



DIRECTORS UPDATE

- Charlie Neale

Last month I attended the XLVets Buying Services Annual Meeting, which gives us all a great chance to catch up and discuss opportunities and challenges with our medicine supply, but also within our own practices. It was felt that many clients (both current and prospective) do not fully understand what XLVets is and why we feel it's an important part of our business, so I'll attempt to give a brief rundown of the XLVets community. XLVets is a group made up of member practices, which are all independently owned by the people working within those practices, XLVets has no share in these practices, but the practices have a share in XLVets. This means that every practice is entirely free to operate as it wishes, without any vested interest from corporate owners, but we have a large network of similar businesses so that we can share ideas and issues with confidence – much like a dairy discussion group.

Due to the numbers of practices involved, we also own our own medicines wholesaler who deal directly with pharmaceutical companies on our behalf.

This direct link means that we get the best prices possible on the products stocked at the wholesaler – but this is not every single product on the market, hence why we may look to supply identical product X over identical product Y, as this will end up with a better price to yourselves.



Red Tractor Review - how we can help, is your training up to date?

- Paddy Gordon

Red Tractor Health Plans have been taking up a lot of my time this month, and this is often a good chance to review what has happened in the past year and identify areas where there are opportunities.

This has identified some real positives such as fertility improvements resulting in higher yields and more even calving pattern, less lame cows resulting in less antibiotic use and then fewer cows in the hospital pen; and less infectious disease impacting on both cow and calf health.

Health plans can also be useful to identify what aspects need attention. This can be cows but sometimes it is people. Staff skills training can be a good way of building staff loyalty. At the practice we can provide training across a broad range of topics. Currently we are running courses on calving and calf health but have recently covered other topics such as cattle behaviour (best practice in cattle handling – cows, races and crushes; sick cow recognition – changes, actions and records) or housing and health (skin lesions, cleanliness, mobility; good shed and cubicle design). We can review your staff skills and training requirements as part of the Health Plan.



Farm

We are a proud founding member

XLVets is a great community, with regular academic, business and social events for our vets, nurses and administration staff. We have online forums and knowledge bases where we can share cases, ask questions and call upon the knowledge of hundreds of farm vets.

I hope this gives some insight into why we feel XLVets is important to Shepton Vets and is markedly different from a corporately owned practice model. We make the decisions at practice level, share ideas with colleagues, and have 'skin in the game' so we look to make the best decisions both for us and for you.

TUP TESTING DAY

23rd August 2023 11:00am



Join us at the surgery to check your tups are in tip top condition before the breeding season

Please remember to book your place with the office

Ram vasectomy day

25th August 2023 11:00am



Do you want help to tighten your lambing period? Why not join us for our ram vasectomy 'teaser' clinic

Speak to Bibby or Rosie to find out more



Animal Health and Welfare Review

- Rob Powell

We have all been out doing AHWP visits recently. These provide funding for vet time on farm. On one farm the funding paid for the annual BVD youngstock screen. Whilst the bloods were being taken further samples were sent away for trace element testing. The farm has very good fertility in the dairy herd with a submission rate of 71% (NMR 2022 average 41%), a conception rate of 46 (NMR 2022 average 38%) and a pregnancy rate of 32% (NMR 2022 average 16%). They had however been disappointed with the heifer conception rates. Trace element sampling revealed that the heifers were low in Selenium. These heifers will now receive a bolus which will last 180 days, this will be given to heifers before service and 3 months pre-calving as selenium deficiency can cause an increase in retained foetal membranes and weak/stillborn calves.

On another farm the funding paid for a bulk milk BVD PCR test. The calf management was looked at and the farm was benchmarked against 60 other producers. Comparisons included; calving pen use and cleaning out frequency, colostrum storage and feeding, milk feeding policy and effected growth rates from this, temperature and environment, frequency of cleaning out calf pens, disbudding policy and cleaning of colostrum feeding and collection equipment. By benchmarking you can easily see where your management policy may be different to other farms and how this may influence growth rates or infectious disease on your farm.

Other topics covered under the AHWP on farms have included lameness, A.I refresher training and infectious disease.

Training course dates

LIMITED SPACES

Weds 19th July-
Calving & Cow first Aid 11am-4pm

Thursday 17th August-
Mastering Medicines lunch and learn - 11am-2pm

Wednesday 30th August-
Intro to smallholding 9am-5pm

Weds-Fri 20th/21st/22nd September-
DIY AI Course 10am - 3pm Limited to 6 spaces

Weds & Thurs 29th & 30th Nov-
Herds person certificate



Ask us for more info

Top Tips for Worm Egg Counting.



Understand which group of animals need testing. Most of the time this is calves or lambs.

Only collect samples from those animals which need testing, otherwise mixed age groups can lead to false results i.e. mixing ewes and lamb samples.

If you're unsure what samples to collect, please get in touch and we can direct you.

Post drench check timings vary depending on wormer. Levamisole is 7 days, typically others are 14 days.

How to take faecal egg count samples correctly for CATTLE

- Use a tablespoon to collect faeces from 3 areas per fresh pat.
- Collect in a glove/zip lock bag/pot, expel the air, seal sample and label with the group.
- Collect 10 individual samples per group.
- Drop off at the surgery for testing the same day or store refrigerated overnight before dropping off.

How to take faecal egg count samples correctly for SHEEP

- Gather the animals to be tested in a corner and leave for 15 minutes.
- Collect a 3g (tablespoon) sample in a glove/zip lock bag/pot, expel the air, seal sample and label with the group.
- Collect 10 individual samples per group.
- Drop off at the surgery for testing the same day or store refrigerated overnight before dropping off.

Worm Egg Count Club

To encourage you to carry out routine monitoring, we are still offering the 'Worm Egg Count Club' this is 10 samples for a discounted rate of £100 ex vat. Please let the office know when you drop off your first sample if you would like to take advantage of this.

WE WILL BE ATTENDING THE MIDSOMERSET SHOW

Sunday 20th August 2023, come and say HELLO



Heat Stress in cattle

- Rob Powell

2023 is working out to be another hard year to manage with grazing and feeding dairy cattle. 2022 had a record high of 40.3 C, breaking a previous record that lasted 3 years. In comparison the 1911 record of 36.7 C stood for 79 years.

Higher yielding cows also generate more heat from greater metabolic activity which increases the risk of heat stress. A cow producing 18 litres generates 28% more body heat than a dry cow and a cow yielding 31 litres a day produces 48% more heat than a dry cow. Research has shown that with an increase in milk yield from 35 to 45 litres the heat stress temperature threshold may be reduced by 5 C.

Heat stress affects production, reproduction, nutrition, health and welfare. Heat stressed cows have been found to have a 23% reduction in conception rate i.e. a herd with a 40% conception rate would drop to 30.8%

In the United States cows spend 14% of all annual hours in heat stress conditions. The UK does not get the same extreme heat of other dairy producing countries have but we can have high relative humidity. The effects of this can be seen below:

Temperature Humidity Index (THI)									
Relative Humidity %									
C	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
22	66	66	67	68	69	69	70	71	72
24	68	69	70	70	71	72	73	74	75
26	70	71	72	73	74	75	77	78	79
28	72	73	74	76	77	78	80	81	82
30	74	75	77	78	80	81	83	84	86
32	76	77	79	81	83	84	86	88	90
34	78	80	82	84	85	87	89	91	93
36	80	82	84	86	88	90	93	95	97
38	82	84	86	89	91	93	96	98	100
40	84	86	89	91	94	96	99	101	104

No heat stress

Moderate heat stress

Severe heat stress

Dead cows

Signs of heat stress

- Cows lethargic and moving round slowly
- Increased respiratory rate
- Reduced intakes and milk yield
- Cows bunching together

Practical management of heat stress

• In hot weather cows may drink up to 20% more, so it is essential that high traffic areas are well supplied with clean fresh water. Access at grazing is important as cows with heat stress will be more lethargic and less keen to walk further for water.

• Increasing air flow has a dramatic effect on evaporative heat loss from the skin. Some USA research shows that airflows of 10 km/hr which is classified as a light breeze can reduce respiratory rates in heat stressed animals by 50%.

• Natural ventilation may be improved by ensuring the sheds have sufficient ridge outlets for the stocking density and size of cattle in the shed.



Requirements can be calculated exactly to account for roof pitch etc but as a rule adult cattle require approximate outlets of 0.1m² each.

• Inlets can be calculated and should be a minimum of twice the outlet area. A 10cm space board with a 2.5cm gap gives a 20% inlet (12.5cm/2.5cm).

- Mechanical ventilation can also be installed.
- Cows can be cooled with water; care needs to be taken regarding bedding and mastitis risk. The collecting yard may be an area to look at for this.
- Roof lights can allow excessive heating, on some sheds roof lights could be removed, painted over or minimised on South facing aspects. The picture above shows an on-farm adaption to raise the roof ridge. The farmer needed to keep the area below dry to house a robot. Other ridges on the farm have been left open.

MEDICINE DELIVERY TO FARM

Ask us how it works



Medicine Update

Now is a great time to grab some Spotinor and Enovex parasite and wormer treatments! Plan ahead while we have stock and availability.



Meet Rob Trainor

Job Title: Farm Office Administrator / Tea Boy

Where are you from/where do you live now?

Originally Yeovil, lived in Street for the last 13yrs

Where/what did you study?

An Air Craft Apprentice straight from school, then studied Business Management at Bournemouth University

How long have you worked here?

Been here since November 2022

What did you do before?

Owned/ran a dog walking/photography business from 2015, prior to that a Project Manager at Clarks in Street so very different to dealing with sending Vets to sick cows, lambings & calvings

Favourite animal and why?

I like most four legged animals, anything more than 4 legs freaks me out.

Do you have any pets?

A 9yr old Cocker Spaniel called Harry, & a 6yr old Labrador called Tilly

Favourite biscuit?

Any, the office's secret stash can take a hammering depending on how the days going!

Interesting fact about you?

Im a qualified level 2 tennis coach and played at Wimbledon in my teenage years, and of course the current Shepton Vets Golf Champion, much to the disappointment of Paddy, Ray and Harry!



Calving and Down Cow First Aid

Wednesday 19th July

11am-4pm

£150 + vat per person
Join Bibby on our newly formed Calving and Cow first aid training day

Dont forget,

as our client you can order medicine at any time of day or night by Whatsapp or text

07592307394



Shepton Farm Vets Community Listings

Small flock of friendly pedigree, registered Hampshire Down ewes. Our ewes have always been sired by pedigree rams from a top award-winning breeder. Reluctant sale due to house move from our Somerset small holding, near Wells. We have 3 breeding ewes, 2 shearlings and 3 2023 lambs. We are keen to sell them as a complete flock. All vaccinated and wormed. Please phone 07790491081 if interested

If you have an advertisement, please email this to Farm.Animal@sheptonvets.com



Herd Health Planning and Review

Ask us about it

