

August Farm News



Office News

Consumable Charge

We have made a number of changes to our charges in the past year to include dropping routine visit fees, 5% direct debit discount on medicines and lower medicine prices. We have now made the decision to levy a modest fee of £4.50 per visit to cover the consumables used during our work, which include gloves, Lubrel, syringes and needles, discarded medicines and disposal of medicines. This price will be charged when you have a routine or sick cow visit, but not on TB test visits. We will remove all injection fees, and there are no other changes to our hourly rate or visit fees. We think this strikes a fair balance, reflecting our increasing costs while also recognising this is a difficult time with farm gate prices. If you wish to discuss this then please contact any Director.

New Farm Office Administrator—Lindsey Baker

We are pleased to announce that Lindsey has joined the farm office team to assist with the Daisy Bureau and day to day duties in the office. Lindsey will be working Monday to Thursdays, from 9.30am –2.30pm.

Lindsey comes from a farming family and lives in Blackford, Wedmore with her husband Paul and two boys, Jack 4 and Oliver 2. She previously worked at Crown Pet foods in Castle Cary for the last 5 years, and is settling in well.



Booking TB Tests

As you know we have 3 dedicated TB testers at the practice. Whilst they are all qualified vets they are employed by us to TB test and are not able to carry out general clinical work whilst on farm.

If you have work which needs doing at the same time as the TB test please contact the practice to discuss your requirements.



Supporting the next generation

We are passionate about championing the next generation of farmers and regularly support the local young farmer clubs with training, practice visits and sponsorship.

This year we sponsored the Dairy Team Challenge at the Bath & West Show in June and are sponsoring the Dairy Future category at the Dairy Show in October.

Mid Somerset Show

The Mid Somerset Show returns on the 21st August. The practice stand is situated in the Upper Show field, stand P3, next to the Countryside ring and the food hall.

The stand will be showcasing the Farm and Pets departments, so come along and say hello to the team. We are also providing support for the show as the official Veterinary Surgeons.

Dates for your Diary

Dutch Foot Trimming Course—21st September

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

Preventing Problems in Fresh Calvers

For every milk fever case you see, there are typically ten other cows with less severe, or subclinical, hypocalcaemia. This milder calcium deficit increases the risk of milk fever, metritis, mastitis, ketosis or displaced abomasum soon after calving. The cows most at risk of hypocalcaemia are high yielders, Channel Islanders, older and over-conditioned cows, and those that had problems after calving in the last lactation. For these cows a standard fresh cow drink will not be enough to correct the subclinical hypocalcaemia and will not provide any "glucogenic" energy to reduce the risk of ketosis.



When you first notice cows off feed a single treatment by drenching with the pump delivers a large dose of calcium, plus glucogenic energy to reduce the risk of ketosis, and rehydrate the cow, all in one go. Rehydration is useful, because a dehydrated cow does not eat, so rehydration further reduces the risk of milk fever and ketosis.

We recommend Selekt Fresh Cow 500 sachets to add to the drench water for these cases and stock this alongside Restore sachets for sick/toxic animals, and Off Feed sachets for animals later in lactation who are more generally off feed. All are available at the practice and we can order in the pump system for you and train you and your farm staff in the safe use of it.

Velactis Update

Following a small number of cases of suspected adverse reaction following the use of Velactis at dry off the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) has suspended the marketing and use of this product in the UK. These cases mostly occurred in Denmark and appear to be due to hypocalcaemia at dry off. Further safety studies will be needed before this treatment is available again.



Cyclo Spray

We now stock a larger 422ml cyclo spray, an antibiotic spray suitable for the treatment of skin wounds, digital dermatitis and foot rot in cattle. The larger 422ml can works out slightly more economic than the smaller 211ml can, but we now keep both sizes in stock.

AI Case Study

A high yielding dairy herd milking 200 cows had always had good fertility. However over the last 18 months conception rates had gradually dropped from 25 to 20%. Investigations into infectious disease, nutrition and trace element deficiencies were unrewarding. Individual cow health and yield remained good. It was therefore decided to do an AI refresher course with both the farm team members responsible for serving cows.

Michael Head spent an hour with both the team members, and by going through a detailed checklist was able to identify issues around semen handling and AI technique. The black arrow shows when Michael visited and the blue line represents how the 3 month rolling mean conception rate has dramatically increased. The black line shows the 12 month rolling mean which shows conception rates have now returned to 25%, and could go higher still!



Shepton Vets have performed hundreds of AI refresher courses – and we have never failed to identify areas to improve around semen handling or AI technique or both!

If you would like to go on an AI refresher course please contact the surgery.
Oliver Tilling