



## PARASITE CONTROL STARTS WITH MONITORING

Turnout is finally here, which means we should be shifting our thinking to monitoring for parasites in those animals at pasture, especially first and second season grazers. This is especially important for those who are adopting a more sustainable parasite control approach.



your youngstock. Manage and feed accordingly to meet your target. In the dairy heifer we usually target 0.8kg/day. Cattle should be weighed regularly, as it is the only way to accurately monitor performance and can act as an early warning system for parasitic disease

**Observing for signs of disease:** Look for ill thrift, scour and coughing. Carry out post-mortems on fallen stock. If you have vaccinated your youngstock using Huskvac then the risk of lungworm should be reduced, but for those who were impacted by availability of the vaccine or animals which have not had exposure, careful monitoring is required to avoid disease.

**Grazing strategy:** Consider mapping the farm using an app or paper map so as to understand pasture risk better. This monitoring is useful to plan your grazing strategy for later in the season or the next year.

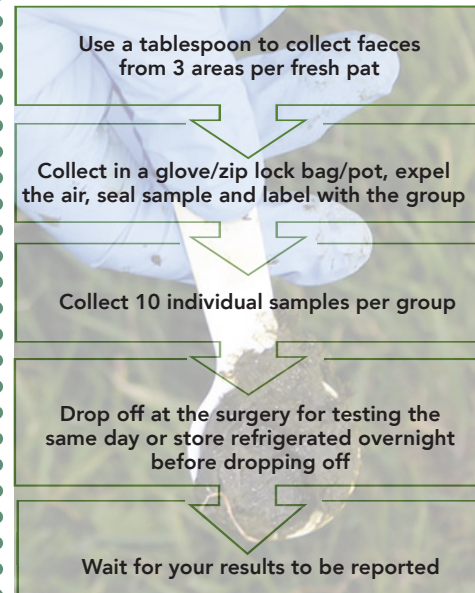
What does monitoring look like? Well, you should consider carrying out worm egg counting, DLWG monitoring and observing for signs of disease, as well as planning your grazing strategy.

**Worm egg counting:** Regular worm egg counting should begin approximately 5-6 weeks after turnout then monthly thereafter. More regular worm egg counting may be required if animals are set stocked or turned out onto high-risk pasture. This is to detect gut worms and will not detect lungworm.

**DLWG monitoring:** You should have a target for daily live weight gain in

/ Rosie

### How to carry out a worm egg count for CATTLE



### Join our Worm Egg Count Club!

To encourage you to carry out monitoring 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 take advantage of this.

## MEDICINES UPDATE

In the coming months I will be taking over the role of medicine procurement from Oliver, and as part of this transition I have been looking through the medicines offering from Shepton Vets to our clients.

Historically, we have generally kept our medicines offering to POM-V drugs - these are veterinary prescription only products which must be purchased from a vet.

There is another category of drugs called POM-VPS - these are drugs that can be supplied by suitably trained persons and make up the drugs categories such as wormers and fly treatments, and are something that we have generally only supplied in small quantities and/or at special request.

This season however, through XLVets, we have secured good deals on such products and are able to offer some

of these at a very competitive price compared to other outlets.

Furthermore, we feel that if these products are purchased through ourselves, with well planned treatment strategies using known products, we have the ability to make more responsible, effective and cost efficient use of them.

Initially, this will be limited to a pour-on ivermectin wormer (comparable to most generic pour-ons found on the market) and a fly treatment (deltamethrin based 10ml standard treatment).

If you are interested in more information and pricing of these products, particularly alongside the parasite control services discussed by Rosie in this newsletter, please contact the office.

/ Charlie



## AI COURSE

We held an enjoyable AI course last week! With the help of our training cow as well as lots of barren cows, we trained another 5 young people how to AI. Well done to the group who persevered and got to grips with this new skill!

Our 3 day AI course combines classroom theory and on-farm practicals, and leads to a Licensed AI Certificate in Fertility Management.

Our next AI course will be running 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> July. Give the farm office a call for more details and to book your place.

/Anna



# RISKS OF SUMMER KETOSIS

As we head into summer, we need to be aware of the risks of summer ketosis. In early lactation, particularly in grazed cows, there may be an energy gap if the energy required for milk production exceeds the energy available from the cows diet.

In the short term, cows can use body fat reserves to supply this energy gap. However, if intake is insufficient or if the cow has built up too much fatty reserve, the process can result in a build up of ketones in the blood, milk and urine.

If levels become extreme, this will lead to ketosis with cows suffering from poor appetite, depression, nervousness and general poor health. There will be a loss of milk production and potential fertility related diseases, which will have a significant cost.

So we need to get the balance right and be aware of the issues.

From a feed perspective, our target is high fibre / low energy but far-off grazed dry cows have uncontrolled nutrition so how well is this being delivered? Too much or too little energy can cause problems.

Transition cows need sufficient time on close-up rations otherwise there will be disruption to intakes too close to calving and an increased risk of ketosis.



milk proteins are usually a sign of low energy or low intakes from inadequate dry cow feeding. Monitor the body condition of your cows and incidence of disease - if they're too fat, they'll be at risk of ketosis and a fatty liver whilst LDAs, RFMs, milk fever and metritis should all trigger questions and investigation.

Our aim is to help you keep every cow as healthy and productive as possible at this crucial lactation stage. There are various things we can do to help target this issue - as well as ensuring adequate feed and nutritional intake, Kexstone Bolus works well as a prevention for SOFT (sick, old, fat, twins) cows

whilst cows with problems after calving will benefit from Cholvite Bolus to improve their liver function and immunity as well as boosting their intakes. Ketotic cows will benefit from Keto-Fix and oral fluids are also beneficial as pumping cows with ketosis can prevent LDAs.

As always, knowledge is power so we want to work with you to identify and address herd risk factors. We are planning on holding a meeting to look at how different farms manage their transition cows order to share best practice. More details coming soon.

/ Paddy

I'm not sure if we're in for a wet or dry summer but grass growth will currently compromise milk fever control if cows have access to good grazing - and milk fever will reduce their appetite in the crucial period after calving.

And at this time of year, heat stress (from as low as 16C) can also cause reduced intake which will increase ketosis risk. Look out for cows seeking shade, bunching together or showing increased respiratory rates.

How will you know your herd is suffering with ketosis? We can ketone test fresh cows, ideally 4-7 days after calving. You should also look at milk yields and milk quality - low yields or low

# SURGICAL FOCUS

This poor pregnant cow was attacked by a large out-of-control dog and suffered catastrophic damage to her face. Normally this sort of injury would give us genuine reason to consider euthanasia as cows depend on a mobile and non painful muzzle to eat and survive.



However this girl has a valuable pedigree having been imported from the US as an embryo! She was also soon due to calve. So when I turned up to this mess less than an hour after the incident and saw her trying to eat, I thought I would have a go.

There is a golden hour with most traumatic injuries, which is important for blood supply to injured tissues and infection of contaminated wounds. The fact that we were able to attend so promptly was certainly a help in my deciding it was worth a try. Also the fact that this beef cow was attempting to eat was a promising sign. It is always an important consideration that anything we do to attempt save the animal does not cause unacceptable or unmanageable pain.

Once she was in the crush, the cow was sedated just enough to calm her down to a standstill, then a local block applied directly to the infraorbital nerve ensured that the whole area was desensitized without infiltrating too much local anaesthetic into the tissue which can retard wound healing.

I cleaned the tissues extensively, gradually lifting and removing bits of silage, hair and saliva from the tissues. There were pockets of silage that had got deep into the puncture wounds made by the teeth. Careful cleaning of the tissues is essential to ensure a smooth healing without pockets of infection.

Once I had everything cleaned up, it was like a jigsaw (in a butchers shop), ensuring careful apposition of the tissues for better healing and less likelihood of wound breakdown.

With a wound of this size it is important to close 'dead space', meaning that all the tissue deficit underneath the final skin wound must be closed otherwise this gap fills with blood and swelling and the wound

would just zip apart. More than half of the total stitches are on the inside, closing that dead space.

It was also important to carefully appose the inside mucosal membranes of the nostrils to ensure nasal secretions drained back outside and could not pool in the flesh.



Two and a half hours later and over 50 stitches inside and out it came together like this!

She had antibiotics and an anti-inflammatory pain killer for 6 days after which time all was looking well enough to stop medications and monitor only. All of the internal stitches will dissolve in time but the outer stitches will need removing in the next week or two.

She's been happy and well since and is still boss cow at the feedface. She has also now calved and both her and the calf are doing well.

This is the first time I have seen such damage to a cow. It's terrifying, but just shows how dangerous dogs off the lead can be when instinct, chase and fear kick in.

/Alex

# A CASE OF NEOSPORA

Last week, I was called out to a group of heifers that had previously been diagnosed as pregnant but had aborted. Something like this obviously raises concerns and it was important to try and work out what had happened.

Neospora is one of the most common out of a long list of reasons for abortions so I blood-tested for that and wasn't too surprised when it came back positive. Unfortunately that meant the animals were all culled.

So what is Neospora? It's a protozoan parasite - transmitted either from dog faeces or, more commonly, from an infected cow to her calf via the placenta during pregnancy. It's the most common cause of abortion in dairy cows, with infected cows 7 times more likely to abort.

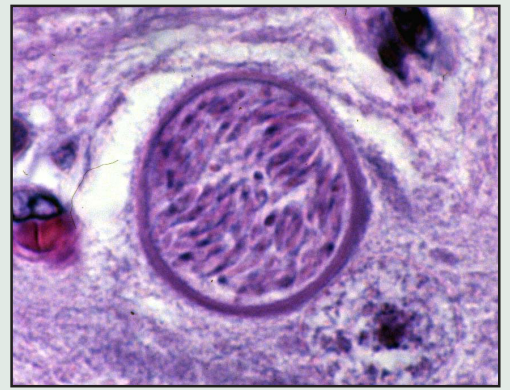
The timing of the infection will affect the disease outcome - in early pregnancy

it's likely to cause death and re-absorption of the foetus, giving the appearance of infertility whereas in later gestation, calves may be stillborn, have neurological issues or be infected with the parasite themselves.

We can test for Neospora by blood sampling both the cow and the aborted calf, as I did last week. You can also monitor herds with bulk milk testing although this needs to be interpreted with caution.

More recently, we've been able to test via individual milk sampling - it's most accurate towards the end of lactation but to make the process more practical and achievable, it can be done at any point.

How should you manage Neospora positive cows? Whilst vaccines have been researched, there isn't anything currently available in the UK so affected cows can



either be bred to beef, or culled from the herd to stop them passing the parasite on. The aborted foetus, or the placenta if the cow has calved, should be disposed of in a safe and timely manner to prevent access from dogs and wildlife.

/ Rob



## BEEF FARM WALK

We had a fantastic turn out for our #beefweek Farm Walk with Rosie and Alex at the end of April, with 45 portions of fish and chips gobbled up! Our main aim was to meet, discuss and share experiences and there was great participation and discussion.

Dan and Vicki White were great hosts showing us round their efficient and productive suckler herd producing Prime Angus beef for a local butcher and their own meat sales via Farmers Markets.

We learnt how great independent nutritional advice and consultation needn't be costly, in that it can save on cake bills and makes best use of home produced forage. We all learnt a lot looking at some of the best silage we'd seen across all our farms (beef and dairy).

AHDB came to talk to us about their Maternal Matters campaign which tied in nicely with Rosie's talk on Heifer selection. Maternal



Matters such as growing your heifers well, age at first calving, and heifer selection are key in driving the suckler herd forwards in efficiency and production.

Since Rosie has joined us from Yorkshire, she has also brought with her new skills to add to our services in helping heifer selection. Rosie spoke to us about pelvic measuring with the rice pelvimeter, which is a useful tool to complement the heifer selection visit, where we can examine the reproductive tracts of your heifer group, excluding any freemartins or insufficiently developed animals.

We also sent out new data collection forms as a new template for the HHP Review. We hope by recording a little more information our next beef meeting might involve a little anonymous benchmarking. Please contact the office if you would like to take part.

/Alex



## CYCLING INTO THE CENTENARY

Last month, we told you about our Centenary Cycle Ride - we'll be RIDING our bikes 100km (twice over!) and RAISING money for Farming Community Network.

There's a one day group ride event, cycling 100km around the Somerset lanes on Saturday 10th September. And there's also a month long event (from 10th August-10th September) which allows participants to complete 100km on a bike over the whole month in bitesize rides, using Strava to record progress. This means that those who like to ride bikes but not big distances in one go can also participate.

We have a team of Shepton staff keen to participate but I know there are a few budding farmer cyclists out there!! So, if the lovely weather has inspired you to dust off your road bike and get fit, or you are already a seasoned cyclist - or if you'd just like to cheer us on along the way - please get in touch with Rosie who can give you more details about joining us and the map of the route.

Finally, if you would like to help us raise money for FCN, then please consider sponsoring us <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sheptonvets100>

/Rosie

Have you booked your space on our Centenary "TOUR DE YORKSHIRE"? Ask the team for a leaflet for full details.



# MEDS UPDATE

**Cyclo Spray 422ml** is currently out of stock. We are awaiting an update on its return, but still have plenty of the smaller Cyclo spray 211ml.

**Pen Strep** is currently out of stock, but we are expecting a return any day now. The most appropriate replacement is Betamox at a dose of 1ml/20Kg I/M. Milk withdrawal 24 hours, Meat withdrawal 18 days.

**Heptovac** remains out of stock but we are hoping for a delivery any day now.

*We are keeping a close eye on the situation and will of course fulfill any outstanding orders as soon as we receive stock.*

## UPCOMING COURSES



### DOWN COW FIRST AID WEDNESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> MAY 11am-2pm

Bibby will be running another of these popular, practical courses which will cover:

- Caring for a down cow to optimise the chances of her getting up
- The correct way to lift a cow
- How to assess limbs for breakages
- Passing a stomach tube and giving oral fluids
- How to give IV injections
- Blood sampling allowing calcium levels to be assessed
- Prevention of down cows

*£65+VAT, extra team members £15pp. Booking is essential.*



### PRACTICAL CALVING COURSE WEDNESDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JULY 9.30am - 2.30pm

**Join us for a practical calving course, covering:**

- what is normal for a calving cow and how it can be different in heifers
- when and how to intervene in calving
- how to correct common malpresentations
- how to manage post-calving complications
- practical session with our artificial cows to practice putting head ropes on and correcting malpresentations

*£134+VATpp - includes lunch, hand-outs and certificate of attendance. Booking is essential and this course always fills up quickly.*

**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 01749 341 761 to book onto a course or for a chat about how we can help with other training needs.**

## 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**



**TOM SLEE**

## MEET THE TEAM

**Name:** Tom Slee / **Job Title:** Vet Tech

**How long have you worked here?** Almost 6 years.

**Where are you from?** I grew up in Gravesend in Kent but moved to Somerset 17 years ago with my mum and now live in Crocombe.

**What did you do before this?** I'd started AS levels at the Blue School but then moved to a Business BTEC. I took a Business Apprenticeship at Shepton Vets and never left!

**Why did you want to do this job?** Initially, my interest was in Business Management but I really enjoyed being involved in everything at the vets and seeing what they do. I've always loved animals and like the idea of being able to help make them better. I became a Vet Tech, which I've loved and it's also inspired me to go further too. I'm just finishing my Higher Education Diploma (equivalent to A Levels) and have had offers from Bristol and Surrey universities to go on and study Veterinary Medicine.

**Favourite animal and why?** Very specifically, it's Oscar - the Golden Retriever I grew up with! He was simply wonderful and I even learnt to walk by holding on to him.

**Do you have any pets?** We have a dog, 2 cats, 2 tortoises and a corn snake!

**Favourite biscuit?** Absolutely has to be the classic Maryland chocolate chip cookie.

**Hobbies?** I've been doing Judo for 17 years and am a black belt.



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

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