

March Newsletter



Top Tips for Preventing LDA'S

We see the majority of LDAs within the practice in March – April, so here are 3 top tips to reduce the chances of your cows developing LDAs...

- **Do not allow far off dry cows to become too fat** – fat cows don't eat enough after calving! Body condition score should not increase during the dry period – we often see problems when far off dry cows are overfed; for example when they are turned out onto too much grass! If cows are fat ensure they receive a Kexxtone bolus, to reduce them from developing ketosis after calving which predisposes them to an LDA.
- **Ensure dry cows have enough feed space** – 1 metre / cow is the recommendation. We often see problems with LDAs when dry cow accommodation has been overstocked when there are lots of cows calving. If there is not enough feed space intakes will suffer and rumen fill will not be good enough to keep the abomasum in the correct position!
- **Minimise disease in the freshly calved cow**- being lame, getting mastitis, metritis or any other infection after calving will result in a cow having a reduced dry matter intake, increasing the likelihood of an LDA. Imrestor can be used to increase cow's white blood cells after calving, which improves her immunity to these diseases.



If you would like further advice speak to your routine vet or call the practice.

Anna Patch

Farmer Focus:

Nigel and Sue are fourth generation farmers running a 300 acre organic dairy farm near Shepton Mallet, the farm has been in the Sealey family for 120 years. One of the biggest challenges, aside from the milk price has been repeated bTB breakdowns in both the main herd and also 17 miles away in the young stock, a total loss of 36 animals in 2016. To overcome the challenges of bTB they have adapted and altered their business model radically.



All the remaining young stock have been brought back to the farm, thus removing the need for pre movement testing and reducing the opportunities for external infection.

The most radical step has come as a result of the couple's children hand raising an orphaned Simmental X Brown Swiss calf, "Calfie" (pictured). Nigel and Sue decided, since it was clear Calfie was going nowhere, to use her and her Sim x heifer friends as the basis for a multipurpose herd moving forwards.

Once calved they will join the milking herd, (if they milk well that is) where they will stay and be put in calf to dairy bulls, thus giving $\frac{3}{4}$ dairy progeny but with a beef stature and associated resilience.

If they do not milk so well they will be used as suckler cows or sold on. If/when the next bTB shutdown occurs the dairy cross calves can be suckled and sold as stores or direct to the abattoir as finished beef animals.

Nigel says 'We need to spread our bets and maximise the return per animal no matter which pathway they follow, we believe this model gives us the flexibility to achieve that goal so that the farm will survive the next 120 years intact'.

Dates for your Diary

Winter Discussion Meetings:

Revised Date—27th March: Join us for a Quiz Night and Fish & Chip supper

29th March: 5 Step Foot Trimming & Lameness Course

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

Confidence at Turnout:

We all know that trace amounts of copper, zinc, iodine, selenium and cobalt in the diet are needed to ensure optimum health for the herd. If a few animals are beginning to show signs of deficiency, then the rest of the herd may well have sub-clinical, hidden deficiencies which are already reducing growth rates, conception rates and milk production, and may also lead to difficulties at calving and affect the vigour of their calves. This year Shepton vets, as a member of XLVets, has a new high quality trace-element cattle bolus available, Oligovet Super Grazing. For cattle over 400kg, a single bolus given at turnout delivers trace-elements consistently throughout a full 8 months (250 days). This gives tremendous value for grazed animals, particularly if you consider the savings on labour for the season compared to other methods of mineral delivery.



Do it once. Do it right.

We are offering an introductory 20% discount for all new users: £6.36 vs. regular price of £7.95 per bolus. This equates to 2.5p per day for guaranteed delivery of trace-elements across the whole grazing period.

Team Shepton: Lottie Mayo

I started working at the practice nearly ten years ago – I'm not quite sure where that time has gone, but life has certainly changed quite a lot for me since I arrived. Having got married and had my little girl, who is now 17 months old we have officially outgrown the house I've been living in for the last ten years, so we are moving house next week, locally but somewhere with a bit more space for family life.



At work I continue to be very keen on infectious disease control on farm and have become an accredited veterinary advisor with the national Johne's disease control plan as well as being involved with the BVD free program and advising our clients on high health schemes for other diseases. I am also an enthusiastic surgeon so am often found doing hernia repairs or other surgical bits and pieces out on farm.

Mid-Somerset Show Annual Hedgelaying Competition at Wigmore Farm:

A record number of competitors and spectators came along to support the Mid-Somerset Show's Annual Hedgelaying competition. Shepton Vets and other local businesses are proud to support this traditional country craft. Well done to everyone who took part and congratulations to Clive Bethall who came 1st in the novice class and Alex Bown for coming 2nd in the open class.

Case Study: Advice at TB tests

TB testing. It's everyone's least favourite vet visit but sometimes it can be useful to look at these things from a different perspective. It can be a really useful herd health visit as it is probably the only time when you handle every animal in the herd. It is also a great time to pick the brains of the vet on anything that has been on your mind regarding your farm.



Recently at a TB test we spotted some bulling heifers that had supernumerary teats as well as horn buds that had not been removed as calves.

The farm had had a change of staff when these heifers were little and they had slipped through the net of routine treatments. Spotting them at bulling age meant that these things could be dealt with without causing any stress to an in calf animal, and should avoid any issues with the udder/milking once they have calved in.

It also provided a good opportunity on one of our beef herds to dehorn and castrate some calves that had not been rubber ringed at birth as well as discussing the timing of worm and fluke treatments. Often farmers use treatments at housing, but it can be more effective to leave treatments for a month after housing to allow any recently ingested fluke and worms to mature to a stage where the drugs will be more effective. Often TB testing over the winter months can provide a good opportunity to get these treatments done.

Lottie Mayo