

## Case Study: E. coli and Post Mortems

I recently had a call to go and see a sick scouring calf, according to the farmer he was very ill and would likely need fluids. When I arrived there was the calf flat out in the pen with a yellow scour coming out, he was puffing hard and was obviously extremely sick. I checked him over quickly and assessed that he was very dehydrated and would need IV fluids although his prognosis was grave. Sadly, before I even managed to place an IV line the calf died and although disappointing this provided an excellent opportunity for a post-mortem examination (PME): and to hopefully find out why he and others have recently been struggling.

PMs are best performed as close to when the animal died as possible in order to better identify what is disease and what is natural change and decomposition after death. They can easily be done on farm and are not just a great way of finding out what was wrong but learning what normal looks like from the inside and understanding the healthy animal better.

In the case of this calf the most obvious problems were in it's intestines likely due to E. coli although some early pneumonia was evident in it's lungs and lesions in it's heart. All these changes are consistent with an E. coli septicaemia and so this was assumed to be the cause of death here.

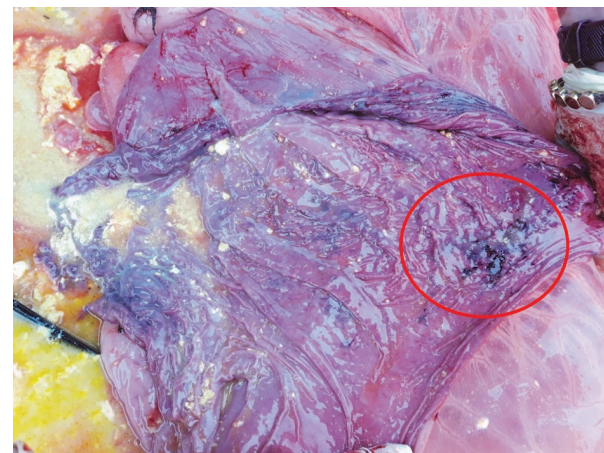
If you are interested in having a PME done on anything that's died we can either come to the farm to do it or alternatively if they're small you can bring them into the practice where we can perform the PM and arrange disposal of the carcass on your behalf. Please contact the practice if you would like to do so.

Flo Page

Picture 1.  
The heart



Picture 2. Inside of abomasum. The circle shows an area of ulceration/ erosion.



March 2019 Edition

# Farm Newsletter



## Directors Focus “Congratulations to Spike on being Highly Commended in the category Dairy Vet of the Year at The Cream Awards”

Dairy Tech was an enjoyable and stimulating day out, attended by lots of farmers and the stands were many and varied.

It was great to hear discussions about Februdairy and how the dairy sector is looking to present itself. We can all help to promote how nutritious milk is, and the effort and high standards that go into producing it.

It was great to celebrate those recognised for doing a great job – congratulations to the team at

Stowell Farm, shortlisted in the RABDF Gold Cup; and to Andy Smith on receiving a Farm health Management Award.

Congratulations too to Spike, on being Highly Commended as Dairy vet of the Year at the Cream Awards.

The Show had plenty of new systems for heat detection and health monitoring; it is difficult to wade through the sales blurb and work out which is best at present. However early experience is that they do give an extra pair of eyes and ears to

the farm and will help in fertility and early identification of disease.

If that sounds like too big an investment then we are running courses this Spring and Summer on Cow First Aid: Fresh Cow Checks: and Mastering Medicines, all aimed at helping you and your staff have the skills to make the correct decisions with any sick animal. Talk to any of our vets for more details.

Paddy Gordon

### Shepton Veterinary Group Ltd

Allyn Saxon Drive

Shepton Mallet

Somerset

BA4 5QH

Tel: 01749 341 761

Email: [farm.animal@sheptonvets.com](mailto:farm.animal@sheptonvets.com)

[www.sheptonvets.com](http://www.sheptonvets.com)

### 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.





## Community Focus

### Shepton Team Running the Bath Half Marathon for Send a Cow

We have a team of four runners taking part in the Bath Half Marathon on the 17th March.

Anna and Paddy are representing the large animal team and Lynn and Louisa are running for the small animal department.

The team are once again fundraising for the charity Send a Cow.

If you would like support their fundraising efforts you can donate at the practice or online

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/paddy-gordon>

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/annahares>

## TBAS TB Advisory Service



We are able to offer our clients FREE TB advice under this DEFRA funded scheme.

Alex, Rob or Ralph are our TBAS trained specialist advisors who can provide a one-to-one farm advice visit with specific recommendations based on your situation.

This can include, for example, recommendations to prevent TB incursions on holdings which are currently clear or trading options and measures to prevent repeated reinfection for farms currently under TB restriction.

At the farm visit the vet will

ask you about your current farm set up, any concerns or issues you currently have, and will then walk your buildings and fields to gain a better understanding of your situation.

Following the visit you will receive a bespoke report including practical things you can do to reduce the TB risk on your farm.

If you would like further information or to sign up to this free service please contact the Farm Office at the practice.



## Tolracol® and Coccidiosis

Coccidiosis is a highly infectious protozoan parasitic infection of the intestinal lining in cattle and sheep which can destroy large amounts of the lining. The disease is most commonly seen in young stock of around 3 – 12 weeks of age, usually as inappetence, scouring and weight loss. Critically, the most common type of coccidiosis is the economically important subclinical form where there are no obvious clinical symptoms to see but causes appetite loss, significantly reduced feed conversion rates and eventually lead to 'poor doers'.

The parasite's oocysts (eggs) are passed out in faeces contaminating the environment and are able to survive for more than 12 months. Susceptible young stock then pick up the oocysts and within 2-3 weeks are

shedding more. Given the right conditions, such as a high stocking density with a new crop of lambs or calves, concurrent disease, or mixing groups, this multiplication of oocysts can be truly explosive, spreading the disease rapidly within the group.

Treatment: as well as essential management measures to help reduce exposure of stock to contaminated areas, there are oral treatments available and the practice now stocks Tolracol© (toltrazuril). The timing of treatment administration is critical, so if you suspect you may be seeing signs of the disease, or have had it in previous years, please discuss coccidiosis diagnosis and control with our vets as soon as possible.

Oliver Tilling

## Farmer Focus: Partnering with Velcourt

In June 2018 Martin Hoddinott decided to contact Velcourt, a farm business management company to see what a future working with them may entail. This was not a decision taken lightly but a combination of factors including a father with retirement looming, increasing bureaucracy around contracts and government policy, not having direct descendants ready to take over and a general dislike for being stuck in an office encouraging Martin to make the call.

The next step was for the Velcourt Livestock Director to come and have a look round the farm and ascertain what Martin would want out of a future partnership. He explained he would like a role within the business where he could enjoy the job without the hassles of farm management; an index linked income for himself and his father; to have access to the greater buying power that being part of a larger organisation would provide, but most importantly a fresh dynamic approach to push the business forward and future proof it in uncertain times.

The Hoddinott family was keen to proceed down this road. They had considered selling the cows and diversifying as well as share farming but the prospect of unknown business partners didn't suit this family farm. Over the Summer Velcourt introduced Marcus Doig the future farm manager to Martin and family. Marcus was coming from Bristol

University's farm in North Somerset and so wasn't too much of a stranger to the area or tough challenges! A 3-year plan was drawn up between all parties which outlined the budgets as well as the future of reducing corn and beef sales and driving up milk yields. Most of the farm's own machinery was sold and replaced with 2 tractors, a telehandler and mixer wagon on full repairing contract hire (this is a reduction from 8 tractors and an assortment of kit). The income from these sales will contribute to the expansion plan over the next couple of years including building work and increasing herd size.

This partnership seems a good one, the "young bright dynamic" farm manager Velcourt promised has settled in and enjoys working with an equally young, enthusiastic and progressive team with big hopes for the future. Martin's verdict; "so far - no regrets".

Flo Page

Image: Marcus and Martin



## “Team Shepton: Kate Sadler

I've been back at work after having the twins since November and I'm enjoying getting out and about and seeing everyone again. It's good to get back to doing some vet work and I even get to enjoy hot drinks in peace!

At home, chasing after Xander on his bike or Wilf and Aeneas who now run in opposite directions, certainly keeps me entertained!

Just to make sure I'm kept busy we also have 2 dogs, 1 cat and 23 sheep. My ewes are mostly Ryelands which are fairly low maintenance lowland sheep with good feet and lots of wool. They will be lambing in April this year to a Texel tup. I'm looking forward to having lambs bouncing around the fields again. In January I became the proud owner of 2 Herdwick rams. I have liked Herdwicks since I first visited the Lake District which is their natural home. So far they are proving very friendly and cheeky and much better at escaping than the Ryelands!



”

## Events & Training Calendar

**Cow First Aid**  
13th March

**DIY AI Course—Somerset**  
1st – 4th April

**Mastering Medicines**  
3rd April

**Advanced Hoof Trimming**  
29th April

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