



BISHOPTON

VETERINARY GROUP

March 2024

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW
LOOK NEWSLETTER**



Bumper Spring Issue!!

Lambing Season is upon us. See page 4 for our handy lambing checklist and check out page 5 for our bespoke Lambing Kits.

THIS MONTH

- Sheep & Lambing update
- Parasite Mapping
- Lameness - how to tackle it
- Burns Night Ceilidh
- ... and more!



The new year seems to be flying by and we're now looking forward to a busy spring.

As many of you will be aware our farm team are an active bunch with many of the team regularly taking part in various hobbies and challenges to keep fit. The latest escapade involved a team outing to take part in the Ninja Warrior Race for Glory roadshow. As I didn't want to upstage any of the team with my athletic prowess I did the dutiful thing and opted to be on call instead! A great time was had by all and I'm pleased to report no injuries were sustained!

Within this edition of the newsletter we reflect on some of recent discussion group meetings we've held. These are open to everyone and represent a great opportunity to keep up to date and pick up top tips across a wide range of topics in a relaxed and social setting. There's a lot to be said for the adage that 'everyday is a school day' and here at Bishopton we're always striving to do the best job possible of educating ourselves, staff and clients. It's compulsory for all vets (even those of us that are 'long in the tooth!') to complete a minimum of 35 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) per year. We're fortunate across our team that we have a wide range of

interests. This enables us to share knowledge and internally refer to help us strive to provide the best possible advice to our clients. Do let any of the team know if there's topics you'd like us to cover in the future be it in a training or discussion group setting. Wishing you all the best for spring and beyond.

**Neil Eastham,
Partner**

You can read more about our Discussion Groups on Pg 3.

Sheep and lambing update - Spring 2024

So far in 2024, the weather hasn't been the kindest to us, plenty of rain and wet ground! However, Autumn 2023 was also a wet and warm season, meaning increased midges and flies, with fly strike being seen much later into the year than usual.



by **Kath Gray,
BVM BVS MRCVS**

Flock Focus

Schmallenberg

Last seen circulating between 2016-18, Schmallenberg virus (SBV) seems to be making a bit of an appearance again this year, with APHA reporting several confirmed cases across the country. Early lambing flocks are more likely to be affected, as they would have been at the vulnerable stage of gestation coinciding with the peak of the midge season in Autumn. Along with seeing early re-absorptions/abortions (which may present as increased number of empty ewes at scanning), clinical signs include live or dead lambs, with bent limbs and fixed joints (which may be all limbs and spine, or only some limbs or joints), brain deformities and damage to the spinal cord.



Lamb with fused joints and head/neck deformities

There may be difficulties lambing ewes, and caesarians may be required.

APHA is currently offering free testing for SBV and so it is vitally important for you to report any suspicious lambs to us so that we can organise sampling and testing. Currently, no vaccine is available for SBV, but discussions are ongoing surrounding this, and so it is essential for UK vets to identify as many infected flocks as possible.

Continued...

Bluetongue (BTV)

Bluetongue (BTV) has also made a re-appearance in the south of the UK in late 2023 and early part of this year, and is something that we need to be aware of going into the warmer seasons and increased midge activity. With the anticipated increase in cases, please be vigilant and report any suspicious cases. The strain currently circulating (BTV-3) is different to the strain previously affecting the UK in BTV 8, and there is no cross protection from the existing BTV 8 vaccine. BTV 3 also seems to be causing more severe disease in both sheep and cattle than the previous strain.

See the signs to look out for on this page, taken from the Ruminant Health and Welfare website .

Although we cannot control the movement of midges. We can certainly control the movement of livestock, and therefore please be extremely vigilant when considering buying in stock, as we don't want to introduce potentially infected animals into our part of the country and infect the local midge populations!

Bluetongue Clinical Signs



- Lethargy, reluctance to move
- Crusty erosions around the nostrils and on the muzzle
- Discharge of mucus and drooling from mouth and nose
- Swelling of the muzzle, face and above hoof
- Reddening of the skin above the hoof
- Redness of the mouth, eyes, nose
- Breathing problems
- Erosions on the teats



- Crusty erosions around the nostrils and muzzle
- Redness of the mouth, eyes, nose
- Reddening of the skin above the hoof
- Nasal discharge
- Reddening and erosions on the teats

Cattle do not often show clear signs of disease so owners should also look out for signs of fatigue and lower productivity including reduced milk yield.



Farmers should be vigilant in monitoring for Bluetongue.

Calves can become infected with bluetongue (BTV-8) before birth if the mother is infected while pregnant. Signs of infection include:

- Calves born small, weak, deformed or blind
- Death of calves within a few days of birth
- Abortions

Livestock keepers and vets should consider bluetongue as a possible cause for calves showing these signs.

Lambing Checklist.

Are you prepared?

Lambing season is by far the most demanding time of year for sheep farmers, which is why we recommend taking a checklist approach to pre-lambing preparation.

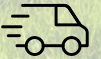


Dispensary:
01765 602396

It may sound tedious but writing checklists and staying organised in the weeks running up to lambing season helps things run more smoothly and efficiently. Taking the time to prepare and be organised is ultimately a small investment into a huge time saver for the future, especially when it comes to having the right supplies on hand.

Use our handy checklist to get ahead and hit the season running!

We deliver!



Markers

Ropes

Lube

Gloves

Lambing aids

Stomach tubes

Feeding equipment/bottles

Prolapse harnesses

Spoons

Ewe restrainers

Iodine

Milk powder

Colostrum

Twin lamb drench

Calcium

Castrating rings/plyers

Cord clamps



**Kit from
£125 ex
VAT**



Let our dispensary team put together a bespoke lambing kit for you. Call Dispensary to discuss your requirements.





Colostrum - Liquid gold.

Colostrum, 'Liquid gold' has more use than just feed value. It is a vitally important part of ensuring the best health of young and growing lambs. Colostrum is full of protective antibodies from the mother which will help protect lambs against an array of pathogens including bacteria such as E.Coli - watery mouth, and help them grow into strong profitable stock. The key is to get it right from the start.

Colostrum Quality.

It starts with the Ewes. Correctly fed and conditioned ewes in late gestation should produce good quality colostrum. Consider blood sampling a selection of ewes approx 1mth off lambing to ensure they have the correct nutritional status and energy levels.

This can be paired with forage analysis to provide a more in-depth aid to planning nutrition around lambing.

Cleanliness & Quantity


The first mouthful of colostrum wants to be clean and free from contamination. Consider dagging/clipping out ewes before lambing to ensure no fecal matter is on the udder/areas where lambs may mis-suck. You can also clean the teats with a teat-wipe or paper towel before the lamb sucks, meaning that the first mouthful of colostrum is a clean one. Best practice is for lambs to receive 200ml of colostrum within two hours of birth (50ml/kg), and then in 24 hours, a lamb must receive the equivalent of 200ml/kg of body weight in colostrum.

You can test the quality of a ewes colostrum using a brix refractometer, and the value should be >26%. Order of preference for colostrum if tube feeding is:

- Mother's colostrum,
- Colostrum from another ewe in flock
- Good quality artificial colostrum e.g. XL vets lamb colostrum, available from us. (See pg 8 for our delivery service).

For further advice on giving lambs and ewes the best nutrition, speak to your vet.



Colostrum should be harvested with clean hands into clean containers and fed via clean tubes/bottles. 

Practical Lambing Course

Enter the 2024 season with the confidence and skills to have your best season yet.

13th March

21st March

Sunley Raynes Farm,

Ripon, HG4 3AJ

10 - 4pm

£150
+ VAT

BOOK NOW

Call 01765

602396

Lameness



by Luke
Johnson
BVM BVS
MRCVS

It is well established that levels of lameness in the UK dairy herd are still above target, with current estimates between 20 - 30% of our national dairy herd lame at any given time.

Prevention of sole ulcers is usually best achieved by a combination of different approaches:

The financial burden of this is significant; treatment cost and loss of production means that a case of lameness can set you back between £200 - £600 depending on the cause. A recent study estimated that lameness across the UK is costing the industry around £250 million per year.

The most expensive cause is a sole ulcer, the slow development and long recovery time leads to an extended period of reduced production. Production losses can start before the lameness is visible and yield can sometimes be affected well after the lameness is visibly resolved.

As with most of farm animal medicine, prevention is far better than cure, in the case of sole ulcers this is especially true for a few reasons.

Increasing lying times – Improving comfort can be achieved in lots of different ways, the goal is to increase lying time and make standing and moving easy and stress free. This doesn't necessarily mean massive investment or changes to housing, lying times are mostly affected by availability and making sure cubicles are clean, dry and well bedded. Alternatively, reducing standing times will have the same effect, things like having large milking groups or not enough feed space can lead to cows standing up on concrete for longer while waiting to be milked or get at the feed face. 1-2 hours increased standing time is shown to

....Continued next page



BOOK NOW

Foot Trimming Services

Regular mobility scoring and preventative foot trimming are a vital part of any herd health plan. We provide experienced, qualified technicians with our own hydraulic squeeze crush for a safer and calmer experience for the cow and handlers. To discuss your requirements, call the Farm Desk on 01765 602396



The damage caused by the ulcer will change the shape of one of the small bones in the foot. This means that a cow that has been lame once is far more likely to have a repeat problem in the same or later lactations.



Cows that are lame when they are eligible for service are up to 30% less likely to become pregnant as there are less likely to display signs of oestrus and less likely to conceive if they are served.



Lameness is well known to be a very painful disease; in the interest of animal welfare and public perception it is favourable the prevent these cases from happening in the first place.

Lameness, continued

increase the chance of developing lameness by 25-50%. Every system is different and it's important to have a look at your own set up and consider which may be the easiest adjustment to make for the biggest gain on your farm.

Heifer Conditioning

Heifers that experience similar housing before entering the dairy herd will be at a far lower risk of developing sole ulcers once they are in milk. Heifers that are exposed to concrete develop a larger fat pad in their foot compared to those that are not. The fat pad is a natural shock absorber in the cows' foot helping to protect the sole from bearing all the weight therefore reducing the risk of sole ulcers when they enter the herd. The second main benefit is that heifers will already be cubicle trained and therefore spend more time lying down when they enter the herd.

Improving handling facilities and techniques

Gentle and stress-free handling of dairy cows will not only help with increase in yield but will also significantly affect rates on lameness on farm. Removing stress often relies on a well-designed race with good cow flow, any pinch points or sharp turns will alter their stride causing abrasions to the claw.

Foot trimming/inspections

Trimming can be used in two main ways, treatment of newly lame cows or as a prevention at high-risk periods of the lactation. Good foot trimming technique is essential for either, incorrect methods or over trimming have the potential to cause harm by incorrectly changing foot balance or reducing protection by excessive horn removal. When outsourcing foot trimming make sure the technician has had adequate training.

Alternatively, if you are foot trimming your own cattle it's important to attend training to stay up to date with current best practice. Trimming lame cows is best done as soon as possible after the onset of lameness; this will help to increase the speed of recovery and limit the damage making a repeat case less likely.

Routine foot inspections/trims should be targeted depending on the individual farms' lameness patterns. As a rule, the highest risk period for developing a sole ulcer is during early lactation. Inspection and trimming of cows and heifers at drying off is a good way to ensure feet are correctly weight bearing at calving. A second routine can be added at a strategic point during the lactation, for most farms this is usually around 100 -150 days in milk and should be tailored to be just before the risk period on your farm. Keeping good records of when lesions develop is key to identify the correct period to trim.

Foot Trimming Courses:

Keep an eye on our website and social media for Foot Trimming courses. New dates to be released shortly.

To book
call 01765
602396

Mastering Medicines

Join us for this Red Tractor Approved course in which you'll:

- Understand classes of medicine & when to use them.
- Understand how an active health plan ensures effective product use.
- Safe and effective administration of medicines
- Understand AMR and OneHealth
- Comply with medicines legislation & farm assurance requirements.

27th March or 24th April. £50



TB Reminders



Unfortunately there have been a number of new 3km radial zones within the practice in recent months, which has led to a lot of extra work for the farms affected, as well as the worry involved in having TB cases in the local area. The majority of these cases are as a result of stock being bought in to the area from high risk areas, that get picked up on post movement test or at the slaughter house.

If you are buying stock then please be careful where you are sourcing them from; just because they are coming via a mart in a 4 yearly testing area, doesn't necessarily mean they can't be from farms in annual testing/high risk areas. Use the tithub to gather as much information as possible about the holdings where the stock is coming from: <https://ibtb.co.uk>

Dispensary Focus



HEPTAVAC P and wider clostridial disease prevention in sheep.

This last couple of years has brought major disruption and periods of unavailability to Heptavac P and similar products.

This has carried on into the current lambing season and so we are trying to be organised in securing supply for as many clients as possible. We have some stock in the practice currently and have more coming in shortly.

We cannot guarantee supply for all clients but feel that with a proactive approach we might be able to ensure that everyone is covered.

Once spoken for we'd ask clients to take the stock – provided it arrives on time.

Speak to your flock vet or the dispensary if this is of interest.

Scabigard:



Last year was disastrous for Orf vaccine with significant numbers of flocks left vulnerable. Sadly issues have occurred this year as well and a major supply gap is affecting the UK right now.

We have tried to plan ahead to manage this risk and have a good supply as a result - however we would encourage you, as with Heptavac and perhaps all of your routine medicines, to plan ahead and secure supply early this year.

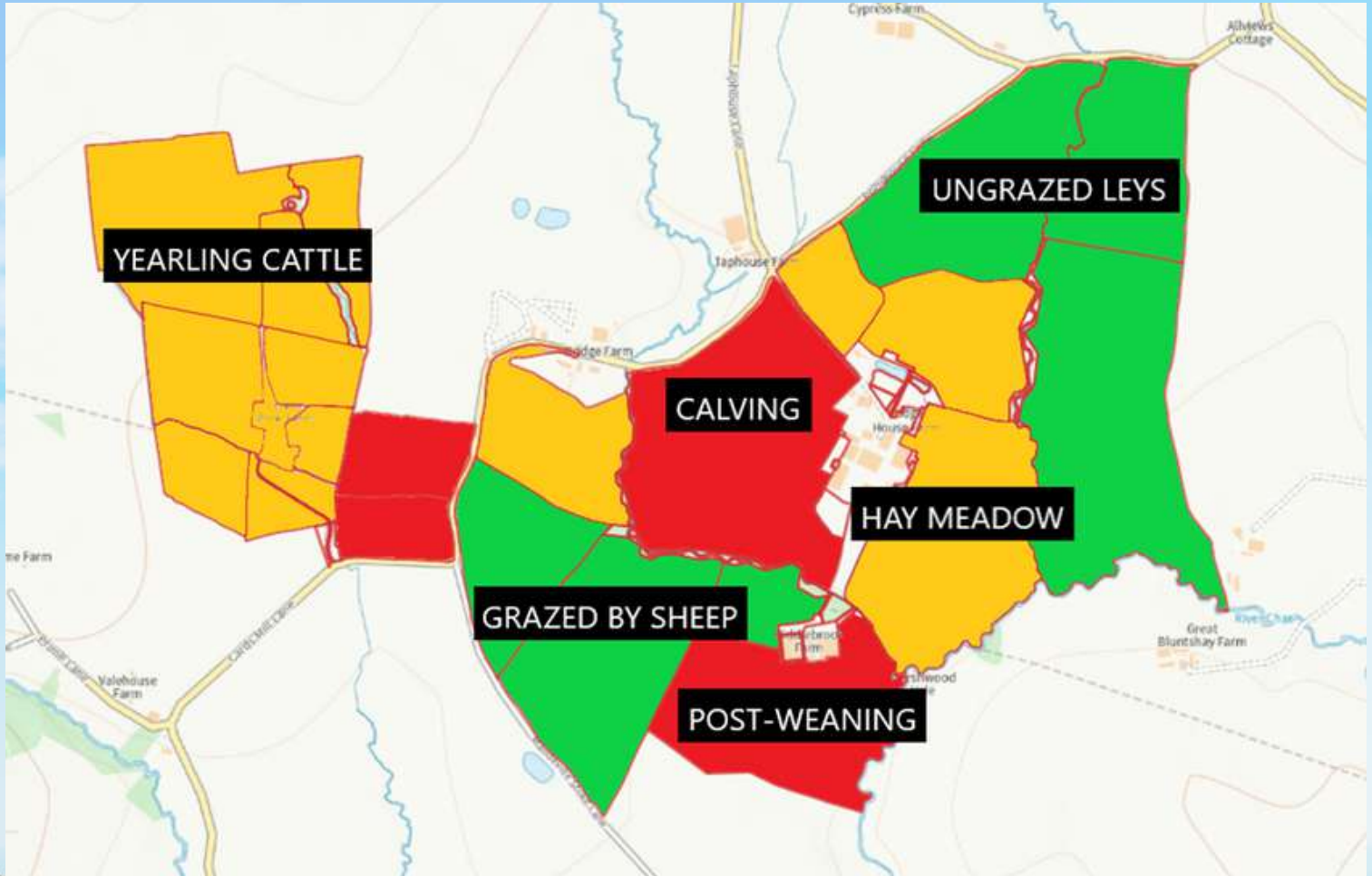


Parasite Risk Mapping

Beef
Focus

With a new grazing season fast approaching it's a great time to try something different and look to develop a parasite risk map.

by
Ben Walker,
BVM BVS
MRCVS



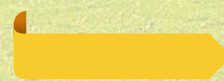
Roundworms (mainly *Ostertagia ostertagi* and *Cooperia oncophora*) are the most economically significant parasites of cattle, able to reduce growth rates by as much as 30%. Unlike adult cattle, calves in their first grazing season have no immunity against these worms, and therefore are both more susceptible to them and more likely to shed large numbers of eggs.

A parasite risk map can help you identify risks and opportunities through the grazing season to mitigate the risk of calves being challenged by roundworms. As with many diseases prevention is usually better than cure, helping you to save time, cost and stress involved in treating animals, and improving cattle welfare and productivity.

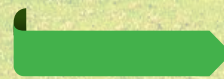
In its most basic form the risk map works on a traffic light system, with each field assigned a colour based upon its use over the previous grazing season. In a suckler system this might look something like this:



Red – High risk, areas grazed by cattle under a year old within the last year, most often permanent pasture.



Amber – Medium risk, areas grazed by cattle in their second grazing season, silage / hay aftermath.



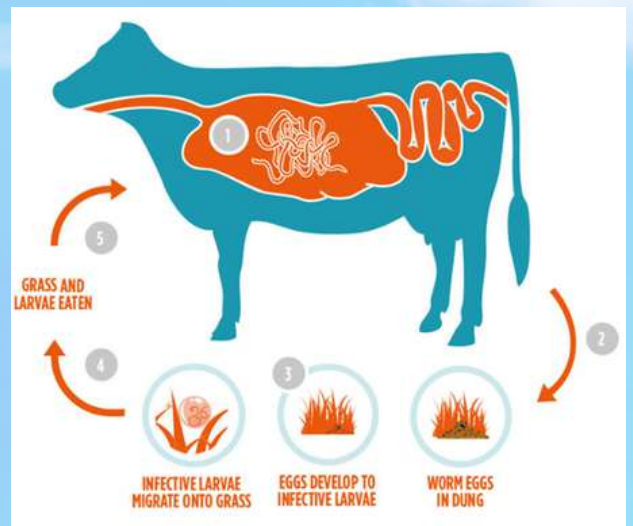
Green – Low risk, areas grazed by adult cattle / sheep / other species, newly sown, ungrazed leys.

How to use your map

Producing a risk map can help you plan which fields you should allocate to young cattle over the grazing period. For example, you might save a low risk ungrazed ley field for weaned calves, or you might choose to put adult cows in a pasture that you have identified as high risk.

Eggs can shed and develop into infective larvae in just three weeks – this means that a low risk field can quickly develop into a high risk field while calves are still grazing on it if they aren't moved before this point – something to bear in mind!

Best laid plans don't always work out – you might reach a point in late summer where you've run out of low risk pastures to graze youngstock on. However, identifying that they are on a high risk pasture means that you can be extra vigilant – take faecal egg counts, weigh calves regularly and treat as appropriate to ensure that calves don't lose ground.



Things to bear in mind:

Adult cattle are great for being able to Hoover up and remove more roundworms than they shed on pasture. Sheep can also act as 'hoovers' because they are not affected by the same species of gutworms as cattle. **It's important to remember that cattle and sheep can cross-infect one another with fluke** and that your map may not easily reflect the risk involved with this.

If you're running cattle and sheep you can produce a risk map for each species – the maps will look very different!

A parasite risk map works best when used as part of an integrated parasite control plan which your vet can help you formulate. This plan can incorporate well-timed diagnostics, grazing management, nutrition, vaccines, genetics – a full farm-based approach to managing parasites, rather than over-reliance on anthelmintics.



Sheep can act as 'hoovers' but can also cross-infect fluke

Lambing Supplies

Don't forget, we stock and deliver all lambing supplies. Let us pick up the slack during this busy period and come to you. Our delivery service is as follows, but do call our Farm Dispensary for large orders or emergencies and we will see what we can do. Keep an eye out for our handy Lambing List, which will go out by email soon.



Tuesday

Leyburn/
Swaledale/
Northallerton/
Bedale

Wednesday

Wharfdale/
Nidderdale

Thursday

York,
Easingwold,
Thirsk



Discussion Groups

We've had another full and busy season of **Discussion Groups**, bringing clients, students and vets together for interesting evenings on a range of topics.

Our own Neil Eastham kicked us off for 23/24, sharing a podium with Paul Dennison of Strutt & Parker, to talk us through the Animal Health & Welfare Pathway and Sustainable Farming Incentive.

In December, Ali Cook, Nuffield Scholar and dairy farmer showed us how robotics can be implemented in large scale dairy farming.

January also saw a Beef panel discussion on '*The Genetics & Essential Traits of the Optimal Suckler Cow*'. Thanks to the following local breeders who divested their considerable knowledge and experience: Eddie Rooke (Stabilisers), Jamie Cooper (Limousins), Mike Powley (Bespoke Crossbreeds), James Johnson (Natives) and Angus Gowthorpe (Salers).

Dr Ginny Sherwin spoke at a well attended Dairy meet on '*Keeping on Track with your Heifer Performance*' for our Dairy clients.



In February we ran a repeat of Laura Eden's very popular First Aid for Smallholders, with many determined clients battling through floods and torrential rain to learn how to care for their animals in an emergency.

We were also delighted to welcome George Oikonomou, Professor of Cattle Health and Welfare to speak at our February Dairy meeting on the topic of Lameness. We enjoyed a buffet at Romanby Golf Course, and it was great to see clients once again able to ask questions from an internationally known expert.



We have one more Dairy meet planned in partnership with The Grasslands Society at **The Crown Hotel, Boroughbridge on Wednesday 13th March, 7.30pm**. Do call the Farm Desk and book on.

Thank you to all our clients who attend and help stimulate interesting and insightful conversation.



Burns Night

We had another great night with clients on Friday 2nd February. Thank you to everyone who came along and created such a fantastic atmosphere.



BISHOPTON VETERINARY GROUP



Diary Date:

We're delighted to join The Grasslands Society for a joint Dairy Meeting on Wednesday 13th March, 2024 at 7.30pm. As ever there will be supper and a chance to ask questions and get involved in the discussion. Call Farm Desk on 01765 602396 to book.

Next time...

Show season! Summer sees us hit the road... and the agricultural shows.

Fly control - they're back! Keep on top of parasites with modern methods.

Football - Our annual charity footie tournament and BBQ makes a return.

For more up to date news, follow us on social media -
@bishoptonfarmteam