



GREAT PROGRESS AND ALWAYS STRIVING FOR BETTER

I have been struck by the improvements achieved in mobility scores over the past 10 years reported by Rosie in last month's Pilton meeting, with scores improving from 76% to 92% score 0 and 1 cows. Other sources show that total volume of antibiotic used on dairy farms has halved over the past 8 years or so. This is really impressive progress, and is an indication of the level of positive improvements made on farms by you.

We are not resting on our laurels however and are currently involved in several initiatives.

I am talking to Barbers suppliers about antibiotics best practice and selective dry cow therapy, with selective DCT an opportunity to further reduce antibiotic use on most farms. However it is really important to follow guidelines on selection and technique. For those unable to make this meeting Anna Hares is running a 'lunch and learn' session on selective DCT on 4th May.

Charlie and I are carrying out a pilot study on a holding injection for repeat breeder cows. This was in use 20 years ago with limited success, but this is a new approach with

impressive early results. We will establish if it has potential as it would be great to reduce the risk of barren cows.

I am talking to a Dutch farming organisation about benefits and risk of pairing calves from birth as they look to achieve UK welfare standards.

Later in the summer I will be talking at the National Youngstock Conference on trace element challenges. We hope that some of you will be able to join us at this one day conference.

And of course, most of you are now eligible to register for a fully-funded Vet visit. As part of these visits, we will do some endemic disease testing leaving the rest of the visit to discuss any animal health, welfare, medicine or biosecurity related topic. Contact Charlotte in the office for some examples of what the visits can be used for.

There is certainly no standing still for any of us at Shepton!

/ Paddy

HAVE YOU BOOKED YOUR FULLY-FUNDED VET VISIT?



FULLY-FUNDED ANNUAL HEALTH & WELFARE REVIEWS NOW AVAILABLE

Are you a BPS registered livestock farm? If the answer is YES, then the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Annual Review is now OPEN for you.

This fully-funded vet visit will deliver bespoke health and welfare advice as well as some endemic disease testing.

Contact the office for more information about what topics our vets have been delivering for beef, sheep and dairy clients as well as further information on how to register.

SELECTIVE DRY COW THERAPY: ARE YOU WHERE YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE?

Some of the herds that I work with have lost faith in selective dry cow therapy (SDCT) in recent years. You may have seen mastitis after drying off with the loss of a cow or an increase in your herd's bulk cell count. For others, there is a lack of skilled staff able to dry cows off properly meaning they are not doing as much SDCT as they would like to be.

There are also a proportion of herds that would benefit from giving more cows antibiotic at dry off to help manage cell counts.

When it comes to antibiotic dry cow tubes, unlike teat sealant, we know that not all cows need them. In low cell count herds, giving antibiotics to low cell count cows increases the chances of e- coli mastitis in the next lactation due to the removal of "friendly", commensal bacteria in the udder.

Conversely, for the cows that do have a sub clinical infection in their udder, the dry period is the best time to cure these infections – these cows should have an antibiotic tube.



The percentage of cows within a herd that are suitable for SDCT will depend on the herd's bulk cell count, individual cow cell counts (and having access to this information!) and the dry cow facilities available throughout the year.

When things go wrong after drying cows off with just teat sealant, they can go badly wrong. Attending to cows with mastitis after drying off is often unrewarding, especially when the cow is down. We can give Intravenous flunixin, antibiotics, fluids and oral fluid - some cows can be nursed through but unfortunately many of these cows die.

Regardless of which treatments are being given it is important to be as sterile as possible when administering dry cow therapy if we are to avoid the scenario described above.

I hope by reading this I haven't put you off SDCT - instead hopefully you are now considering whether you are taking all the precautions you can when drying cows off to minimise the chance of the above. Where and when are you drying your cows off? Are you using surgical spirit and cotton wool? What order to you clean and then dry the teats off in?

If you or a member of your team would like a refresher on best practice, then come along to our Selective Dry Cow Therapy meeting in May - details on page 3.

It is also a good idea to review dry period performance using milk recording data. There are several metrics easily accessible through Herd Companion – we are always happy to look at these with you.

/ Anna Hares



THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPLEMENTING BIOSECURITY MEASURES ON YOUR FARM

Preventing the introduction and spread of disease is key to minimizing losses on your farm and helping to control or even eliminate infectious diseases.

Biosecurity describes the measures that are taken to prevent the introduction of a disease into a population (your herd or flock), and biocontainment describes the measures taken to prevent or minimize the spread of an already-present disease agent within a population.

If you look at the diagram below, you can see different ways diseases can be introduced to and spread within a farm, as well as to other farms.

Disease agents can be introduced to a farm from an outside source. These sources include bought-in animals, visitors to farms, hired equipment, vehicles, etc.

Examples of ways to prevent disease introduction to your farm include maintaining a closed flock or herd, quarantining, and testing any incoming stock, purchasing only from farms with known disease status, having farm-supplied protective clothing (wellies and waterproofs or coveralls) for visitors, and having a designated parking area for visitors near the entrance to the farm and away from any stock (especially youngstock).

Once introduced to a farm, disease can also be spread within the farm between individual animals and groups. For example, many diseases such as Johnes, are transferred from adult cattle to youngstock.

Ways of preventing disease spread within your farm include good environmental and equipment hygiene practices, maintaining a standard work flow starting from the most susceptible animals (neonatal calves) and ending with the highest risk animals (sick cows), testing and identifying any affected animals, vaccinating, isolation of affected animals, good colostrum management with calves, etc.

Preventing spread of diseases to humans is also very important, as many diseases found within animal populations are considered zoonotic and can also affect people. Identification and management to reduce risk is essential.

In addition, some diseases can affect the environment in and surrounding the farm, creating a risk for spread in wildlife and reservoir for maintaining and spreading disease (ie. water supplies, wildlife population, sheds, etc.).

Finally, preventing the spread of disease to other farms is very important to slow and halt the spread of disease agents within an area.



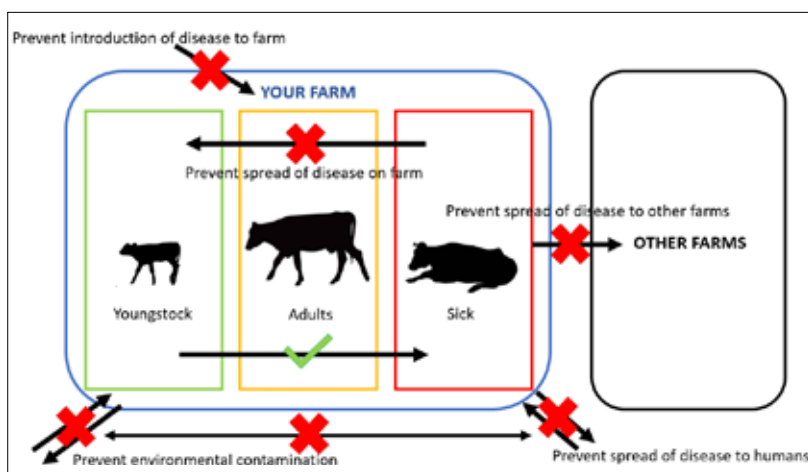
Many diseases that have been eradicated in countries have relied not only on good biosecurity within a farm, but also reduced spread to other holdings. This biosecurity measure is both directly beneficial to your fellow farmers, but if others take care to implement these measures it is directly beneficial to your farm as well.

Examples of how you can do this include testing and determining of disease status of animals on your farm, maintain good fencing with adequate distance between your animals and those on neighbouring farms, appropriate slurry storage and spreading practices, cleaning and disinfecting any borrowed equipment, etc.

I would encourage anyone to sit down and chart out a cost-benefit analysis for implementing additional biosecurity measures on farm. Begin with simple, cost-effective measures such as education of farm staff, implementation of a standardized daily workflow on farm, and provision of farm-supplied protective clothing to visitors.

Remember, no biosecurity measure is too costly, as long it is useful and effective!

/ Emily



FLY CONTROL OPTIONS

We have a range of fly control options available to you this year:

Parasitic wasps – these wasps parasitise fly eggs and are most effective at keeping numbers down, rather than dealing with large numbers of eggs when they are there, therefore it is preventative and best used right from the start of the season. They come in (smaller than previous) packs capable of treating an area associated with 50 cows. These are applied monthly by our Techs and work out about 1.5p per cow per day.

Parasitic mites – these mites also parasitise fly eggs, but are much more vigorous in terms of short term impact, although they are less long-lived. Therefore these are applied in the face of large fly numbers and are used August/Septembers if/when

fly numbers become excessive. A pack treats 250m³, so this will do an average calf shed, half an average collecting yard or a reasonable area of cubicle/straw housing (but this is determined by tech assessment).

Fly boards – these bait adult flies and they die. The boards need to be placed in dry areas where flies are landing.

Fly buckets – this is a new product, with the same general idea as the boards, except flies die inside the bucket. The advantage to these is that they can be hung in areas that can potentially get wet, and the dead flies are contained.

Fly Pour - this treatment is most effective if it goes on early, before flies have the chance to breed.

Give us a call for more information and prices on our fly control options.





TB OR NOT TB?

I've been thinking about my TBAS sett surveys, and - after a conversation with a client following a slaughterhouse case - thought this short Q&A might be helpful.

I want to turn my cattle out. What can I do to reduce the risk of them getting TB?

If your grazing land is bounded by mature hedgerows or copses, erect a single strand electric fence 1m inside the boundaries to stop your animals foraging along the field

edges, as there may be setts and latrines present, especially during periods of prolonged dry weather.

Don't feed youngstock on the ground or in troughs on the ground. If you have to feed concentrates, use raised troughs with or without rollers. Don't leave mineral licks on the ground.

What is a high-risk cow?

TB and Johne's Disease are caused by similar bacteria. You will know that once a cow has been identified with a raised result for Johne's that she is on a one way ticket to showing a positive result sooner or later.

It is a similar story with TB and although the skin test involves the comparison of the top (avian) reaction with the lower (bovine) one, the present consensus is that the presence of a bovine reaction indicates exposure to infection.

Young cattle generally have few, if any, bottom (bovine) reactions whilst 25-30% of cows in some herds can have them. These herds could have an undetected TB problem.

How can you identify a high-risk cow?

Like Johne's, the bovine reactions can fluctuate in size or not be present at every

test. With TB, your herd's records for the last 10 years can be accessed online and the results for individual cows can be checked.

If a cow is found to have bovine reactions at successive tests or over a period of time, then it is possible that she will become either a reactor, an IR or a slaughterhouse case. This information tends to be gained retrospectively, ie after you have received that phone call telling you that the cull cow you sent off is a suspect slaughterhouse case.

A High-Risk Cow can also be one whose cohort was an earlier reactor or IR, indicating that they were exposed to the same source of infection at more or less the same time.

But what if these High-Risk cows could be identified and culled before they became problems? Then with good biosecurity, your herd could be on the way to staying on annual testing!

If you're interested in identifying your High-Risk cows, please contact me.

/ Ralph

WORM COUNT CLUB TO IDENTIFY PARASITE TYPE AND BURDEN

With Spring approaching, warmer weather can come with an increase in gastrointestinal parasites for lambs.

Young lambs commonly suffer from scour caused by cocci, gut worms or both. Both types of parasites can cause significant disease, horrible scours, ill thrift and poor weight gain.

We encourage you to routinely worm egg count your lambs. This means we can monitor faecal egg output as an indicator of parasite burden. It also means we can speciate the type of parasites causing the problem.

It important to have this information, to ensure we can promptly treat with the most effective products.



Did you know that a lamb can have cocci counts in the thousands of eggs per gram and this could still not be causing a problem? That's because some species of cocci don't actually cause disease.

If you haven't already done this, sending off a cocci fecal sample to identify the species of cocci will provide useful information. It might even indicate that treatment is not necessary.

/ Bibby



NEOSPORA: ABORTION IN YOUR HERD?

**MON 17TH APRIL
FROM 7.30PM
@ PILTON CLUB**

Join us for supper and discussion about Neospora, the last of the winter discussion meetings this season.

Farm Vet Alex Perkins will talk along with guest speaker about Neospora, the UK's most commonly diagnosed infectious cause of abortion. Often a frustrating one for beef, dairy farmers and vets alike. Both our beef and dairy clients are welcome to come and hear how we can best test for and manage this disease on farm.

Limited spaces available - please call us on 01749 341 761 to confirm your place and let us know of any dietary requirements.

Join our Worm Egg Count Club!

To encourage you to carry out monitoring of worm burdens rather than routinely worming we are offering an 'in house worm egg count' package. This is 10 samples for a discounted rate of £100 +VAT (samples are usually £15+VAT each). Please let the office know when you drop off your first sample if you would like to join this club!

HUSKVAC HELPERS

Did you know our team of Vet Techs can help with administering Huskvac as part of their usual visit, with no extra cost?



Please contact the practice now to order your vaccine and let us know if you need an extra pair of hands to help with administering it!



MEDS UPDATE & VACCINE OFFERS

Great news - Spirovac is now back in stock! Ubrostar Red Herd Packs and 20 syringe packs are now back on the shelf too.

Heptavac has a current expected restock date of May.

Huskvac only has a few more months to run - have you arranged for your doses to be ordered?

We also have promotions on pour-on wormer and fly treatments for the forthcoming season, so please speak to Vin regarding prices of these products.

Don't forget, you can order medicines at any time of day by text or WhatsApp!

07592 307 394

TRAINING COURSES



**LUNCH & LEARN
PRACTICAL SELECTIVE
DRY COW THERAPY
THURS 4TH MAY / 11AM-2PM**

Do you have new or existing team members that need training on how to dry cows off? Have you experienced mastitis or loss of animals after drying cows off?

Join us to learn which cows you should select, how to do it effectively and how to monitor outcomes.

This practical discussion will cover:

- Which cows you should be selecting for selective dry cow therapy based on individual cell counts and taking into consideration your herd's bulk cell count
- Correct administration of dry cow tubes (antibiotic and sealant) *(hopefully with the help of real udders!)*
- Common pitfalls and where things can go wrong
- Use of data to monitor the impact of selective dry cow therapy on your herd

Cost £60 (+VAT) per person, additional team members £20 (+VAT)

Booking is essential - please call the office on 01749 341 761 or email training@sheptonvets.com.

We will also be running courses in Foot Trimming, Practical Calving, Cow First Aid, Mobility Scoring and Youngstock Care - watch this space for details! You can also email us to register your interest for any of our courses and we will keep you updated.



LOTTIE MAYO

MEET THE TEAM

Name: Lottie Mayo / Job: Farm Animal Vet

Where are you from? I grew up in London but spent a lot of time at my Aunt and Uncle's dairy farm in Cheshire and with my Grandparents in Devon. We've been in our family home in Barton St David for 5 years now.

Where / what did you study? I studied zoology and palaeontology at Bristol University before heading to Glasgow for vet school.

How long have you been at Shepton Vets / what did you do before? More years than I can remember! My first ever job was a chamber maid in a hotel as a teenager (and yes, I have plenty of stories from that time!) I worked in a mixed practice in Derbyshire when I graduated, then a farm job there too before heading to Somerset.

Why did you want to do this job and what do you like best about it? I've loved this part of the country since my Bristol uni days and it was a great opportunity to work in a practice with a larger dairy client base. No day is a bad day when you get to drive around our beautiful county and we have some of the nicest clients and team members to work with.

Favourite animal and why? Cows, they're amazing creatures.

Do you have any pets? Two very naughty cats and two slightly better behaved chickens. Do the children count?

Favourite biscuit? Milk chocolate digestive every time!

Interesting fact about you? I could legally fly a plane on my own before I could drive a car on my own.



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Shepton Veterinary Group
Allyn Saxon Drive
Shepton Mallet
Somerset BA4 5QH
Tel: 01749 341 761

Email: farm.animal@sheptonvets.com



Office Opening Hours
Mon-Fri: 8am - 5.30pm
Sat: 8.30am - 12.30pm

We also provide a 24 hour emergency service