

July Farm News



Directors Update:

We are pleased to announce that as of the 1st of July, Oliver Tilling has become a director of Shepton Vets.

Oliver joined the practice back in 2010 and has become an integral part of the team. He is our calf and youngstock specialist and has supported MSD with their Keeping Britain's Youngstock Healthy programme. Oliver has been developing our youngstock services over the last 6 months. He has also taken on the role of purchasing director for our veterinary medicines, working with Sharon our practice manager to get the best deals for the practice and for you.

We are delighted Oliver is committing his future to the practice, to further strengthen Shepton Vets, and allow us to support all your needs.

Annual Farm Walk

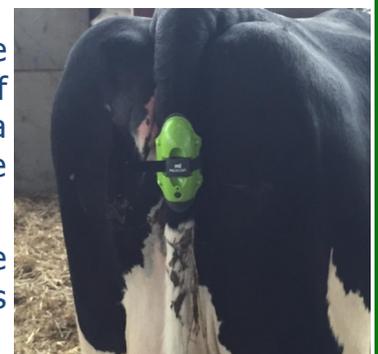
Last week we held a farm walk at Brickhouse Farm, Wanstrow, with the kind permission of the Pole Family. We didn't let the appalling weather get us down and a great day was had by all.

Visitors had a chance to look round the farm and meet all the suppliers involved in this high performing herd and to look at the 'green' bedding / recycled manure solids used on farm.

Cows looked exceptionally clean and comfortable, with excellent cubicle acceptance and lying times. The farm is currently producing over 36 litres per cow in milk per day, and this is down to good genetics, forage and health (BVD-free farm), but also due to fertility management focussed on getting cows back in calf promptly. One of the challenges is high yielding cows have reduced heat expression, this means timed AI is used on a 'Vet-synch' method to maximise fertility. Talk to your routine vet for more details.

We ran a competition on the day to identify the MooCall device and this was won by Dominic Salter of Y Farms. The MooCall device sends a text message to alert farmers when a cow is calving. If you would like more information on the MooCall device please contact the office or speak to your routine vet.

Thanks to everyone who came along and to all the other suppliers on the day. If you have any further questions or would like any advice on the topics of the day, speak to Paddy or your vet.



Dates for your Diary

Responsible use of Medicines—26th July

Dutch Foot Trimming Course—21st September

For more details about our training services email: training@sheptonvets.com

Bluetongue vaccine available

The latest from APHA is that there is an 80% risk of the disease reaching us by September. The notifiable disease has re-emerged in France in 2015 since the compulsory vaccination programme ceased, allowing progressive drop in herd immunity. The disease is most likely to enter the UK via midges which can travel considerable distances (easily across the channel) and is also now known to overwinter in midges or host ruminant species, as well as crossing the placenta to offspring. There are a number of different strains, but the one circulating in France and likely to be of issue to us is serotype 8 (BTV-8).



The disease causes swelling of the head neck and mouth, with drooling, nasal discharge and oral ulcers. There may be stiffness and reluctance to move, with a fever. There may be reddening and erosions on the teats. In sheep the most likely clinical impact is reduced reproductive performance which can lead to devastating breeding seasons. Milk drop in dairy cows may be significant over time combined with reduced reproductive performance. Movement restrictions would inevitably affect trade for both beef and dairy, as such, vaccination is part of a strategy to reduce restrictions on movement.



The vaccine is available by order from the 4th July. It can be given from 3 months of age (cattle) / 6 weeks old (sheep). Like most vaccines, it requires a primary course of 2 doses given 3 weeks apart and the onset of immunity is 25 days after the second dose. Annual boosters are required. It is licensed to be used during pregnancy. The vaccine is available in 50 dose vials for both cattle and sheep.

Please contact the practice for any further information.

Oliver



Charlie, Bibby and Alex have been out performing corrective surgery on umbilical hernias on a flurry of calves recently.

A hernia is a protrusion of abdominal content through an opening in the body wall. An umbilical hernia results, when the hole in the body wall of a calf, which is present during foetal development to allow the umbilical cord to pass through to the placenta, fails to close soon after birth. On farm they may look similar to,

or be confused with, navel ill.

Umbilical hernias can be a hereditary condition, they are commonly seen in holstein-friesian cattle. It is also believed that there may also be environmental factors that increase the chances of a calf developing an umbilical hernia, for example, cutting the umbilical cord off too close to the body, excessive traction applied to a calf during calving and multiple calves housed together with insufficient water, which encourages navel sucking.



The size of the hernial defect, will determine the best treatment. Very small defects in young calves, may repair themselves, but larger hernias, are best managed with surgical correction.

The surgery involves full anaesthetic with the calf on its back. The aim of the surgery is to remove excess skin from around the hernia, remove any fibrous tissue and by using very strong and slowly dissolving stitches, close off the hernial defect. The calves will require post operative antibiotics and pain relief, we also require the farmer to keep the calf in a small pen for 4-6 weeks after the surgery has been performed.



This is to prevent the calf from excessive movement and minimise strain on the stitches placed. Hernia repair surgery is not always 100% successful, but most calves will go on to lead a productive life (84.6%). Generally, we would recommend against breeding replacement heifers from these individuals. The surgery is best done in the young calf, so

if you have any that need checking ask your vet next time we are on farm.

Alex