



WARM WEATHER AND RAIN DRIVES HIGH WORM COUNTS IN GRAZING RUMINANTS READY TO BE HOUSED

worm counts in grazing ruminants. With this in mind, if you are planning on keeping heifers and other youngstock out for as long as possible, you may want to perform a worm egg count to check parasite burdens now.

When housing youngstock, I would advise worming once they are housed with a clear wormer. These wormers are from the macrocyclic lactone class which include avermectins and milbemycins.

We advise using this treatment as not only does this class of wormer kill any adult worms within the guts, but it will also kill any worms that have become dormant within the gut lining. This will ensure youngstock, when turned out again next year, have a fresh start and don't suffer from scour early in the grazing season when the dormant worms begin to burrow out of the stomach. We have a good supply of Enovex (ivermectin) in our dispensary.

We have seen from monitoring antibodies on our farms, that lots of farms do not have a Liver Fluke burden. Many farmers used to routinely treat for Liver Fluke after cattle had been housed. What we would recommend now is - from November - blood sampling around six first grazing season animals to check for antibodies. This will tell you whether treating with a flukicide is needed.

Alternatively, you can wait until the new year and take a pooled faecal sample to check for the presence of Liver Fluke eggs as an indication to treat.

It's important to utilise wormers appropriately, to ensure we optimise growth and performance of our cattle and sheep, whilst using them only when necessary to slow the development of resistance, ensuring these products work for as long as possible.

/ Bibby

DAIRY VET SPEND REPORTS TO HELP ASSESS MILK INPUT COSTS

Having listened to some recent podcasts and flicked through the farmers weekly, it seems like the general consensus is that milk price is likely to plateau shortly, but then hold, rather than tumbling back down as it has done previously after a period of increase. Hopefully with some stability in both input and output prices, it will give our farmers the chance to consolidate and assess their inputs versus outputs.

Vet medicine prices are always a carefully observed input cost, but with very few price increases seen (and long may this continue!) when compared to other farm inputs, we anticipate our "average" farm's medicine cost will now make up roughly 1-1.2% of milk price, compared to a figure of 1.6-2% around 18 months ago.

Despite the proportional decrease in vet input cost, we are still very keen to work with our farmers to ensure that the spend is not excessive and is being used to its greatest effect.

With this in mind, we are able to produce dairy vet spend reports, which breakdown vet input and can be assessed with your routine vet to make sure this aspect of your business is as profitable as possible.

Please ask your routine vet for a report if you think this would be of benefit, but please bear in mind they do take a little while to produce, so give your vet plenty of notice ahead of a routine.

/ Charlie



A GREAT DAIRY SHOW DAY

We had a great day at the Dairy Show last month. It was wonderful to see so many of you there.

Thank you to everyone that voted in our search for the Centenary Farmer of the Year and for entering the raffle for the hamper. Congratulations to winners Zara and Holly!



We look forward to doing it all again next year...





ANTIMICROBIAL USAGE

TUES 22ND NOV @ 7.30PM
PILTON WORKING MANS CLUB

Our Pilton Discussion Groups are back! Join us for supper and a discussion about our first 'Shepton Top 10' topic, Antimicrobial Usage.

Farm Vet, Rob Powell will be using data from our Shepton dairy herds to review the progress we have made in responsible antimicrobial use. Using herd examples, he will highlight key areas where disease prevention has led to reduced antimicrobial use, and improved health and performance long term.

There are limited spaces available so please call us on 01749 341 761 to confirm your place and let us know of any dietary requirements.



SHEPTON TOP 10: RESPONSIBLE ANTIMICROBIAL USE IN OUR HERDS

At the upcoming Pilton meeting on the 22nd of November - our first of the year - we will be presenting some of the data from our Shepton dairy herds to review the great progress our farmers have made in responsible antimicrobial use.

It's the first of our 'Shepton Top 10' sessions - a series of simple, measurable metrics that represent high performance in herd health, efficiency and sustainability, across key topics which we consider to be essential to top performing herds.

We will provide high performance targets for each topic for farms to aspire to, offering practical advice, herd health services and support from our vets - as well as knowledge sharing amongst each other - to help you achieve them.

Discussion points for AMU will include benchmarking your herd within the anonymised Shepton client base and how Shepton clients compare to RUMA targets and the national average.

We will look at what we can learn from the low use herds with examples of areas where management changes have led to reduced antimicrobial use and improved health and performance.

We'll cover the January 2022 EU changes regarding regulations banning prophylactic antibiotic use and what that may mean to us, as well as how the dairy sector compares to other sectors such as pigs and poultry.

I'll also provide an update on antimicrobial resistance and some of the numbers behind this.

And of course, we'll be awarding the very first of our 'Shepton Top 10' achievers, and crowning our Centenary Farmer of the Year!

It will be a great session, please make sure you call to confirm your place. We will look forward to seeing you there with some food.

/ Rob



NIGHT NURSE TEAM ON CALL

After a bit of a delay due to technical issues, we are now using our own night nursing team to answer emergency calls which we hope will improve our out of hours answering service.

There will still be times when you may be transferred to the answering service call centre, as nurses can be busy with hospitalised cases but we will endeavour to answer as many calls directly as we can.

This will be a more personal service from the practice with better links to the duty vet so we think this will enhance the service received.

HARRY INVESTIGATES KETOTIC SUCKLER COW

Ketotic suckler cow? Surely not....

I was called to see a "not quite right" suckler cow about 3 weeks post calving. There were occasions when she had been struggling to stand up. Speaking to the herdsman, another calf had been suckling from her, but her calf was still growing well.

On clinical exam, there was nothing hugely jumping out at me. Her rumen fill was poor and she had slightly firm faeces. This was just backing up the fact that she is likely off her feed and is dehydrated.

I then tested her blood for her ketone levels. It came back as 3.9 mmol/L. Values over 1mmol/L require treatment, therefore, the cow was given some Ketofix and Selekt Off Feed to help provide the energy source to correct her ketosis, help her dehydration and increase feed intake.

She also was given vitamin B12 and steroids to support her liver and switch off ketone production. The Ketofix was repeated for 3 days.



Four days later, the cow was beginning to feel a lot better. She was eating well, her udder was increasing in size and the herdsman was happy with the outcome.

It's not often we see a ketotic beef animal. Our thinking was that the extra calf suckling may have tipped the cow into a negative energy balance, resulting in a ketotic animal.

Ketotic suckler cow? It's possible...

/ Harry

FOOT BATHING: BEST PRACTICE FOR BEST RESULTS

As the colder mornings loom and the wetter weather sets in, winter housing is fast approaching. With this, comes pressures on cattle's feet. Our main concern is Digital Dermatitis (DD). DD is caused by a spiral shaped bacterium, which is transmitted from cow to cow via environment, contaminated knives and water.

Foot bathing is the mainstay of DD and foul in the foot prevention. Infected cows will still need to be identified and treated appropriately but when done correctly, foot bathing will reduce the spread and prevent many new infections within your herd.



All animals need to be foot bathed, except for the youngstock. In calf heifers and dry cows there can be a reservoir of infection, so running them through the foot bath weekly can stop introduction of infection when they enter the milking herd. This also helps to maintain skin and hoof quality of heifers.

Some helpful tips to boost your foot bathing protocol:

Ensure your cows feet are clean before entering the foot bath - this helps reduce contamination in the chemical footbath, improving its effectiveness. Hosing the backs

of cows feet off in the parlour before they enter the foot bath is sometimes needed if feet are very dirty, but if this is consistently needed, then cow environment and scraping should be reviewed.

Ensure your cows are stepping in the foot bath twice with each foot - this generally means it should be greater than 3m long. The water level should be up to the top the hoof horn, so usually around 10-15cm deep.

Ensure your foot bath contains the correct concentration of chemical - it's worth checking concentrations are not above 4% for Formalin or 5% for Copper sulphate. Formalin is banned in a few countries due to possible health concerns from carcinogenic fumes so handle with care and use in well ventilated areas, or even better, invest in an automatic foot bath so there is no handling of chemicals.

As a rule of thumb, change the contents of the foot bath every 1 cow for each litre of foot bath capacity - eg 200L foot bath should be changed every 200 cows.

The correct frequency of footbathing depends on the cleanliness of your cows feet, the percentage of the herd with infections and the severity of the lesions. New evidence suggests that footbathing after 4 consecutive milkings every two weeks can be effective in preventing DD in herds with low prevalence. In high prevalence herds, cows may need to be footbathed every milking. Many herds footbath every other day when actually new evidence suggests consecutive milkings is best for control.

Why not review your current foot bathing protocol with your vet, including the concentration, volume and location, in order to maximise the benefits from your foot bath this winter.

/ Harry



Vet Alex was delighted to be shown this recent photo of a calf she'd treated back in November 2020.

The calf had had profuse diarrhoea and when Alex visited, was cold, flat out and moribund - Alex thought she was best put to sleep. However, this little calf started life as a purchased embryo, highly desire for her pedigree so the client really wanted us to try whatever we could.

Tests ruled out certain pathogens and showed her diarrhoea was diet-related which helped determine the most appropriate course of action. We hospitalised her at the practice and she stayed on a drip of intravenous fluids over the weekend with plenty of TLC.

And now here she is, almost 2 years later having calved down at just over 2 years old. What a heart-warming story!

CONGRATULATIONS JAMIE & JO: BECOMING ATTS

Congratulations to Jamie and Jo who have passed their Approved Tuberculin Tester exams. We're delighted to welcome them to our team of TB testers, delivering 6 monthly testing in our area. We asked them to share a bit of their journey over the last four months.....



Jamie: Knowing TB testing from the farming side, it's been very educational learning the finer details

behind the initial test. I completed a course of modules studying the process of TB testing, followed by an online examination.

Then, before doing the practical exam, I had to do case studies at 10 different farms, describing the tests and details of any reactions. A minimum of 500 animals had to be tested and at least 80 reactions recorded across a variety of animals including youngstock, beef and dairy.

Alongside this, I've been busy doing vaccine rounds as well as disbudding, taking bloods and udder singeing. I've also worked alongside some of the vets helping assist with caesareans, castrations, DA's and even an enucleation. My first 4 months have been very interesting and I'm very much looking forward to moving forward onto the next stage now I'm qualified.

Jo: My journey to becoming a TB tester has been a busy one! Training with the vets has

really given me a good basis and confidence in my TB testing. It has also been great getting to meet lots of new people whilst out on farm.

After testing over 500 animals across 10 different farms, it was a relief to finally

have passed my exam and I'm now enjoying going out on farm, meeting more clients and taking on the challenges that being a TB tester brings.





MEDS UPDATE

** NEW CRYPTO TREATMENT **

We will now be stocking Kriptazen instead of Halagon for the treatment and prevention of Cryptosporidium. It is supplied with a unique dosing pump to help ensure precision dosing and reduce errors, delivering 4-12ml in a single dose with weights graduated from 20-60kg in 10kg increments. This means you don't need to calculate dosage in mls before treating.

Spirovac has had a slight supply disruption but we do currently have stock and are closely monitoring the situation.

Due to a change of country of origin for the supply of Gamaret, the milk withdrawal period has changed from 72 to 108 hours.

MEDICINES DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR



Do you know we can deliver your medicine order? Save yourself some time and let us deliver it all to your farm! We deliver across the area on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays - it's £5(+VAT) for a one off delivery, or £7.50(+VAT) for the monthly subscription service which gives you one delivery a week. Give our Pharmacy Manager, Vin, a call for more information or to sign up.

Don't forget, you can order medicines at any time of day by text or WhatsApp!
07592 307 394

UPCOMING TRAINING



MASTERING MEDICINES

THURSDAY 1ST DECEMBER
11AM - 2PM

Join us to learn more about safety, good practice and legislative requirements for giving, storing and recording on-farm medicines, including:

- Safely administer veterinary medicines to animals under your care
- Store, maintain and record medicine usage on farm in accordance with legislation and farm assurance requirements
- Describe the differences between vaccines and treatments and the different legislative classes
- Describe basic differences between different classes of antibiotic and the need for veterinary guidance in their use
- Describe the basic classes of anthelmintics and the need for veterinary or SQP guidance in their use
- Understand the actions of NSAID and when they should be used
- Understand the responsibility of those administering medicines to farm animals

£50+VATpp includes course notes and lunch

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

We can also organise one to one foot trimming training with Charlie and other practical support sessions for your team - give us a call on to book onto a course or for a chat about how we can help with other training needs.



ALEX PERKINS

MEET THE TEAM

Name: Alex Perkins

Job Title: Vet

Where are you from? I'm a West Midlands / Devon hybrid now living on my husband's family farm just outside Shepton Mallet.

Where/what did you study? I did a Bachelor of Veterinary Science at University in Liverpool.

How long have you worked at Shepton Vets? Since November 2012 - almost exactly ten years!

What did you do before? I did a new graduate placement in Morocco working with working equids, donkeys, mules and horses before moving to Somerset to work in mixed practice at Silva House, and then in Glastonbury. I wanted to move to Shepton Vets to work with a renowned team full of expertise and a progressive approach to bovine medicine.

Why did you want to do this job? I wanted to be a vet since I can remember, I've always been fascinated by the puzzle of forming a diagnosis and how our animals 'work'. I love the variety of my job - one day paperwork on farm (which believe or not, a good Johnes review is still incredibly interesting and rewarding!) and the next a good calving or surgery.

Favourite animal and why? Very difficult to choose, it's got to be cows hasn't it. Best one to work with for sure.

Do you have any pets? Do my kids count?!?!

Favourite biscuit? Chocolate hobnob.

Interesting fact about you? I'm allergic to giraffes.



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