

November Newsletter



Dairy Show Dairy Farmer of the Year

We presented our nominations for Shepton Vets Dairy Farmer of the Year at the Dairy Show and asked for your votes to find our winner. Congratulations to the Cradocks, from Evercreech, and to Simon Wells, from Camerton, who tied, each receiving the same number of votes. We think it only fair that they share the trophy for six months each!



Steve and Matthew Cradock were nominated due to their exceptionally low mastitis rate of 7.4%, meaning 7.4 cases per 100 cows per year. This is achieved while maintaining an average cell count of 134. Mastitis rates for the UK are typically 45% and an achievable target is 30%. This exceptionally low mastitis rate saves them around £9,000 per year for their 200 cow herd.



Simon Wells was nominated because of his efforts to reduce lameness, now achieving a mobility score of 8%, compared to UK average figures of around 30%, while the practice average is 17%.

This saves him money with less cows to treat, less milk lost and fewer culls due to lameness. We estimate that this herd saves around £11,000 per year compared to the practice average of 17%.

If you would like to know more about production disease and their costs then sign up for our Daisy Club meeting on 18th November. The meeting takes place from 11am-2pm and a fish and chip lunch is included in the price of £25+VAT. To gain maximum benefit from this meeting, we do require access to your data.

Client achievements: Clare Miles of Witham Hall Farm

Clare Miles won Champion Calf with the beautiful Witham Hall Pepper Robin, also scooping the prize for Champion Showmanship. Clare went on to the Nationals at Malvern All Britain All Breeds Show 18+19th October and was placed in 6th place. Congratulations to Clare and all the family for their achievements with Pepper Robin.



National Johne's Management Plan (NJMP) and what it means for you

Over 80% of milk produced in the UK is now supplied to purchasers that have committed to delivering the NJMP through their farmers. These milk purchasers are all implementing strategies to encourage their farmers to actively engage with Johne's control, with help from BCVA Accredited Johne's Veterinary Advisors. Milk purchasers that have committed to the NJMP include Barbers, Arla, Dairy Crest, First Milk, Medina and Muller Wiseman.



NML have introduced a new risk assessment tool to help farmers take practical steps to control Johne's disease and to monitor how their control strategies are working. For Herdwise clients this is included in their subscription and is recommended to be done at least annually with your vets involvement in developing and continuing to improve your plan.

Alex and Lottie are both BCVA Accredited Johne's Veterinary Advisors, so as a practice we are well placed to help you to take practical steps suitable for your farm to control this important and costly disease. If you have not had a risk assessment or review done in the last year, give us a call to book one in, and help to protect the health and productivity of your herd for the future.

If you would like to receive our newsletter by email, please advise the office team or drop an email to: training@sheptonvets.com.

Dates for your Diary

Winter Discussion Meetings: BVD Free - 8th November & Youngstock -12th December

18th November: Daisy Club—Production & Disease

23rd November: Dutch Foot Trimming course • 12th –14th December : DIY AI Course—Somerset

13th December: Responsible use of Medicines

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

bTB Herd Level Reports:

From August APHA have been sending farms who have had a *new* TB breakdown information containing a TB history for the herd, movement details, the strain of bTB, and a map showing other TB breakdowns in the area. The different strains of bTB can be associated with specific areas. The bTB strain for East Somerset is '21' but in Gloucestershire it could be 9, 10 or 17. It is useful to know this information as I recently tested a herd, which a purchased cow had been identified as a reactor at an earlier test. The owner felt that the cow had been infected before it was purchased but on checking with APHA, the TB strain was 21; this cow had been infected **after** purchase.

APHA are not sending bTB Herd Level Reports straight to your vets, however it is useful to share with your vets to help give specific advice to reduce the risks of TB to a farm. If you do receive a report and would like to try to do something about protecting your herd and livelihood; or if you would like to know what you can do to reduce the impact of bTB, please contact me at the practice.

Ralph Drouin

NADIS predicts increased FLUKE risk

Fluke seems likely to cost UK farming in excess of £300million again this year. With such potential impact it is essential to recognise risk factors, manage grazing and treat where appropriate. Preventative approaches are all the more important as flukicides available for use in lactating animals become less available. It is thought that active fluke infection may reduce milk production by up to 1kg/day. Manage your herd by reducing grazing of wet/marshy and snail habitats, reduce infection load by treating adult stages of fluke, make drainage improvements and keep stock off wet sodden land in winter. Only use combination products for gastrointestinal roundworms where round worms truly need to be targeted, and use a product that treats the appropriate life stage of fluke. We stock Endospec available to use for lactating cows, which targets adult fluke and can order in for you EndoFluke targeting younger fluke.

Don't forget we now stock gutworm treatments and ectoparasiticide Enovex and Spotinor too.

Alex Perkins



Case Study: Cluster abortions at approx. 5-6 months pregnant.

APHA still requires reporting of all abortions in beef cows and all abortions in dairy cows which occur where the animal has not previously had a normal calving, the animal was born outside of the GB/NI, or, there has been another abortion in the herd within the previous 30 days. Where a report leads to you being given an inquiry number APHA will require a visit from us and sampling. Whilst APHA is concerned regarding Brucella, there are many other causes of abortion (some of which are also transmissible to humans) which are of concern to us. It is estimated that a single dairy abortion represents a loss in production equating to approximately £650.



There are many causes of abortion, and whilst most of the common offenders can, with some effort, be controlled with herd management strategies the most commonly identified cause of abortion in the UK is the frustrating disease Neospora.

The best sample for an abortion investigation is the complete aborted fetus together with placenta, it is important that it is not contaminated or decomposed for the lab to have the best chance of providing useful information. Where this is not available, as in this farm, the dams may be blood sampled and again three weeks later. In one recent on-farm case, BVD, Lepto and IBR were ruled out whilst the change in antibody titres to Neospora indicated this was a likely cause.

Neospora is a protozoal parasite that the cow will first become infected from eating the oocysts that may be contaminating feed. If this infection occurs during pregnancy the calf may be aborted or infected itself causing a calf to be born that may go on to infect its own calves. Dogs are the prime suspect in the UK for contamination of pasture and feed sources for the cattle and become infected from eating raw meat diets, wild animals, and aborted material e.g. placenta/aborted calves.

There is no cure and not every cow that is infected will abort so management strategies are tricky. Tips going forward for this farm were:

- Break the cycle of transmission and avoid grazing animals on pasture where there is a lot of dog walking occurring,
- Remove all birth by products from pasture so dogs can not become infected.
- Remove all risks of dogs defecating on feed stores/stored hay etc
- If you have experienced greater than 3% abortions and would like guidance on further diagnostics and management please phone the practice.



Alex Perkins