

Happy Moo Year!



Welcome to the first farm team newsletter of 2022! With festivities fading we can look forward to what promises to be another fun filled year of, hopefully, even more occasions to meet up!

Towards the end of last year, we were able to restart in-person discussion groups, and despite receiving positive feedback for the 'Pub in a Bag' distributed for our online talks, you can't beat a good feed sat with your friends. The events diary is as busy as ever, so keep a look out for up-and-coming farmer meetings, farm walks and social activities as we roll these out over the next few months.

A new year will no doubt bring its own challenges and unpredictable weather, but if you have set yourself a resolution for the new year, don't let those hurdles hold you back. Do you want to increase the growth rates of your lambs or work on improving the health status of your herd? Maybe your aim is to learn how to AI cows or to become more confident with your lambing skills. No matter what your aspirations are over the coming year, there's an approachable and enthusiastic farm team available to support and guide you towards these achievements.

We look forward to working with you as always and encourage new and exciting opportunities for the coming year.

All the best for 2022, from Laura Eden on behalf of the Bishopton Farm Team



Congratulations to 2022 Nuffield Scholar Miles Middleton

We are delighted to share that Miles Middleton has been awarded a place on the Nuffield Scholarship programme for 2022.



His work with a broad range of dairy systems has exposed him to the variety of challenges farmers face, giving him unique insight and perspective. Miles will use his Scholarship to explore the trade-offs and opportunity costs for dairy as the wider industry works toward Net Zero by 2040, with a focus on efficiency of resources which are scarce and/or limited.

We wish Miles all the best with his research and look forward to following his progress. .

Improving the Johnes status of your herd



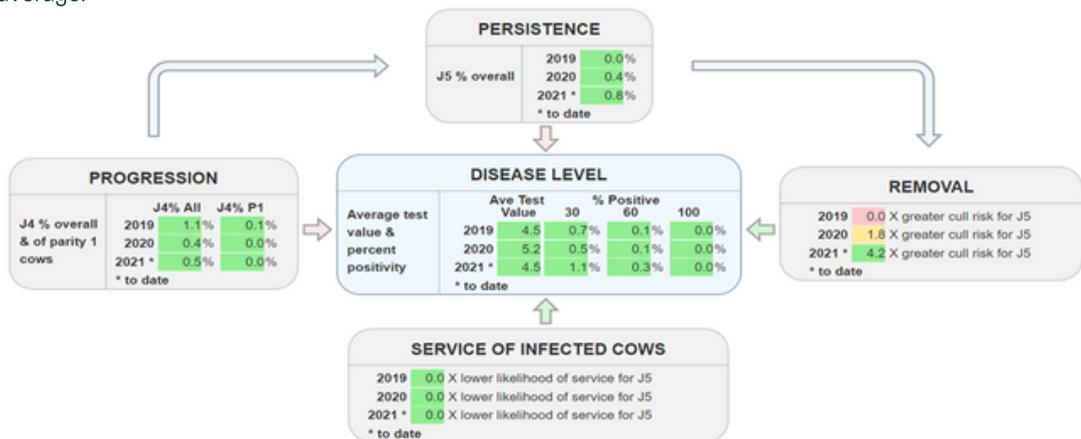
Whether you are a dairy or beef farmer, (including beef finishing farms as we have seen clinical Johnes disease affecting finishing beef cattle less than 2 years of age), then Johnes disease has the potential to impact on the performance of your herd. From the obvious signs of clinical disease of scouring and weight loss, to the more subtle signs of increased incidence of other diseases e.g mastitis, or poor fertility, Johnes can be a drain on herd performance.

Johnes testing and control has been a topic of discussion in both the dairy and beef sectors recently, and below are some key points that have come out of those discussions.

DAIRY

It has been a red tractor requirement for a few years now to sign up to the National Johnes management plan, where a minimum level of testing has to be done and a risk assessment for Johnes disease transmission is done on an annual basis. It is likely that more engagement will be required going forward, and there will be targets to hit in terms of Johnes prevalence relating to J5 cows, as there is in some aligned milk contracts already.

Whole herd routine quarterly testing allows animals to be classified from J0-J5, with J5 animals being the ones that are positive for Johnes antibodies in 2 out of the last 4 tests and are most likely to be shedding bacteria in high numbers and therefore the highest risk animals in the herd. There has been reports of some differences in test results, and therefore animal classification between the milk recording organisations; and this has led to communication and collaboration between the recording organisations to ensure the same test and protocols being used in all the labs so that results should be consistent between them all now. A new tool available from the milk recording companies uses the herds testing history to monitor the progress of Johnes disease on the farm, benchmarking your results against the national average.

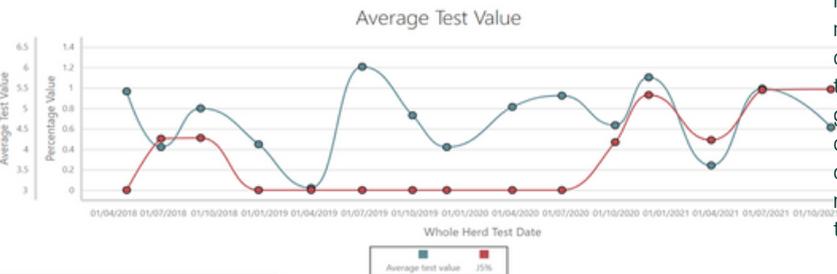


These colour codes progress in the different areas that contribute to the maintenance of disease on the farm. For example if J5 cows are culled quickly, and therefore not served then the infection pressure on the herd should be lower.

Another slight change has been looking at the actual numerical result of the antibody test, with the higher result being the highest risk. i.e. 2 cows may be classified as J5, but their actual test result values could be very different. Values over 100 will be shedding large amounts of Johnes, whereas a J5 cow with values of just over 30 will be slightly less risk. Monitoring the average test value of the whole herd is also a useful way of measuring progress in the herds progress. This can be used to monitor progress over time.

Johne's Progress Tracker

[Dashboard](#) | [Summary](#) | [Help and Guidance](#)



However, testing alone will not result in progress without appropriate identification and management of infected cows, to minimise the risk of transmission to the next generation of animals. The calving environment and colostrum/ milk feeding remain the two critical areas to control.

BEEF

Beef farms who are members of CHecs accredited health schemes that award Johnes risk levels, following annual herd testing and adherence to scheme rules, may be aware that there are some rule changes being reviewed currently. The proposed changes under review include whether or not follow up PCR testing on dung samples of blood positive animals will be allowed when this affects over 2% (or more than one animal) of the herd. A dung negative sample can mean that the herd status is unaffected by the positive blood result. This is because before an animal is antibody positive it has the potential to shed Johnes bacteria, but shedding can be intermittent, and therefore not always detected when tested. Under current rules these animals may not necessarily affect the herd status, but potentially pose a risk to that herd and therefore to people buying other stock from those herds with potentially lower risk levels than is appropriate.



Similar to the milk recording organisations collaborating, the labs involved in Johnes blood and muck testing will be comparing their processes through a ring test so that farmers and vets can be confident that whoever is doing the testing, the results and interpretation will be consistent.

Currently any animal testing positive for antibody to Johnes disease, but negative by faecal PCR should be considered as high risk and must not be sold for breeding, and it is also advised that these animals should not be retained for breeding. This remains in place in the proposed new rules, and in addition any calf to which they have given birth within the 12 months preceding the positive blood result, and any calf born subsequent to the positive serological result, must also not be sold as breeding animals



Written by Mark Spilman
BVSc MVM MRCVS



Sheep Abortion - Don't suffer in silence

Abortion has a significant economic impact on your flock, yet every year we speak to farmers who are suffering from abortions in their sheep, but have not investigated it any further. The average incidence of abortion in lowland flocks in the UK is 2-3%. Anything more than this should be investigated.

As a rule of thumb in a flock with 100 breeding ewes if you have one case daily for three days or three cases in one day this is too many.

What should I do if I have a case of abortion in my sheep?

- 1. Act fast!** The earlier you determine the cause and treat other ewes, the more lambs may be saved.
- 2. Isolate** and mark the affected ewe.
- 3. Contact us.** We want to hear from you when it happening, not after when there is less chance of getting a diagnosis.
- 4. Collect freshly aborted lambs** and placenta; put in separate, clean bags and take to the APHA for diagnostics, or to the practice so we can collect the samples required. Multiple foetuses will improve the chance of a diagnosis.
- 5. Be careful!** when handling problem ewes and aborted material. Always wash your hands afterwards. Most causes of abortion in sheep can affect humans. Pregnant women and children are particularly at risk from infection so should not go near the lambing shed or handle anything that has been exposed to ewes eg. overalls for washing.
- 6. Dispose** of aborted material carefully and appropriately.

The two main causes of ovine abortion in the UK are Chlamydophila abortus (Enzootic Abortion) and Toxoplasmosis. These make up to 70% of diagnosis based on submissions to the APHA. Both of these diseases can be vaccinated against to minimise future losses.

If you have had abortions this year, but haven't investigated them you have not missed the boat. We can test blood from aborted sheep for exposure to these two main causes. This can indicate that these agents are on your farm and vaccination is worthwhile.



Written by Katherine
Shepherd
BVMS CertAVP (Cattle)
MRCVS



We want to hear from you if you are having problems, so please don't suffer in silence and speak to your vet if you have concerns.

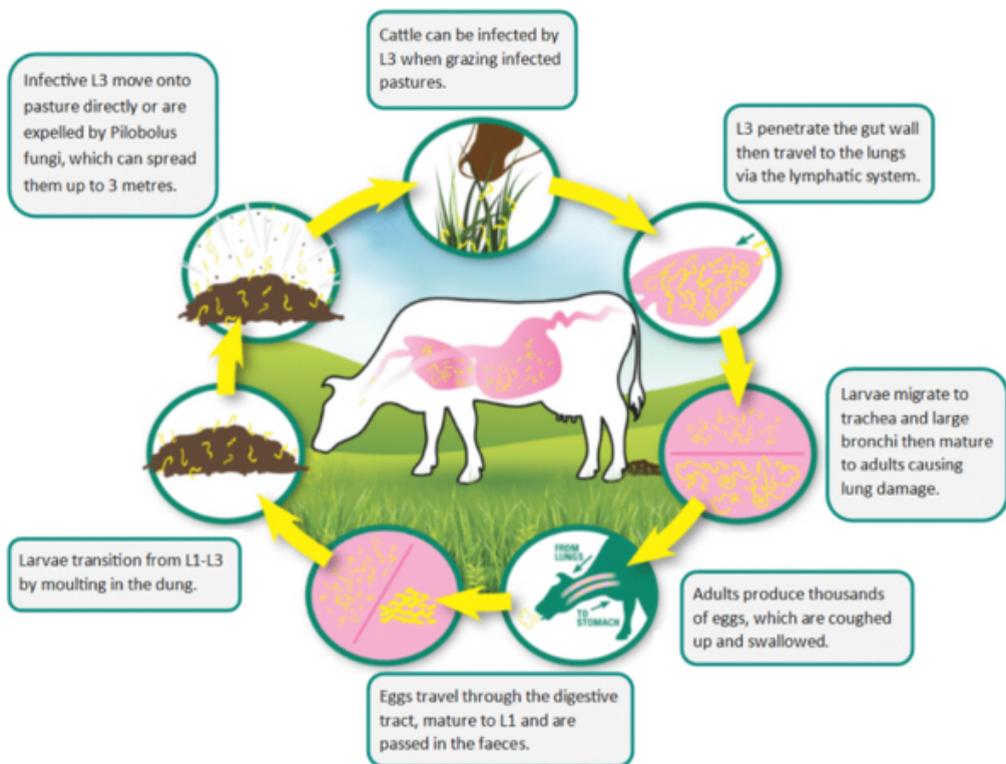


Protect against lungworm in your herd

During the late summer and autumn of 2021 we saw a surge in Lungworm, or 'Husk', with it affecting several herds in the local area. When lungworm burdens are at low levels on the pasture and exposure is gradual, cattle develop immunity and will have protection against further infection. The problem occurs when naïve cattle are suddenly exposed to pasture with high burdens of lungworm larvae. This frequently happens with young dairy cattle at their first grazing season, but can also occur in adult cattle that have not had recent exposure to lungworm, for example those that have been regularly wormed, or bought in cattle from an area with low incidence of lungworm.

A quick recap on the lifecycle...

Infection occurs when cattle ingest forage contaminated with lungworm larvae. These migrate from the gut to the lungs, where they mature and lay eggs. These eggs are coughed up and swallowed, and pass in the muck to continue the worms lifecycle on the pasture.



Diagnosing the problem...

Mild cases may simply show coughing when cattle are handled, but ill thrift, reduced milk yield and weight loss are also common findings. Severe cases will have difficulty breathing, stop eating, and if left untreated cattle will develop chronic pneumonia. If clinical signs and history are not enough, faecal samples can be tested for lungworm larvae to give you a firm diagnosis.



So what can be done?

When you detect cases of lungworm, it is recommended to treat all animals in the group as visible cases are often just the tip of the iceberg. Even those without symptoms are likely to have picked up the parasite, and you want to avoid them developing symptoms further down the line. Most wormer groups are effective against lungworm. Eprinomectin based pour-on is usually the treatment of choice due to its zero-day milk withdrawal.

As always, prevention is better than cure, and vaccination may be the best option for your herd. Huskvac is an oral vaccine and needs to be given as two doses 4 weeks apart. The doses should be given at 6 weeks and 2 weeks prior to turnout, so that cattle are fully protected before exposure. All calves should be vaccinated before their first grazing season, after which continued exposure to the lungworm larvae should maintain their immunity. Bought in heifers should also be vaccinated before turnout as their exposure to lungworm will be unknown.



Although beef suckler herds are less at risk, autumn born calves can become infected when turned out for their first grazing season, especially if lungworm burdens are high on the pasture, so vaccinating these calves before turnout can be a safe option.

If you think your herd is at risk of lungworm infection, and that vaccinating may be a viable option to protect them and reduce your wormer usage, get in touch and we can get you started with a vaccination programme.



Written by Ed Noblett BVSc MRCVS



#savegbbacon Campaign

At the beginning of October the Save GB Bacon campaign was launched at the height of an industry crisis. Pig farmers were, and still are, facing the unthinkable - having to cull healthy, high welfare pigs on farm due to a lack of butchers and workers at abattoirs across the country. A protest was held outside the Conservative Conference in Manchester in response to the Prime Minister's interview on the Marr Show where he showed lack of understanding and respect for British food production along with no empathy or support for those affected by the crisis that was unfolding. Bishopton Veterinary Group Partner and pig vet Duncan Berkshire is playing a key role in communicating the facts surrounding the crisis through the media and conducted many interviews on TV and radio.

We'd like to ask you all to help support our British pig farmers by continuing to spread the message, British really is best! Encourage your friends and family to buy British, it doesn't matter if it is from the local butcher, a farm shop or the supermarket. If you are a social media user, please follow @saveGBbacon and share their posts.

Future Farmers of Yorkshire member and Bishopton Vets client Kate Moore has been working alongside other local pig farmers to raise awareness using the 'Bite in to British' social media campaign. If you haven't got involved yet it's simple, take a short video munching on some lovely British produce. This could be your bacon butty, beef burger, bottle of beer or cheese on toast! Then nominate 3 people to do the same, and don't forget to include the #biteintobritish. This is to help raise awareness for the whole farming community so we hope you get on board.



Our qualified SQP Philip Bowes is in the following areas and their surrounding villages on these days, most weeks:

- Monday**
Ripon, Harrogate and Pateley Bridge
- Tuesday**
Masham and Leyburn
- Wednesday**
Northallerton, Thirsk and Bedale
- Thursday**
York

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Please call Philip Bowes on
07711 894816



Sheep Farmers or Ovine Performance Coaches?

The beginning of December saw the return of our in-person flock health discussion groups held at the Angel Inn in Topcliffe with guest speaker, Phillipa Page, a vet and sheep consultant from Flock Health Ltd. Phillipa's talk focused on improving the profitability of your flock through effective management of the ewes, as if coaching athletes through their production cycle. She encouraged farmers to work out, if they didn't know already, what their vet med spend was per ewe. On average this is found to be £5-£15/ewe which can be categorised into 'good' vet med spend and 'bad' vet med spend.

'Good' vet med spend

- Vaccinations
- Flock health planning
- Preventative treatments

'Bad' vet med spend

- Antibiotics and treatments – are there any ways diseases can be prevented rather than being treated?
- Wormers that don't work on your farm – have you done a drench test, so you know that it's working on your farm?



To calculate your vet med spend/ewe you will need to list all products and services used within your flock over the course of a year – be that vaccinations, boluses, antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, wormers, pour-ons, flock health scheme etc in order to get an accurate figure. Then divide this by the number of ewes in your flock... To summarise, Phillipa emphasised the importance of 'good' vet med spends and how these can bring your overall spend/ewe down.

2021 has been a good year for sheep prices but we can't rely on that continuing every year. We know from recent surveys that those farmers making the most money are not relying on the outputs of their business, but instead focusing on making the inputs much more efficient.



Are you ready for lambing?

- Lamb milk
- Lamb colostrum
- Stomach tubes
- Castration rings & applicator
- Twin lamb drench
- Strong Iodine
- Lambing ropes
- Prolapse harnesses
- Spray markers
- Calcium

All available on our weekly FOC delivery service or for collection at branch



FarmSkills
GROWING FARM BUSINESS SUCCESS

Practical Lambing Courses

Trainees will learn about the importance of preparation for lambing time, including discussion of pros and cons of housing for lambing, nutrition, body condition scoring and what equipment is necessary.

Thursday 27th January 2022
Thursday 24th February 2022

To book your space please call the RAFT team on
01765 645893



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