

December 2021
Edition

Farm Newsletter



Director Changes

99 years ago Mr Patterson put up his plate in Shepton Mallet and so began the story of the now named "Shepton Vets." 2022 will represent our centenary year and we have a number of really exciting events planned for each month – we look forward to you joining us for lots of them.

99 years later and Shepton Vets employs 63 staff across two sites covering all farm and small animal species. When a business reaches such a size there is always going to be someone leaving, someone new arriving and at least one person on maternity leave! With our continued strong focus on being an independent practice - with the decision makers being the ones who work in the business (and maybe calve your cow in the middle of the night), we are really pleased to announce some exciting changes to the leadership team. Charlie and Anna are increasing their shareholding within the business and stepping up to the main board and Rob will be buying into the business and coming onto the farm board. Succession is such a key part of our independent practice and the bringing on of such great, driven clinicians bursting with fresh ideas is a fantastic way to start the next 100 years of Shepton vets.

As many of you now know, I have decided to leave Shep-

ton vets next July. This is due to a desire to do something else in my life and pursue different business interests. There is going to be plenty of time to handover my regular clients and responsibilities to the fantastic team I will be leaving behind, and I will be staying in the area so it will not be goodbye for good.

On behalf of all the directors I would like to wish you and your families a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Oliver



Shepton Vet's AI Course

Last month we held our first AI course with the help of our new training cow. We welcomed a group of 6 enthusiastic and determined young people from as far as Cornwall to Shepton Vets. One delegate had done a course many years ago and wanted to improve his results on farm, we were pleased to identify an area of his technique that by changing would result in much improved conception rates. Delegates started in the classroom with Charlie where anatomy, the theory of AI and fertility management were covered before moving onto tracts from the abattoir and then a lot of time was spent passing AI guns through the training cow's cervix.

Anna and Alan Steer from AB Cow support then spent 2 days on farm with the use of lots of barren cows, many of them bulling, working on gun placement and semen thawing. All successfully passed the course with the use of the training cow noticeably improving how quickly they picked up this new skill. We will be visiting these newly qualified AI persons this month to check how they are getting on as we realise this can be a difficult skill to master and good support is often needed after the course.

Well done to all who attended, it was a really enjoyable course to run. **Next course is 9th–11th Feb. Anna**



Meds line Ordering Service

We now have a “**Meds line**” this means that you now don't have to wait for the farm office to be open, you can now order any time of any day that suits you!

What do you need to know?

- Medicine orders will be ready between **09:30-17:30 Mon to Fri** and **09:00-12:30 Sat**
- All medicine orders by text must allow **30 mins before collection.**
- All text medicine orders received **after 17:30 Mon-Fri will be ready by 09:30 the following day.**
- Any medicine orders received **after 12:30 on a Saturday and on a Sunday will be ready by 09:30 on the following Monday**

When placing your medicine order:

- Contact number for Text or Whatsapp Medicine ordering: **07592 307394**

Message Layout: Account Surname, Farm Name, Collection time if same day then list medicines and quantity followed by the word End

Example: *Smith, Shepton Vets Farm, 11am, Metacam x 2, Ubroseal Herd Pack x 1. End*

Please note this contact number is for text and whatsapp messaging medicine orders only.

This is a trial period for us to understand what works for you and what doesn't. The times stated of the ordering process will be reviewed after the first month's trial has finished. Please be patient during this trial period, we welcome all feedback on our new ordering service

Vin

Interested in producing more milk without increasing feed costs?

High feed costs this winter means there is particular focus on producing more milk from forage and without increasing feed rate. This is challenging as forage quality appears very average after a cool May. Focusing on the right cows might well help you achieve higher production as follows:

1. **SOFT cows (Sick, old, fat, twins)** are at risk of ketosis after calving. Ketosis is associated with low yields, either directly from lower intakes and poor feed conversion, or from health problems like retained cleansing and LDAs. Recognising these cows at 3 weeks before calving and giving a **Kexxtone bolus** reduces the risk of ketosis by 75%.
2. SOFT cows are not always recognised and some cows will calve twins unexpectedly, or others will have a difficult calving. Use of **Cholvite boluses is a new approach**. These are available from us and contain choline to help liver function, vitamin E to boost immune function, and will boost dry matter intakes. They work for 5 days and can be given to any problem cow around calving. The cost is £8 per bolus. Talk to your routine vet for more information and to trial the boluses.
3. **Dry period length** needs to be 40-70 days for optimal milk production and quality. Uniform allows us to analyse the range in dry period across your herd. In one herd, the decision was taken to reduce dry period length from 56 to 50 days, with a gain of 150 litres milk per cow expected.
4. **Digital dermatitis control**. Estimates for milk loss from a case vary but can be as high as 150 litres. Putting in place a good footbath regime now is essential as infection tends to build through the winter.
5. **Cow time budgets**. Cows need sufficient time lying down and cudding for optimal milk production. Cubicle comfort can impact on lying time and milk yields. We have a time lapse camera and can set this up in your cow shed to monitor cows behaviour over 24 hours. This can help identify issues with cubicles and lying times, but also feed availability.

Talk to Paddy for more details.

Paddy

Pilton Discussion Group



The start-up meeting for the Pilton Discussion Group was held on the 8th of November. We saw a great turnout, and the evening included a dinner and presentation, fol-

lowed by good discussion on the topic of feeding calves from birth to weaning. If you would like a copy of the presentation, please get in touch with the office and a copy will be emailed to you.

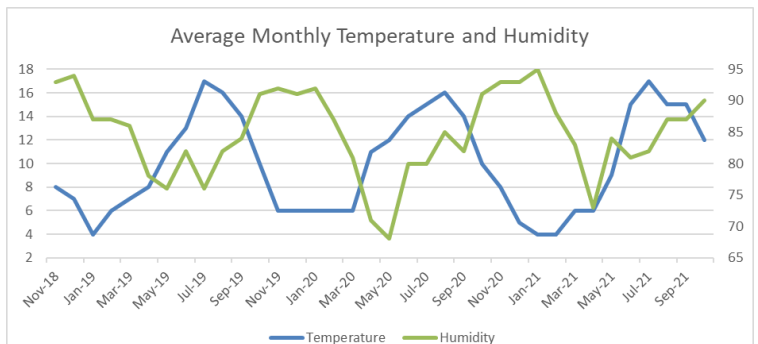
We would like to invite you to join us for our second Pilton Discussion Group of the winter season, which will be held on the Tuesday 1st February 2022. This time we will be discussing sustainable parasite control principals. We will explore why and how we can incorporate these principals into our herds parasite management plans to build cattle immunity, reduce the chance of developing resistance to wormers and harness the power of the dung beetle on your farms.

Emily

Someone's Coughing, And It's Not Covid

We find ourselves once again in a time of cool weather, fewer hours of daylight, and rain, and with this more animals being housed. Many factors act in concert to cause an increase in incidence of pneumonia in calves, with higher levels of moisture, added environmental stressors, different ages housed under one roof, and an increase in stocking density being a few of the common culprits.

We recently evaluated a three year trend on sales of respiratory disease treatments (Zeleris and Zactran) in comparison to doses of calf respiratory vaccinations sold. We compared these results alongside weather trends (average temperature and humidity) to evaluate annual variations.



Graph 2: Average monthly temperature and humidity over time from November 2018 to October 2021.

Graph 2 shows the temperature and humidity trends from November 2018 up to October 2021 based on monthly averages. Humidity is inversely proportional to temperature, with higher humidity seen during winter months and lower during late spring and summer. As you can see in the graph, the relative humidity over the 2020-2021 winter was higher than that seen during the 2019-2020 winter, which may in part contribute to higher incidence of pneumonia over the past 12 months. Cooler weather during winter with a more abrupt increase in temperature in late spring, higher humidity, and a later start to the growing season likely meant animals were housed for longer, which would be another contributing factor to increased incidence of pneumonia.

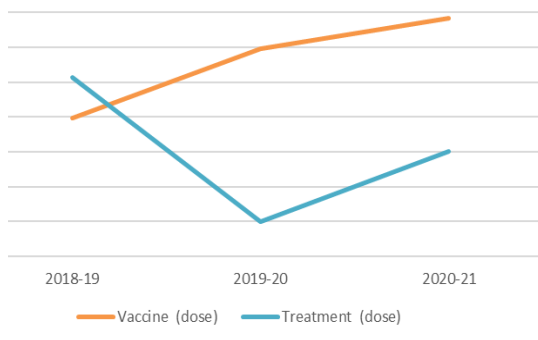
So what is the take-home message?

With increase in sales of respiratory vaccines, we have seen a decrease in need for medical treatment of pneumonia cases. There will always be year-to-year variation due to weather (temperature and humidity). Preventative measures (in addition to vaccinating your calves) include modifications to the environment to allow for improved ventilation (fresh air and air speed), less moisture (keeping bedding dry, for example), decreased stressful events, and fewer mixing of age groups. Remember, **AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE.**

We hope to see a continuation of these trends, striving for improved preventative measures and less need for treatment of disease in the years to come.

Emily

Pneumonia Vaccine vs. Treatment Sales



Graph 1. Pneumonia vaccinations versus treatment sales.

Graph 1 indicates the total number of vaccine doses sold annually in comparison to the number of doses sold of Zeleris on Zactran (calculated based on a 100kg calf). The period between November 2018 and October 2019 saw more doses of pneumonia medications sold than of respiratory vaccinations. This shows that there were more animals treated for respiratory disease than those given preventative doses of vaccinations. The numbers changed the following year, with a significant decline in sales of pneumonia medications and increase in sales of respiratory vaccinations. Vaccination sales have continued to increase through to this year, with nearly 3,000 additional doses sold in the last 12 months in comparison to two years ago. There has been a slight increase in pneumonia medication sales from last year to this year. Weather (temperature and humidity) were considered when looking at the results, and data on this can be found in Graph 2.

As part of our centenary celebrations Paddy along with other vets both past and present are compiling a book about the practice and how it has changed over the years. He would be very interested in hearing from anyone that has any photos or stories that they recall from the 70's & 80's. Please email paddy.gordon@sheptonvets.com Thank you!

YFC Rally at Shepton—Celebrating 100 Years Of Shepton Vets

The first of our centenary celebrations will be held on Monday 31st January. We are hosting a Shepton Vets Young Farmer Rally. Our Mini Rally, will be similar to normal Young Farmer rallies, where Clubs show off their skills, however at the Shepton Vets Rally, we want you to demonstrate your veterinary skills to us!!

We are looking for local Young Farmer Clubs to submit a team of around 5-7 member to compete. We will have several stations for you to show off your skills around Bovine Reproduction, Foot trimming, Sheep Veterinary Skills as well as Cat and Dog First Aid.

Whilst competing you will all be able to have a look around the practice to see what goes on behind the scenes. At each of the stations you will be awarded points for how well you complete the tasks. Shepton Vets will be awarding the winning club £100 in prize money and sponsoring the winning clubs polo shirts next year.

We will announce the winners on the night after the points have been counted and verified, whilst you enjoy a Pasty on us! Please contact the practice to book in your teams.

Bibby

Dates for your diary

Lambing Workshop

Monday 24th January 2022 7pm-9pm

We are hosting our practical lambing workshop at the practice. This workshop is aimed at smallholders and novice sheep keepers to give you the knowledge of how best to manage your ewes before lambing, what equipment you might need and it will provide information around common problems encountered at lambing time. You will also be able to practice delivering lambs on our lambing ewe "Betsy the Beltex".

£30 +VAT

YFC Rally Event

Monday 31st January 2022

Please see Bibby's article in this newsletter.

Mastering Medicines

Thursday 27th January 2022 11am-2pm

This course a red tractor approved medicine course focusing on the correct usage of medicines on farm.

£50 +VAT

Pilton Discussion Group—Sustainable Parasite Control

Tuesday 1st February 2022 7.30pm

Please see Emily's article in this newsletter.

DIY AI Course

Wednesday 9th February—Friday 11th February

10am—3pm

Charlie and Anna will be running this 3 day course which will give delegates a licenced AI certificate. The course includes a follow up meeting with Anna or Charlie on your farm a month after the course to check progress and iron out any difficulties you may have experienced. We will have the use of our new training cow to aid learning this new skill as well as the use of live cows and tracts from the abattoir.

£550 + VAT



Shepton Vets

Christmas Opening hours



December'21	Opening Times	Delivery Service
Fri 24 th	08:00 - 16:00	N/A
Sat 25 th	Out of hours service only	Closed
Sun 26 th	Out of hours service only	Closed
Mon 27 th	Out of hours service only	Closed
Tue 28 th	Out of hours service only	Closed
Wed 29 th	08:00 - 17:30	No delivery Service
Thu 30 th	08:00 - 17:30	No delivery Service
Fri 31 st	08:00 -16:00	N/A
January'22	Opening Times	Delivery Service
Sat 1 st	Out of hours service only	N/A
Sun 2 nd	Out of hours service only	N/A
Mon 3 rd	Out of hours service only	N/A
Tue 4 th	08:00 - 17:30	Delivery Service
Wed 5 th	08:00 - 17:30	Delivery Service
Thu 6 th	08:00 - 17:30	Delivery Service
Fri 7 th	08:00 - 17:30	N/A

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Office opening hours

Monday – Friday: 8am—5.30pm

Saturday: 8.30am—12.30pm

Emergency Service

We provide a 24 hour emergency service.

If you need assistance out of our normal working hours,
please telephone 01749 341 761

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