

## Practical Selective Dry Cow Therapy

- Anna Hares

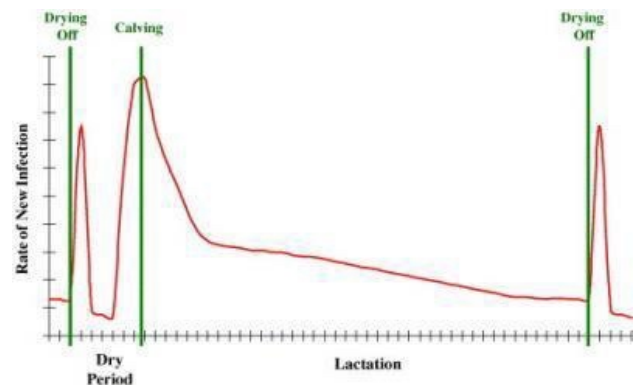
Last month, with the help of some udders collected from fallen stock, on a day that thankfully wasn't too hot or fly heavy (!) we held a practical selective dry cow therapy lunch and learn. We started with a theory session, considering the benefits of selective dry cow therapy. For the cow, if she hasn't had mastitis and has had a low cell count, being treated with a sealant only vs sealant and antibiotic lowers her chance of clinical mastitis in the next lactation. This is because the good bacteria in the udder is preserved.... It's not just about keeping your milk buyer happy!



We discussed the importance of antibiotic tubes for cows that have a sub clinical infection in their udder, the dry period gives the best chance of curing these existing infections. Antibiotic tubes are not so good at preventing new infections in the dry period, especially in the important risk period just before calving when the cow's immune system drops. Antibiotics given at dry off are no substitute for poor hygiene around calving, by this point levels of antibiotic in the udder won't be high enough to prevent new infections anyway. Correctly infused teat sealant should be given to all cows, as this forms a barrier to new infections entering the udder. Modern milking cows are not particularly good at forming keratin plugs at the end of their teats, 50% cows have open teat ends 10 days after dry off leaving them very susceptible to new infections if not given sealant.

Best practice is to look back at a cow's entire lactation of cell counts, if this cannot be done looking at the last 3 month's recordings then before dry off is next best. Milk yield at dry off, teat condition (presence of warts or teat end damage), summer mastitis risk, cow temperament on the day and of course, mastitis and cell count history should all be factored in when choosing which cows to just give sealant only to.

How good is your dry period at allowing infected cows to cure and preventing new infections? More than 85% of high cell count cows should have a low cell count at calving and less than 10% of cows that were low cell count at dry off should calve in with a high cell count. Less than 1 in 12 cows should have mastitis in the first 30 days. This information is easily accessible through Herd Companion, ask your routine vet!



No one time and place that suits all farm set ups for where and how we dry cows off. Some key points shared below;

- Always apply a Pre Dip for 30 seconds before wiping with clean paper towel
- Surgical spirit soaked cotton wool should then be used focusing on the teat end – cotton wool should come away clean!
- The order in which you clean and then tube matters – clean furthest teats away from you first and then seal those closest to you. Cleaning then sealing the far 2 teats and then the closest 2 teats can be more manageable than doing 4 and 4.
- Keep hold of the teat once you've started cleaning with cotton wool and only let go once sealed (minimises the chance of contamination and helps keep the cow still!). An assistant passing tubes is a great help!
- Adjust how far up the teat you pinch depending on teat size, you want the sealant to occupy the teat end
- Partial insertion technique – only remove half the cap on the sealant tube
- Put cows on clean, hard standing for 30 mins afterwards to allow musculature of teat end to close down
- Avoid cows running immediately after dry off as this has been shown to dislodge sealant

# What is Sustainable Livestock Production?

Last month myself and Harry went to an XL Farm Vets meeting to discuss sustainability. Although we hear the word sustainability regularly, I must hold my hands up and say that I went to this meeting not really knowing what it was.



So, what did I learn. Well, I think actually there are probably many different “Definitions” and it depends on who you are as to what it means. For example, if you are a processor of livestock products, a sustainability tag is currently a useful marketing tool. As a consumer, sustainability has many emotional connotations, however, there were many discussions that the public perception of sustainability probably isn’t actually very good with regards to carbon output and kg of products produced.

As farmers and vets, maybe I’m biased, but I think we probably are already striving for sustainable production. To me, sustainable livestock production should be efficient at producing good quality food, in a manner that can be repeated for generations to come. Livestock practices need to ensure maximum food production whilst allowing wildlife to thrive, resulting in maintaining our biodiversity.

Although we all love our work, fundamentally sustainability also means our businesses needs to be profitable. Our cattle and sheep need to achieve good reproductive efficiency, our holdings need to have as little disease as possible, overall we need our animals to be healthy.

In summary, what did I learn? We still have so much more to understand, for example learning about areas such as soil health, the intricate microbial populations that can be the difference between a successful crop and a failed one. Although there is lots of knowledge to be gained, we can still strive to work on the areas that we know can improve the sustainability of your farm, for example ensuring heifers are calved at two years old, making sure infectious diseases such as BVD, which we know reduced production is not circulating.



There is now available funding for Sheep, Beef and Dairy farms, through the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway, that can be used to go through fertility management and infectious disease control on your farm, you’ll even get some BVD testing paid for too! Please speak to Charlotte in the office about booking your visit.

- Bibby Thomas

## Animal Health and Welfare Review, Our findings

- Emily Zwamborn

The Animal Health and Welfare Review (AHWR) is a new government initiative that was launched earlier this year. Our vets have been conducting visits under this initiative to our dairy, beef and sheep clients in order to review herd health and provide a bespoke visit and report to our farms. The aim is to improve animal health and welfare across the livestock industry through this funded visit.

The basic requirements for signing up for the AHWP initiative:

- BPS Registered Farms
- Dairy Cattle: 11 or more animals; must do BVD bulk tank PCR OR youngstock screen as part of AHWR
- Beef Cattle: 11 or more animals; must do BVD youngstock screen
- Sheep: 21 or more animals

Some examples of what we have done on AHWR visits so far include: on-farm training refreshers, youngstock health, flock health, mobility and lameness, transition management, BVD and Johnes control, and trace element status to name a few. We have a diverse team of farm animal veterinarians with various areas of expertise able to deliver a bespoke visit under the AHWR. If you qualify and are interested in signing up and scheduling a visit under the AHWR, please contact the practice for further information on how to do so.



# Prioritising your needs with student teaching

This month, we are welcoming the new final year Bristol Vet Students to Shepton Vets. These students have chosen to carry out an extra two-week farm rotation with us.

This year, the number of students on rotations has increased, which means that there is a higher likelihood of a vet student attending visits with your routine vet. While students generally add value to a visit, it may occasionally result in a slightly longer visit than usual. You may notice "Student teaching time - free of charge" on your invoice, which acknowledges the time spent providing practical training to the future vets in our industry.

We understand that time is precious on busy working farms, and visits need to be efficient. Therefore, please communicate with your routine vet to ensure that we are delivering the best service for your business while also providing student training.



We aim to provide the students with a wide variety of experiences during their rotations with us, so they can gain a comprehensive understanding of what it's like to work in a farm practice. This means they will not only be shadowing vets but also vet techs. Working with the techs gives students an excellent opportunity to develop practical skills in key areas that form the foundation of their knowledge about the industry, farming systems, animal husbandry, and observational skills. These skills are essential for success in the animal health sector, so please don't be surprised to see students working with the tech team during procedures such as vaccinations, disbudding, fly control, and TB testing.

With your permission, students may be asked to collect certain information during routine visits. Examples of this could include weighing weaned calves or measuring the length of the feed barrier in the dry cow shed. These tasks not only provide us with useful information about your herd but also offer a valuable learning opportunity for the students to gain practical understanding of data collection and interpretation.

We look forward to working with you to provide the best training for our future farm vets.

- Rosie Lyle

## Training course dates

**LIMITED SPACES**

Thursday 6th July-  
Intro to Calf Rearing  
9am to 5pm

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

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

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

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

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Weds & Thurs 29th & 30th Nov-  
Herdsperson certificate



Ask us for more info

Last few spaces  
available



Foot Trimming  
Wednesday 21st June  
10am- 4pm (lunch included)

Join Charlie for practical training sessions, offering knowledge in bovine hoof care. £250 + VAT per person

--- Vet tech services available to save you time and money ---

# AN INTRODUCTION TO CALF REARING

Heifer calves are the future of your herd. - Rearing dairy heifer calves is the second largest annual expense on a dairy farm, and the cost of rearing a heifer is not recovered until her second lactation. Good calf-rearing practices are necessary to maximise good economic and animal health outcomes on your farm. Our new course, Introduction to Calf Rearing is taking place on Thursday 6th of July. This is a full-day course covering colostrum management, environmental assessment, nutrition, growth, and prevention and treatment of common diseases such as calf diarrhoea and pneumonia. This course is a mixture of lecture, discussion, cases and practical hands-on experience. Are you employing new calf-rearers on your farm? Or interested in a refresher course? Contact the Farm Office or speak to one of our vets to find out more. Spaces are limited, so early registration recommended!



## Meet Kate Travitzky

Where are you from/where do you live now?

Originally from Worcestershire, I now live in sunny Keinton Mandeville.

Where/what did you study?

I studied veterinary medicine in Glasgow (the best city)

How long have you worked here?

I first started in 2011.

What did you do before?

I worked as a vet in Mid-Wales. Before that I worked in a pet shop and at a sheep AI centre.

Why did you want to do this job?

I used to love helping with lambing and calving on the farm near where I grew up, so being a vet seemed like a good idea!

What do you like best about it?

Calvings and lambings are my favourite, along with chatting to farmers and driving around in the sunshine.

Favourite animal and why?

Sheep. Because they are fluffy!

Do you have any pets?

18 sheep, 2 chickens, 2 dogs. A cat and a rabbit. (and 3 children!)

Favourite biscuit?

Chocolate Hobnob

Interesting fact about you?

When I'm not farm vetting, I sometimes help at the maternity hospital assisting birthing humans.

# MEDICINE DELIVERY

Ask about our  
Medicine Delivery  
Service



## Medicine Update

The pharmacy is currently in a healthy stock position across our range of products and a continued positive outlook for the next few months.

With strong stock levels on Spotinor and Enovex make sure you grab your parasite and wormer treatments!

Dont Forget, as our clients,  
you can order medicines  
at any time of day by  
Whatsapp or text.



07592 307 394

Just send :

Account Surname, Farm name,  
Collection time (if same day)  
and the medecines you  
need/quantity

## Shepton Vets Community

Do you have any surplus heifers, a bull that you no longer require, or perhaps you're looking for a relief milker. If this is the case, then let us know. We will be allocating a little portion of our newsletter for you to advertise your stock or employment opportunities on your farm. We are hoping to connect our Shepton Vets Community by offering our platform seen by many in our community.

If you have an advertisement, please email this to  
[Farm.Animal@sheptonvets.com](mailto:Farm.Animal@sheptonvets.com)

[farm.animal@sheptonvets.com](mailto:farm.animal@sheptonvets.com)  
Call: 01749 341 761



Office Opening Hours Monday-Friday: 8am - 5:30pm  
Saturday : 8:30am - 12:30pm