

## Case Study:

I recently carried out a bedding bacterial analysis on a routine farm's sand bedding. The farm has had a slightly higher than target mastitis case rate for a while, and despite various management changes including parlour routine changes, identification/treatment/management of mastitic cows (repeat cases particularly) and checking parlour settings/function, little improvement had been seen. Sand was collected from the fresh bedding pile, and from a selection of cubicles in both cubicle houses.

AHDB carried out a large-scale bedding survey in 2015 with QMMS and from this we have ranges for what we would consider normal for used and unused bedding of all different varieties. Sand is inert bedding, in that on its own, it shouldn't be capable of growing much bacteria – the introduction of organic matter (generally faeces and milk) to the bedding however, will allow bacterial load to increase. Organic bedding such as straw and sawdust will increase in bacterial load without introduction of other organic matter, if conditions allow.

This sand came back with some interesting findings:

The fresh sand had a 'normal' total bacterial count (TBC) but grew *Pseudomonas* spp., which is indicative of coming in to contact with a contaminated water source and this could be a source of mastitis.

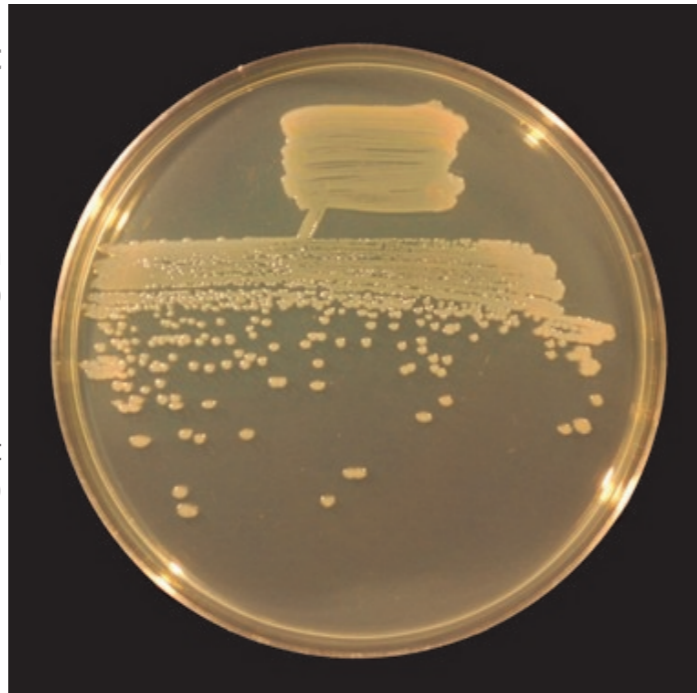
The used samples came back and moderate-high TBC for used sand bedding with various environmental bacteria cultures, some of which can cause mastitis.

These findings certainly gave some food for thought; is the fresh sand arriving contaminated or being contaminated on farm? Why is the current bedding in the cubicles soiled, and can other changes be made to prevent build-up of soiled sand at the backs of beds in future (sand type, raking, digging out etc.)?

These points have been actioned and we eagerly wait to see results, which may take a few months to become clear as is often the case with mastitis and SCC management.

Charlie Neale

Image: *Pseudomonas* culture



March 2020 Edition

# Farm Newsletter



## Directors Focus

“ With Spring just around the corner, it's a good time to take stock ”

Regular followers of this column will have read Charlie's piece on local rugby rivalry between Bath and Bristol spilling over into the practice. Charlie and Bristol have the bragging rights for this season, with Bristol shading it over the talent laden Bath side. Bristol's stout defence and successful conversion of their scoring chances showed that small margins are essential to achieve the required result.

To relate this to cows, as we hit the end of a very long winter, we are noticing the following issues. A seasonal rise in LDAs is being seen and this can reflect more

crowding in dry cows and the milking herd. Some cows struggle with cubicles, and lameness can increase at this time so prompt attention and a straw yard can be a cow saver for these vulnerable individuals. Calf infections build up too and so any opportunity to use a clean area, such as an empty silage clamp, can reduce the risk of calf scours. Fertility has been generally good but we are noticing bull performance can vary widely – take a look at how effective your bulls are. All these areas and many more can make the difference to performance; talk to your routine vet about any

concerns and we will use our wide experience to help you stay on track.

We are now also into lambing season and our small ruminant examination room is receiving regular use for lambings, prolapses and sick animals. Bringing an animal into the vets can ensure there is good light, hygiene and all kit necessary is available, as well as saving on visit fees.

We wish Anna (and Josh) well and trust she has everything ready as she approaches her own due date....

Paddy Gordon

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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.



## Booking Visits

As we approach the busy Spring season, please can we ask you to be mindful that your vet will normally have other visits booked in after your own.

If you have any additional requirements for your visit, please contact the office prior to your appointment to advise us of your extra needs.

The office team will try to accommodate your extra work, or may have to book you an additional visit; depending on how many visits are already booked in.

The more notice and information you can provide the office team, the less of a delay in the vets getting to your farm.

## Training Courses

Are you looking for hands on, practical training courses?

Our vets run a range of courses that offer best practice training to support you on farm. Some of our forthcoming courses include:

**Calf Rearing**— This bite-sized masterclass includes: Effective colostrum management, feeding & nutritional requirements. Weaning process, weight gain targets, housing systems and common diseases in calves.

**Herdsmen Certificate**— This intensive two day practical course is designed to provide essential skills; perfect as a refresher or for those looking to develop their skills to best practice level. This course is split into 6 modules:

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

**Cow First Aid**— This popular course covers: caring for a down cow, the correct way to lift a cow, how to assess limbs for breakages, using a stomach tube & giving oral fluids, how to give IV injections, blood sampling & prevention of down cows.

**MilkSure**—This course covers all the technical and practical aspects necessary to safeguard residue free milk.

Benefits of MilkSure training: having fewer costly milk residue failures, using medicines more efficiently and demonstrating to customers a clear commitment to producing pure, safe milk

For more information on any of our training courses contact the farm office on 01749 341761 or email: [training@sheptonvets.com](mailto:training@sheptonvets.com)

## Farmer Focus:

The end of February marked the deadline for MilkSure top-ups for many producers; these meetings gave us a chance to review overall usage, as well as other aspects of medicine handling. I saw a drop in usage across the board with my MilkSure herds, but one herd stood out in particular.

Naomi and Ryan Haygreen, who took on management of The Creech Hill Partnership in 2019 when Naomi's father made the decision to step back from management, have made excellent progress in herd performance generally, but particularly with regards to antibiotic usage. The 2019 Kingshay antibiotic benchmarking report had them positioned between the 1st and 2nd quartile for total usage

(higher than average use), at 25.9mg/kg.

Since Naomi and Ryan began running the dairy, they have made various steps to reduce overall usage of antibiotics which have included: fresh cow checks, refined treatment protocols and which antibiotics are used, improved footbathing and lameness management and overall environmental management, as well as the whole team attending our Mastering Medicines course.

The result of these changes is a drop in antibiotic usage to 9.4mg/kg, which would now place them between the 3rd and 4th quartile. This reduction will have a notable financial benefit, in both vet medicine spend reduction and increased saleable milk, as well as reduced labour for treatments.

Naomi and Ryan continue to look to improve antibiotic usage and overall herd health by identifying areas of weakness, ensuring adequate knowledge and training is provided for those responsible for herd health, and putting clear protocols in place to guarantee that the necessary steps for improvement are taken and outcomes can be monitored.

Succession can be a testing time for both the generation stepping down and the generation stepping up, but Naomi and Ryan have hit the ground running, and will no doubt build on their successes to keep the farm running well in to the future (or until Zara, pictured, looks to take over from Naomi and Ryan!).

Charlie Neale



## Events & Training Courses

### Mastering Medicines

1st April  
3rd July

### Calf Rearing Lunch & Learn

18th March

### Herdsperson Certificate

22nd –23rd April

### Cow First Aid 'Lunch & Learn'

6th May

### MilkSure Part 1

3rd June

### DIY AI Course

22nd –25th June

Email: [training@sheptonvets.com](mailto:training@sheptonvets.com) for more information or to book a space.

## Pharmacy Update:

### Availability of Lactating Cow Intramammary Antibiotics

**There are currently a number of intramammary antibiotic supply issues.**

The situation for those currently supplied by the practice is as follows:

Product	Anticipated resolution date
<b>Tetra-delta</b>	May/June 2020
<b>Ubro yellow</b>	Product discontinued – no return date
<b>Multiject IMM</b>	May 2020

Ubrolexin supplies are adequate and we are also looking to other alternative medicines in the face of current supply issues.

Should you wish to discuss use of intramammary tube usage please contact Charlie or Oliver at the practice.

## Team Shepton: Anna Hares

I bought these 2 Longhorn heifers from a client last May and both are now in calf. Bonnie seen here on the left held to her 1st service and is due in June, and Beatrice on the right is due in August (she wasn't quite so fertile and it took 3 serves until she held).

I have also gained some condition since this photo was taken last summer, as Josh and I are expecting a baby at the end of the month. I am going off on maternity leave shortly, but don't plan on being away from you all for too long!

