

Case Study: A New Zealand diary farm

One of the farms I dealt with in New Zealand milked 3000 cows over 2 sites with 80 bail rotary parlours, so as you can imagine all of them, plus the heifers, calving in the space of a roughly 10 week period was intense.

Unfortunately for both myself, and the farmer, he had decided to put Hereford bulls on his heifers, which one weekend resulted in 9 calving call outs in one day! Safe to say I became very well known on the farm, and I would show up to buckets of water, towels, chains and a head rope all lined up next to the prepared cow. The cows close to calving were in a paddock directly next to the parlour, but because at the peak of calving there were a lot of cows in that field, sometimes the wrong cow was picked out, meaning that you got the delight of a cow that had been milked for a few days with a calf still inside of her who had been missed. A misfortune of working with such high numbers on that time scale.



Not all farms in New Zealand check the cows after calving, but on this farm we did and the farmer Andrew had decided that he was going to get in a lay scanner at the same time to look at the ovaries of the

cows we were checking. Greg, the lay scanner, would check the uterus and ovaries first, then Bella the vet tech would check for discharge using a metrichecker, and I would then wash out any cows

that needed treating.

It was interesting to see how accurate the metrichecker was compared to what was seen on the scanner, considering it takes a relatively small sample of vaginal discharge.

Then when it came onto getting the cows back into calf it was quite possibly the most efficient colour coded and dated system I have ever seen. Obviously the importance of getting everything in calf again quickly and to calve over a roughly 10 week period is no mean feat. Cows were coloured according to when they calved and whether a heat had been detected. Then it was decided whether they would go on a double PG protocol or a CIDR protocol, again these would then be a different colour. I have never in my life put so many CIDRs in and out of cows. AI technicians are then drafted in and serve hundreds of cows on the same day and they are then coloured a different colour. The system seemed so complicated but so efficient and quite obviously works.

Nicole Baldry



August 2019 Edition

Farm Newsletter



Directors Focus

“ Come and say hello to the team at The Mid-Somerset Show ”

This months brings with it mixed emotions. One is the feeling proud to be a part of the agricultural industry when visiting the many agricultural shows over the Summer as they showcase farming and food. The other is the great sadness which has arisen from the many losses of life on farm through accidents that have occurred this year.

Ali and I were able to visit the Royal Highland Show this year. We were so impressed with the scale of the show and some of the different exhibits and attractions seen such as the mass parade of the Clydesdale

Horses, a food tent of immense proportions and Scottish country dancing. We were also surprised by the number of Somerset farmers in attendance some even for a day in view of the ease of the Easyjet flight service from Bristol to Edinburgh. We had been a little more unconventional (and greener!) and taken the train from Bristol to Edinburgh.

After every farm tragedy there is a great deal of sadness. We are all thinking of the family and friends of those that have lost their lives in farm accidents this year and in previous years. The

loss numbers a staggering 33 this year. We are joining forces with other agricultural organisations to bring to you a farm safety event to support efforts in trying to reduce this continuing loss of life and serious injury on farm.

My final thoughts are of our next local event, the Mid-Somerset Show. The show continues to grow and command a reputation of one of the best local one day shows.

Come and say hello to the team at our stand by the main show ring on Sunday 18th August.

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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.



Other news

Road Closure 27th—29th August

Please be aware that Charlton Road will be closed for 3 days for road works from 27th August 7.30am – 5.30pm.

We have contacted Somerset Highways agency regarding this issue. They have assured us that we can still have access to the practice; but we will have to request this at the entrance points (by the traffic lights or down by the road to the prison).

There may be a delay in getting in or out or you might be diverted to the other entrance, depending on where the works are at the time.

During this time we are offering a special charge for medicine deliveries at half price (only £2.50) or if you would like, we can arrange to have your medicines sent to our practice in Wells for collection.

Please allow yourself extra time and be patient if you are travelling to the practice during these works.

Events & Training Calendar

Mid-Somerset Show
18th August

Hoof Trimming & Lameness
Beginner 2nd September

DIY AI Course—Somerset
16th –19th September

Hoof Trimming & Lameness
Advanced 30th September

Dairy Herdperson Certificate
7th & 8th October

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

APHA Brucella Pilot

Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) are piloting arrangements to simplify the reporting of bovine abortions. It is a legal requirement for anyone in charge of bovine animals to report any abortion or premature calving, within 24 hours of believing it to have occurred, whether the calf is dead or alive. Abortion or premature calving is defined as occurring less than 271 days after service or less than 265 after implantation for embryo transfer.

Brucellosis is a serious disease of cattle that causes abortion in late pregnancy, premature calvings, abortion storms and high levels of infertility. It also causes disease in people. The UK is Officially Free of Brucellosis but there is a continued risk to the cattle population. APHA carries out ongoing surveillance to look for any incidence of the disease and an important component of this surveillance is the investigation of bovine abortions.

In 2004, Brucellosis in a cattle herd in the South West of England was promptly identified following the investigation of an abortion in the herd. This enabled rapid action to be taken to eradicate the disease from the affected farm and prevent spread to other cattle holdings.

This is why it is both important and a legal requirement to notify APHA of all bovine abortions or premature calvings in your herd.

Sampling is required for all beef cattle and for dairy cattle in certain circumstances.

To simplify the reporting process Shepton Vets will now be able to take the notifications of abortions from our clients, and will let you know whether further investigation is required. Please call the office to report any abortions.

Dairy Herdperson Certificate 7th & 8th October

This October we are running our 1st Dairy Herdperson Certificate course. This intensive two day practical course is designed to provide essential skills for those working as a dairy herdperson.

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

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 7th October, course notes & a CPD certificate.

For full details or to book, contact Kate Hayes or email: training@sheptonvets.com

Countryside Productivity Small Grant Scheme:

The RDPE Countryside Productivity Small Grant (CPSG) scheme provides funding for farmers to purchase equipment to improve the productivity of their farm., and is targeted at supporting investment for specific pieces of agricultural equipment.

Farmers can apply for funding towards specific items of equipment listed at Annex 3 of the Countryside Productivity Small Grants scheme Round 2 handbook.

All the items have been identified following consultation with industry groups and suppliers as helping achieve improvements in either:

- technical efficiency
- animal health and welfare
- resource efficiency, or

Preparing for autumn

As the summer seems to be speeding by, now is a good time to start planning for autumn calving. We often see an increase in calf pneumonia and scour issues as we move into autumn as well as IBR in adults, particularly heifers calving into the herd for the first time.

Many of these problems can be avoided by planning ahead to get vaccination programmes in place before the high risk period, and remembering to find time to make adjustments to calf housing to optimize ventilation and enable easy management through the winter period.

- nutrient management

The Countryside Productivity Small Grant scheme Round 2 closes midday on 3rd September 2019.

Please remember to check your details on the Rural Payments service before you apply for this grant. You must make sure they exactly match with the details in your application form, or your application will be rejected.

Go online for full details:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-productivity-scheme#round-2>



Our vet technicians can take the stress out of calf vaccines by keeping track of which animals need vaccinating and visiting every week or two to carry out the vaccines for you.

Speak to your vet about what preventative programmes might be suitable for you, and whether our Vet techs could help you with your youngstock programme.

Team Shepton: Bibby Thomas

Last time I wrote a staff focus, I was just about to get a puppy. Piggy the Poodle is now two years old. We've starting going to dog agility training classes; we're hoping to be up to standard for Crufts 2020!!! Training is going well; I've just got to get her to master the seesaw.

Many of you will know that I've been busy decorating my house. The inside, thankfully is now completed and I've moved onto the garden. I'm trying to create a space that would make Monty Donn proud. At the moment we've still got a little work to do, unfortunately most of my plants are looking a little sickly; this is probably not helped by an accident with some roundup! At the practice I'm continuing to work on my interest in Small Ruminants, we will be hosting more flock health meetings. Keep an eye out for the next date.

