



Welcome to the winter edition of our farm newsletter - it certainly feels like we have moved past autumn now, with the recent rain, and latterly snow!



It has been a busy time in the practice clinically and non-clinically, with the continuation of our 80th anniversary celebrations. I was part of a really good team-effort who took on the Yorkshire 3 Peaks in September. We raised money for charity, got some exercise in the fresh air and had a good catch up with people we don't necessarily work with every day, so all in all a cracking way to spend a Saturday!

It has been a better year for grass and forage growth, with clamps looking in better shape than this time last year. Analysing these forages is important in planning what other nutrients will be required, hopefully not too many if silage quality is good.

Preparation for the spring calving season is covered by Milly, later in the newsletter. It may seem far in the distance, but some thorough prep now will achieve good results down the line.

In this edition, Ed covers sheep lameness - an area in which there is huge scope for improvement throughout the industry. A thorough approach with the 5-point plan should pay dividends and hopefully reduce both the time spent and antibiotics used when dealing with lame sheep.



Mark Spilman
BVSc MVM MRCVS

There are a number of buzz words around at the moment: 'carbon footprinting', 'net zero', 'regen ag' etc. As a veterinary team we are engaged and keen to input into these areas and help clients progress in the areas that will benefit them. The foundation of sound livestock businesses has always been, and will continue to be, healthy and productive livestock - and the team at Bishopton is more committed than ever to help our clients businesses to achieve their goals in an ever-changing political and economic climate.

Sheep Lameness - What's the Answer?

Lameness causes a significant impact on productivity and welfare in sheep flocks and can dramatically increase labour inputs. Reports suggest that 10% of the UK sheep flock is lame at any one time, and industry targets are aiming to reduce this to below 2%. Identifying the main cause of lameness on your farm and implementing a 5-point plan specific to your flock is the most effective way to control lameness.



Identify the Cause

Non-infection causes of lameness include white-line disease, toe granulomas and 'shelly hoof'. These often result from unfavourable environmental conditions, and changes in management should be able to significantly reduce these issues. Infectious causes of lameness include scald, footrot and CODD (Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis), and the first step to successful control is identifying the main issue on your farm.

Scald and footrot are caused by a bacteria called *Dichelobacter nodosus*, and some farms will have highly virulent strains that are more challenging to treat and prevent. CODD is caused by a different group of bacteria called *Treponema*, which tend to cause aggressive lesions starting at the coronary band and may result in the loss of the hoof capsule if not treated promptly.

Establish a 5-point plan

1. Cull chronically lame sheep

Lame ewes and rams spread disease, so an aggressive culling policy is critical to reduce the source of infection for the rest of the flock. Cull any 'repeat offenders'.

2. Quarantine bought in or lame sheep

As mentioned above, there are different strains of footrot and CODD bacteria, so we want to avoid bringing in new and potentially more aggressive strains when purchasing replacements or buying tups. Footbath all sheep on arrival and isolate them for a minimum of four weeks before mixing with your own flock. (Continued on page 3)

Practical Lambing - One Day Course

Learn about the importance of preparation for lambing time, including discussions on the pros and cons of housing for lambing, nutrition, body condition scoring and what equipment is necessary. Call 01765 602396 to book.

20th February
13th March
21st March



£150
+ VAT

Sunley Raynes Farm, Ripon



3. Treat lameness promptly



Formalin - Mix at 3% concentration and walk sheep through slowly.

Zinc Sulphate (Golden Hoof) - Mix at 10% concentration and stand sheep in the foot bath for a minimum of 20 minutes

4. Avoid spreading infection

Bacteria spread from sheep to sheep through contaminated ground surfaces - and particularly in warm damp areas. Use hydrated lime around handling and high-traffic areas at pasture and in the shed. Reduce the accumulation of infection around mineral buckets or troughs by moving them regularly and think carefully about where and how sheep are handled. Try to improve underfoot conditions wherever possible and isolate lame sheep during treatment to reduce the spread of infection.

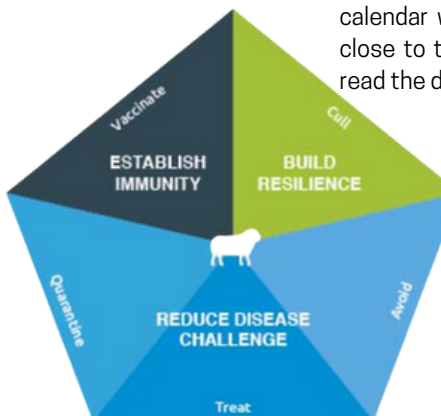
5. Vaccinate with Footvax

Footvax is licenced to enhance immunity against the bacteria responsible for scald and footrot. A primary course is required with two injections given subcutaneously six weeks apart, followed by an annual or bi-annual booster, depending on the severity of lameness in your flock. There are certain times in the calendar when it must not be administered, including close to tupping, lambing, and shearing, so be sure to read the datasheet before use.



Speak to your flock vet for more information on tackling lameness and implementing an effective 5-point plan on your farm.

Written by Ed Noblett
BVSc MRCVS





Preparing the Suckler Cow for Spring Breeding.

Preparing our spring calving sucklers now is important for a successful calving period.

Scanning results this back-end have been very good. Having a vet on farm at this time of year also represents an opportunity to assess body condition scores across the herd. Allowing cattle to become over-conditioned can lead to deposition in the birth canal and under-conditioned cattle lack strength to calve and produce weak calves. It is also important for identifying those not in calf to prevent the cost of feeding an empty cow through the dry period. Identifying cows now allows management changes pre calving.

A typical dry suckler cow diet should provide an animal with roughly 70MJ ME a day and 9% Protein DM. Heifers calving for the first time should be managed separately as their energy requirements are greater whilst still growing. Low protein, low energy forages are often utilised to provide good rumen fill without animals getting over conditioned. However, care should be taken when incorporating large amounts of straw in the diet that animals are provided with effective rumen degradable protein to deliver adequate microbial protein and support good rumen health. Providing sufficient protein 4-6 weeks pre calving is also crucial to produce good quality colostrum. This can be achieved with high protein concentrates to meet requirements in small volumes, particularly important for over conditioned cows. Gut impactions are also a risk when feeding high proportions of straw in the diet particularly when there is poor access to plentiful fresh clean water. We should also consider vaccination against the most common calf scour pathogens to provide calves with maternal antibodies in the colostrum.



This table shows the effect of body condition score at calving on calving interval in suckler cows demonstrating its importance.

BCS at calving	Calving interval (days)
1-1.5	418
2	382
2.5-3	364

Source: Dreenan and Berry, 2006.

Bovigen is an effective vaccine protecting against Rotavirus, Coronavirus and Ecoli K99, 3ml given in the muscle 3-12 weeks pre calving.



Written by Millie Eaton,,
MRCVS BVSc



GET SET FOR SELLING IN DECEMBER

Due to a change in EU legislation, from 13th December 2023, all producers that are selling livestock for slaughter, and are not part of an assurance scheme (eg. Red Tractor) must have had an annual on-farm vet visit. *Kath Gray* explains.



The farm visit must result in a certificate/document called a Veterinary Attestation which allows animals, and/or part of an animal, to be eligible for export out of the UK. Previously, a farmer declaration has been enough to satisfy requirements for sale, however going forwards from 13th December 2023, producers require this Veterinary Attestation (VA).

The VA visit will be on-farm, and will include discussions about biosecurity policies, medicines usage, and health & welfare of the stock. The visit must verify the absence of notifiable diseases to satisfy EU requirements. Once completed, a document/certificate will be left on farm, which includes a unique Veterinary Attestation Number (VAN). The VAN is valid for one year and must be presented to livestock markets/slaughterhouses/buyers. If there is no evidence that a farm has regular vet visits i.e. the VAN, slaughterhouses will not be able to sign a Support Health Attestation (SHA), meaning the products cannot be exported to the EU.

When bringing stock to market/slaughter, the Food Chain Information (FCI) document will need to include either: a qualifying farm assurance scheme number, a Vet Attestation Number (VAN) or a VAN from an Animal Health and Welfare Review - AHWP (pathway visit).

The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway is a DEFRA funded grant, launched in 2023. Farmers are offered funding for an annual visit from their vet, to carry out diagnostic testing, to review biosecurity and use of medicines, and to provide bespoke advice on actions/available support to improve the health and welfare of their animals.

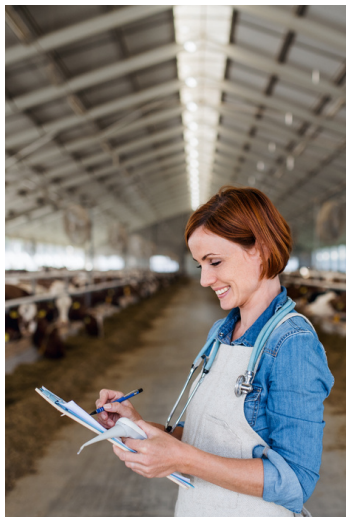
To be eligible for the grant, farmers must have a single business identifier (SBI) and county parish holding (CPH) number registered in England only, and one of the following:

- **11+ beef cattle**
- **11+ dairy cattle**
- **21+ sheep**
- **51+ pigs**

Continued...



What you need to know about Veterinary Attestations, Continued.



Funding is for each livestock type, not for each animal, and the following is available every 12 months:

- £522 for beef cattle reviews - bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) testing
- £372 for dairy cattle reviews - bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) testing
- £436 for sheep reviews - effectiveness of worming treatments testing
- £684 for pig reviews - porcine reproductive & respiratory syndrome (PRRS) testing.

Please note, currently you can only apply for one type of livestock but your resulting VAN will be eligible across all stock on that holding.

The funding covers the specific endemic disease testing, and contributes towards the costs of both farmer time and the vet's time. The vet will visit the farm, collect the necessary samples and discuss/advise on biosecurity, medicines usage, and the health & welfare of the livestock - e.g. lameness, body conditioning or mobility scoring. The vet will provide a written report after the review, including recommended follow-up actions and the test results from the laboratory. Once the vet has completed the review, you can claim your funding.

The AHWP visits can usually be done alongside other routine on-farm veterinary visits, and you will receive a VAN eligible for 12 months to be able to sell stock, with the added benefit of funded disease testing and health/welfare discussions with your vet.

Written by Kath
Gray BVMBVS
MRCVS.



Scan to register for an AHWP visit or visit defra.gov. Once you've got your agreement number please call

the practice to book in your pathway visit on 01765 602396

Discussion Groups are Back!

We've already held a number of fantastically attended discussion groups, covering subjects ranging from AI for Sheep, Lameness in Beef Herds, First Aid for Small Holders and Understanding the Animal Welfare Pathway. We've got plenty of events planned for the new year - keep an eye on our social media for upcoming talks and if you have any topics you would like covering, please do mention it to your vet.



Great Smeaton Young Farmer's Club visit to Sunley Raynes



On the last thursday evening in November, we were delighted to host Great Smeaton YFC, along with our sister company RAFT Solutions Ltd at their Sunley Raynes Farm base. It was incredibly well attended - with standing room only!

Neil Eastham introduced Bishopton and RAFT and explained how we are linked. The young farmers then split into three groups and travelled around different stations. Neil's covered 'a vet on the road' - what you would expect to find in a vet's car, what he encounters on farm, on call and participants were able to try out his calving simulator with scanner and screen.

Alex and Nicola had a station about advanced breeding - with a station set up with bull-fertiity testing equipment and a stand with our ovum-pickup, set up for collecting oocytes for IVF. They also covered RAFT's other breeding services like semen collection and embryo collection and had a tour around the SemenRate lab.

A fiercely competitive 'name that object' quiz ended the evening and everyone went home with a goody-bag. It was a fantastic evening and team members and young people alike enjoyed it. Remember to keep your eye out for other Bishopton events on social media.



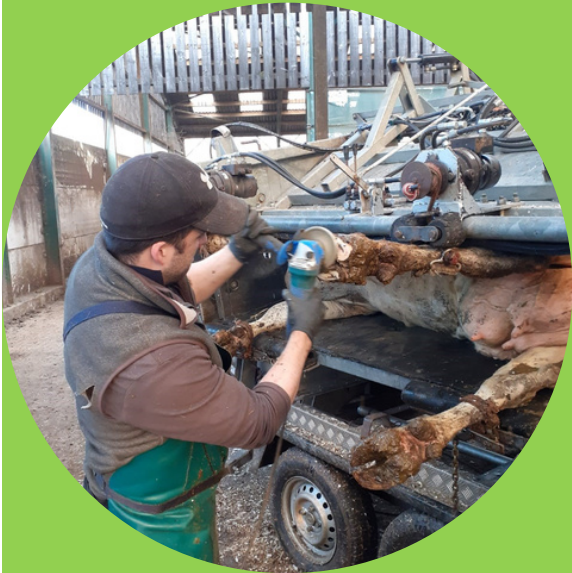
DIY AI Training

DEFRA Accredited 3-day practical course. Understand the legislation and the license rules and regulations. Identify the key parts of the reproductive anatomy of the cow. Understand the oestrous cycle and heat detection along with good flask and straw storage and management. Cleanly and safely carry out AI and thaw and handle semen correctly. Learn how to carry out the practical task of insemination.

18 - 20th December
29th - 31st January
28th February - 1st March
1st - 3rd March

£550
+VAT

Sunley Raynes, Ripon. Email training@bishoptonvets.co.uk to book



Foot Trimming Services

We can provide experienced foot trimmers with qualifications in foot trimming and lameness control. Our hydraulic squeeze crush provides a modern system which is safe and low stress for operator and cow.

Integration with discounted vet attention for persistent and aggressive forms of lameness.

To book a foot trimmer, call the Farm Desk on 01765 602396



Thursday 14th
December, 2023

Dairy Discussion Group

“The Utilisation and Impact of Robotics on Large Scale Dairying”

Join us for this fascinating discussion, led by speaker Ali Cook, (Nuffield Scholar and dairy farmer) and look at how robotics can be implemented in a number of settings within the large dairy environment. An excellent opportunity to learn how robotics can assist, and the impact on both returns and staff.



Venue to be confirmed.

Christmas drinks included!



DISCUSSION GROUP SPECIAL:

GOAT HUSBANDRY

Open to all goat keepers or those of you thinking about getting goats!



Thursday 7th
December 2023,
7pm



RAFT Solutions Ltd,
Sunley Raynes Farm,
Ripon, HG4 3AJ

Scan to book or
call the Farm
Desk on 01765
602396



billy

