

Case Study: New Technology – Cow Manager

One of our farms has been using Cow Manager ear tags for the last 12 months – ‘fitbits’ for cows.

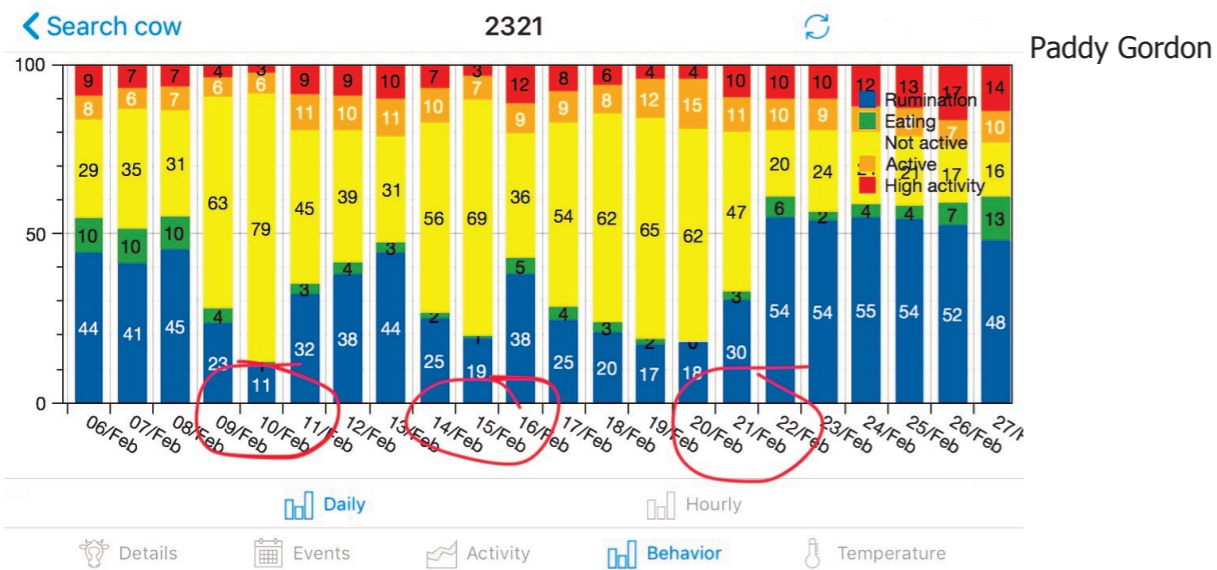
Nik Pole is now also installing the system. Activity monitoring systems have really progressed in the last few years and a number of types are available. They are great for early detection of health problems now, as well as heat detection. The attached picture from the farm shows cudding in blue and the drop in cudding occurs at calving (10 Feb), and again when the cow was first sick (14 Feb). Improvement is seen in cudding but only for one day. The cow then gets worse but makes a full recovery when treated for an LDA (20 Feb) as cudding from then on is on target.

The tags are proving helpful in identifying sick cows but also recovery too....everyone can see when cows were first sick and so are a great way to assess how quickly sick cows are identified. They will also show how well cows recover from

treatment and this keeps an eye on how effective vet treatments are too. Early identification of disease helps recovery, as animals are treated before complications develop. For example, viruses cause most pneumonia but we treat the secondary bacterial infection that the viruses allow in.

If we treat early during the viral phase with anti-inflammatories, we may be able to avoid antibiotic use. Cows with digestive upsets can be treated with supportive fluids and stomach powders, before any LDA develops.

The Cow Manager system has a nutrition analysis tool that monitors changes in feeding patterns so can be useful at a herd level. Some other devices claim they are effective in lameness detection, and one system can be used to identify cow location within the cow shed. It is highly likely we will see more of these systems in use.



November 2019 Edition

Farm Newsletter



Directors Focus “ Congratulations to Chris Dunn winner of our ‘Farm Team of the Year’ ”

The cows are in and most of you have got your silage pits full of maize by now. With another harvest complete it's a case of heads down and buckling up for another winter! For the farm vets at Shepton that means less sick cow work – as a result of greater control over cow management, but the inevitable increase in TB testing. We also work particularly hard with our autumn calving herds at this time, with the focus on getting those cows ready for service and then the all important fertility sessions to ensure they're on track to calve in a tight block

next year.

In the October newsletter I talked about pneumonia season in calves being upon us – and we've certainly encountered a few outbreaks already. However, we're also seeing a number of adult cattle affected. This could be due to a number of reasons. Housing is stressful and inclement weather conditions precipitate the “bug pressure”, but I often think the individuals affected may well have been those that got pneumonia as calves. These cows already have compromised lung function

putting them more at risk. If there are a number of cases on a farm though, I start to worry about IBR. Then it's time to dig a little deeper with investigations, as well as ensuring vaccination is all up to date. Cows aren't the only ones that suffer around this time and a few members of staff at Shepton vets have started with colds – I always think the best place for me in these circumstances is outside avoiding the “bug pressure” in the practice. I hope you all manage to stay well this winter too!

Oliver Tilling

Shepton Veterinary Group Ltd

Allyn Saxon Drive

Shepton Mallet

Somerset

BA4 5QH

Tel: 01749 341 761

Email: farm.animal@sheptonvets.com

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.



Farm of the Year Comp

Congratulations to the winner of this year's 'Farm Team of the Year competition' - Chris Dunn!

This year's focus was on farms that have worked as a team to make significant improvements in performance for health, fertility and production.

Chris was nominated for his successes in herd fertility, with an average pregnancy rate of 27% has been achieved by paying particular attention to bulling cows with the use of Estroprotects and regular observation as soon as cows are 42 days calved.

This also improved submission rates to 66%. Having healthy cows on a consistent diet means conception rates achieved are 51%.

Congratulations to all farms that were nominated for this year's award.



Christmas Supper—25th November

Tis nearly the season for joy and merriment, so it must be time to celebrate with the team.

Join us for our Christmas social this on 25th November at Castle Cary Rugby Club at 7.30pm.

Come along for a chat with the team and fellow farmers over a mince pie or two, buffet supper and a pint!

So we can cater for the correct numbers, please RSVP by 20th November to the office or email: training@sheptonvets.com



Events & Training Courses

Smallholder Meeting Poultry Husbandry

20th November

Mastering Medicines

11th December

Farm Health & Safety Event

17th January

Mastering Medicines

20th January 2020

5th February

Foot Trimming

17th February

DIY AI Course

2nd –5th March

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

Finadyne - now back in stock!

- This flunixin containing product is now back on the market after all flunixin products were removed from sale last year. This was due to concerns around the diluent GEA that was contained within them, and its potential carcinogenic effects in humans.
- Finadyne now has no GEA in it, so no known carcinogenic risks
- It's important to use this medicine in the correct way and for the correct cases:
 - * It is a pain killer with anti-inflammatory, anti-toxic effects, and can lower the temperature of animals with a fever
 - * Intravenous route only (otherwise minimum withdrawal periods of 7 days milk, 28 days meat)
 - * Can be used every 24 hours for up to 5 days
 - * Standard withdrawals: 24 hours milk, 5 days meat
 - * Use for "toxic cows" i.e. toxic E.coli mastitis, toxic metritis etc.

Farmer Focus: Nik Pole

Nik Pole runs a housed herd of 440 Holsteins giving up to 38 litres milk per cow per day. One key aspect of farm management is the transition group. Less than 1% incidence of LDAs are seen, and I think in large part this is down to a low stress environment - the group is understocked with good feed access and comfortable deep bedded sand cubicles. The second key aspect is feeding a well chopped straw based ration, giving low energy and high fibre. After calving, cows are straw yarded for two weeks to ensure they have good health and intakes before integrating into the herd. This sets up the cows really well for the lactation ahead, and also contributes to good fertility later on too.

Nothing always goes to plan and so there was a brief flare-up of LDAs early in 2019. This was found to be due to heifers moving back to the dairy too late - within 3 weeks of calving. This shows the importance of ensuring animals are settled before calving, and disease risk is not just about the diet. There are always likely to be some problem individuals in any herd. On this farm fat cows are identified at drying off and given a Kexxtone bolus 3 weeks before calving. This reduces the risk of ketosis and LDAs after calving. When the boluses are targeted well we expect a milk yield gain from treated cows, which more than offsets the treatment costs.

Following a period of uncertainty the Pole family are now investing in the dairy, and this will see installation of Cow Manager ear tags - see below for more information. Nik is also having VES cyclone fans fitted in his cow sheds. The farm uses green bedding or recycled manure solids. This is giving good cow comfort and clean cows, but needs careful management to reduce mastitis risk. Green bedding is associated with a higher bacterial load than other bedding but low rates of mastitis are achievable when kept dry. Green bedding tends to soak up moisture and of the aim of the fans is to reduce humidity on still days, avoiding beds becoming damp.

Paddy Gordon



Team Shepton: Ellie Beazer –Dimond

Hopefully I've met most of you by now, but for anyone who hasn't met me yet my name is Ellie and I'm a relative newbie to the Shepton Vets Team, having joined the farm side this summer.

Anyone who knows me knows that I am absolutely atrocious at sitting still, and resultantly spend most of my spare time away from the practice running around (literally).

I caught the running bug from one of my closest friends whilst at university, and haven't wanted to stop since. My proudest achievement to date was this spring when I completed my first marathon in Paris. The Bath Half is next on my bucket list, so watch this space for more running related antics...

