

# January Farm News



## Directors Review

2015 saw changes in personnel with Charlie Neale, Kate Burnby, Bibby Thomas, Ralph Drouin and Clare Maggs joining us. Charlie is championing **selective dry cow therapy**, and has developed reports to help ensure the right cows get the right treatment. Kate Burnby has brought a great deal of knowledge of grazing systems and has been assessing trace elements through liver biopsies on several farms. Clare Maggs, as our 1st Vet Tech has increased the range of services available, and we now offer regular ketotesting, mobility scoring and stress-free disbudding. Additional vets in Bibby and Ralph mean we can get a vet to you promptly when needed, and have extra capacity for TB testing.

The coming six months will bring particular challenges around milk price. We have worked really hard to ensure that our services and prices reflect the current situation that is affecting us all. We offer the most competitive medicine prices and many farms now take up the 5% discount offered for direct debit payment. We now have **routine fertility work, with no visit charges**. Some farms have increased the frequency of routines as they recognise the value of regular fertility work. After all we want to have cows pregnant for when the milk price does pick up. We want to help you with cash flow and recognise that paying for vaccines can be a headache, so if vaccines are ordered in January, we are offering to spread payment over the following 3 months.

**Antibiotic resistance** has become a major human and animal health issue, with one report identifying 25,000 human deaths in France as due to antibiotic resistance. The farming and veterinary sector needs to play its part and **reduce the use of antibiotics classified as critically important to human health**. This includes Marbox, Cefimam LC and Cefimam DC, Cevaxel and Naxcel. We will work with you to identify where changes may be required, find alternative antibiotics and ensure appropriate use so that there is no compromise to animal health. We will be holding a number of meetings and workshops on this topic throughout the year.

**We wish you a successful 2016.**

## On Call at Christmas - Sotirios

I was the lucky vet to be on call during the Christmas period. I was fortunate, the only emergency I had on Christmas day, was to burn the nuts for the turkey stuffing. On Boxing day though, I had a selection of calls.

The farm in question has a low incidence of mastitis and is particularly good in detecting and dealing with cases of mastitis early. Unfortunately as can happen, some cases are unresponsive despite our best efforts. The poor cow succumbed to E coli mastitis which turned the milk quarter into a massive abscess. Following prolonged treatment, we decided the most wise course of action was to amputate the teat. Although this is a salvage treatment, it will allow constant draining of the contents, ensuring the cow has a chance to survive.



Following application of local anaesthetic, the operation was quick with the desired outcome.

## Dates for your diary:

Practical Calving Course 20th January £75+VAT

Responsible use of Medicines Workshop—17th February 10am –2pm £75+ vat

*Next month's discussion club meeting will be on Monday 1st February on 'Milk Drop'*

## Why Do We Vaccinate For IBR and BVD Again??

The majority of Dairy herds that work with Shepton Veterinary Group vaccinate against BVD and Leptospirosis. Some have been doing this for a very long time. This is excellent proactive disease prevention. But when vaccination has been done for so long, it is worth reminding yourself why you started, and why you continue to do it?

BVD and Leptospirosis both cause a cow to become sick with milk drop. Outbreaks of Leptospirosis used to be associated with "Flabby bag" – not a phrase heard commonly these days and yet if protection is not secured against this disease then this condition would soon be seen again. The immunosuppressive effects of BVD lead to cows and calves becoming sick with other diseases – the underlying cause of scour and pneumonia in calves are often identified as BVD. Perhaps most significantly, BVD and Leptospirosis are both causes of abortion in adult cattle, frequently in high numbers, and it is here they often prove most costly.

Vaccination is not a silver bullet, but by employing it appropriately we reduce the routes of opportunity the disease has, along with the associated high costs. Vaccination is a means to save money by reducing disease. Don't forget to protect your herd against BVD and Leptospirosis before turnout this spring.

Speak to a member of staff about the cost of BVD/Leptospirosis vaccination this season.

**Plus if you commit to purchasing your vaccine with us in January, the cost can be spread across 3 months. This applies to Huskvac and IBR, as well as BVD and Leptospirosis.**

If you would like help with vaccinating your herd, our Vet Tech Clare Maggs can assist with vaccination programmes. Please contact the practice for more details.

## Daisy Club Meetings

Topics and dates have been set for the 2016 series of Daisy Club meetings. Our first meeting will be held at 11–2pm on Thursday 28th January 2016 to discuss Selective Dry Cow Therapy. If you milk record or run Interherd on your farm we can analyse your herd data to produce an informative and useful meeting pack. We will also anonymously benchmark your data against other Shepton Vet farms to allow you to review your performance in comparison to others based in the same geographical area—much more useful than using national comparables.

Feedback from clients who have attended previous meetings highlights that they leave the sessions with a good insight into farm performance along with some key concepts to explore further on-farm so why not give Daisy Club a go? Later in the year we will also be looking at the Vital 90 project (hopefully incorporating this into a farm visit), Disease Costs and the ever popular topic of Fertility. To book a place or for more details please contact the practice.

## Monthly Case Study: Copper Deficiency

### Key Findings - Reduced fertility and productivity

Do you notice anything unusual about the cow on the left? She is demonstrating one of the "classical" signs of copper deficiency...a pale ring around the eyes known as "spectacles".

We can't make a diagnosis of trace mineral deficiency based on a single sign, especially those involving subtle coat changes as so many conditions can affect this. However in this case a routine blood screen after disappointing fertility results confirmed low copper. Copper supplement was increased to include a bolus as there was already reasonably high levels of copper in feed with high bioavailability.

In our area high levels of molybdenum and sulphur can affect bioavailability of our copper. About two weeks after this an increase in the cows appetite and production was noted. We will monitor them closely, and take some liver tests in the Spring to ensure there is no over supplementation, and will update on performance!

This highlights the importance of regular fertility visits and acting upon information the cows are telling us, if the fertility is not what is expected it's time to question why, and ensure you get things back on track as quickly as possible.

