

Case Study: Inducing Cows

These 2 lovely Charolais heifers had gone 7 and 11 days over their expected calving dates, and the farmer was concerned about them having difficulties calving. I went to examine the animals, and we weighed up the pros and cons of inducing the animals to calve.

Inducing cows is not always straight forward, but as you can probably tell from the pictures in this case both cows calved after being induced and produced live, healthy calves!

Both of these cows were AI'd so the predicted calving date was known to be accurate. It can be tricky when bulls have been running and there are no accurate calving dates. When we induce cows they often retain their cleansings, and there is a slightly increased risk of the calves being born dead. We use a steroid injection as well as a dose of prostaglandin to make this less likely. The steroid injection helps the calf's lungs to finish their development before they enter the outside world. The prostaglandin injection terminates the pregnancy.

We expect animals to calve within 36 hours of their injections but it can take longer and not all cows respond.

Anna Patch



February 2020 Edition

Farm Newsletter



Directors Focus

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Looking forward to Spring

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January is a really long month – short days, long nights, no money. Still it's over now and the hope has to be Spring is just around the corner – I have seen my first daffodils already – I hope they don't regret putting their heads up too early!

I'm told not to talk about the weather in the Director's piece, but it has been a pretty awful couple of months, wet and dank, and perfect if you're a pneumonia or mastitis bug. We've seen some nasty outbreaks on some farms – contact us if you need help, there

are several ways of reducing the risks even if the weather is exposing some of the weaknesses in the system.

To get ahead of the pneumonia curve you might want to attend a fantastic lunch and learn meeting in March on "Calf rearing" run by me! Colostrum, nutrition, housing and minimising disease will all be covered.

We've also got another mastering medicines course before this on 12th February, Spike can help you identify the best approaches to medicine usage, and comply

with Red Tractor requirements.

The first dairy show is this month – Dairy-Tech at Stoneleigh is on February 5th and we're taking a minibus load of you to this great event – we hope all of you who make the day have fun and can bring back some useful tips to help you in the Spring and year ahead.

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Office opening hours

Monday—Friday: 8am—5.30pm

Saturday: 8.30am –12pm

Emergency Service

We provide a 24 hour emergency service.

If you need assistance out of our normal working hours, please telephone

01749 341 761

If you would like to receive your farm account and this newsletter by email please advise the farm office.



Team News

We are delighted to announce that our Vet Tech Tom has passed his accreditation to become a Lay TB Tester.

Tom has been out training for the last 6 months with Lottie, and our other vets. In January he passed his final assessment to become our first Lay TB tester.

This is a fantastic achievement and will help us deliver your TB testing requirements, while helping our vets focus more on your clinical care.



Events & Training Courses

Mastering Medicines

12th February
1st April

DIY AI Course

2nd –5th March

Calf Rearing Lunch & Learn

18th March

Herdsperson Certificate

22nd –23rd April

DIY AI Course

22nd –25th June

Email: training@sheptonvets.com for more information or to book a space.

Dairy Herdsperson Certificate—2 Day Course

We held our first Dairy Herdsperson Certificate course back in October, with Spike, Paddy, Oliver, Anna and Charlie providing delegates with hands on training in best practice skills and top tips to implement on farm.

Our next date for this popular course will be 22nd & 23rd April. This intensive two day practical course is designed to provide essential skills for those working as a dairy herdsperson.

Perfect as a refresher or for those looking to develop their skills.

The course is split into 6 modules:

- Calving & Cow First Aid
- Fresh Cow Care
- Milking Routines & Mastitis
- Calf Rearing
- Fertility Management
- Hoof Care & Lameness

The course will cost £350 + vat per person, which includes: tuition, lunch, refreshments during the day, dinner on 22nd April, course notes & a CPD certificate.

Space is limited, so if you are interested in attending or for more details, contact Kate Hayes or email: training@sheptonvets.com

The TB Advisory Service

The funding for free to you tailored advice to reduce the risk and impact on TB, ends later this year.

If you haven't already taken up this service, don't miss out on getting personalized advice to help reduce the risk on your farm.

If you would like to book your free phone assessment or on farm visit, please contact to the office to make your appointment.

Funding for farm visits finishes this summer, so don't delay, give us a call today!

Vet Tech Udder Singeing Service

Our Vet Tech service can help you with udder singeing.

Udder singeing can help improve hygiene, help to speed up the milking process; and if you use robots it can improve their efficiency.

If you would like more details on the Vet Tech Support Service or to book an appointment please call the farm office team.

Farmer Focus: Robotic Milking

September 2019 saw Witham Hall Farm cease milking through their parlour, and start up their 2 DeLaval VMS 300 robots. Witham Hall Holsteins have always been a high yielding herd of cows, Hugh and Clare believe that the robots have allowed their cows to perform to their full potential. At the last milk recording cows averaged a staggering 41 litres (Butterfat 4.24%, protein 3.55%). This compares to 34 litres last January. The star of the herd has been a cow that peaked at 92 litres, and has been yielding over 90 litres since Boxing Day. Heifers have adapted especially well to the change, and are averaging 38 litres.



It was a tough decision Lely Vs DeLaval, but it was the farms close proximity to the dealership, and the camera assisted cluster attachment on the VMS 300 that gave the blue robots the edge. The robots were put into existing buildings, and cows cubicles

Team Shepton: Charlie Neale

My time spent outside work very much depends on the time of year; during Autumn and Winter this is mostly rugby-based. I am still playing for the mighty Castle Cary RFC (come down on a Saturday if you're at a loose-end), but having played 23 of the last 24 rugby seasons, signs of wear are starting to show and I'm finding myself as a spectator at Bristol Bears on a more regular basis – not the most popular team choice in a "BA" postcode or when working with Paddy, the avid Bath supporter. However, these rivalries can be temporarily forgotten with the Six Nations upon us and hope to see some of you in the pub over the next few weeks supporting England (or whoever is playing against Wales). Before then, I do think it prudent to give an update on the current Premiership standings:

are bedded with chopped straw. Hugh does his own feeding and focuses on making high quality grass silage, which is fed with ground maize and rape. Hugh and Clare describe the first few days as being tough, there was lots of cow pushing to do but things soon settled down. Bactoscans rose initially, but have now reduced to 10. The much reduced standing times, the quietness of the cows, and the fact that there have been just 2 cases of mastitis since September demonstrate the improvement in animal welfare. Cows can do what they want when they want, and the result is a very productive herd of cows!

We are hoping to have a farm walk in the summer months, where I am sure many of you would like to see the results for yourselves.

Anna Patch



Team	P	W	D	L	PD	B	Pts
1 Exeter	9	6	0	3	66	6	30
2 Northampton	9	6	0	3	48	5	29
3 Sale	9	5	0	4	80	6	26
4 Gloucester	9	4	0	5	24	7	23
5 Bristol	9	4	1	4	-3	4	22
6 Harlequins	9	4	1	4	-22	4	22
7 Bath	9	5	0	4	-17	1	21
8 Worcester	9	4	0	5	-83	2	18
9 Wasps	9	3	0	6	-57	6	18
10 London Irish	9	3	1	5	-64	3	17
11 Leicester	9	2	1	6	-66	2	12
12 Saracens	9	6	0	3	94	4	-7