plan.



The encyclopaedia ***Mycoplasma wenyonii* infection**



Cause

Bacterial parasite called *Mycoplasma wenyonii*. Most clinical cases coincide with peak nuisance fly activity, which suggests that flies are involved with transmission.

Symptoms

Udder oedema and swelling in hind feet and legs. Fever and a drop in milk yield are also seen, as well as tail swishing and foot stomping.

Diagnosis

Tricky as symptoms are similar to those seen in cases

of mycotoxicosis. But cows presenting all the classic symptoms should be investigated. Blood sampling can confirm *M wenyonii* infection.

Treatment

Speed is key and anti-inflammatories offer some success, because they can help to reduce swelling and high temperatures. Antibiotics can also be prescribed by your vet. Tylosin or fluoroquinolones are probably the most effective choices. Oxytetracycline may or may not help.

Prevention

Reducing fly levels can help to reduce transmission – work towards reducing the fly population and apply pour-on fly treatments to help deter flies. Exercise extra care with needle hygiene in the face of an outbreak; consider using a sterimatic needle if not already doing so.