

December Farm Newsletter



Molecare Vets closure forces change

November has seen Molecare Vets take the difficult decision to close the Frome branch. Mole Valley have chosen to endorse Shepton Vets as their preferred provider, as having 14 farm vets and dedicated vets in areas such as dairy, beef, sheep and smallholders, Mole Valley were confident that we could provide skills, 24 hour cover and continuity of care.

We are delighted to welcome new clients from Molecare, and will continue to offer a great service and competitive medicine prices to clients old and new. As our area continues to grow, we have implemented a convenient Medicine Delivery Service, and from January, this service will stop at the Frome Market each Wednesday. If you would like more details on when this service visits your area, please speak to Jo in the Pharmacy.

We wish all our clients and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

BVD Free scheme England

There has been a lot in the farming press over the last few years regarding BVD. We have seen BVD impact on herd fertility and calf health and held a meeting earlier this month, to discuss how eradication can be achieved. BVD is widespread in England, but around 30 practice farms are already BVD free, and a many more are taking action to eradicate disease, as well as vaccinate.



Now is the chance to get ahead with BVDFREE England, a national database, run by XLVets, to make available herd and individual animal status information. This will allow buyers to identify animal or farm status by simply tapping in CPH or eartag numbers online. There is a no fee to register for the scheme and lab results are uploaded to the database incurring a small fee per result. We think this will result in a premium for BVD Free animals purchased, as this has been seen elsewhere.

Please speak to your routine vet or contact Lottie or Alex at the practice to sign up and for advice on BVD control.



January Discussion Club Meeting—Monday 9th January

Most diseases and treatments have their origin in early lactation, but what is your biggest health headache? Sometimes it can be difficult to be sure. We have been making use of a computer programme to identify the biggest issue on farm by rate and by cost. This health assessment proves useful to identify the biggest single issue, and then we can help target advice and treatment to make the biggest difference. Solutions are varied and can be about cow condition, feed access or using new treatments, such as Kexxtone and Imrestor. Our aim is to reduce disease, reduce costs and improve health outcomes, and with it improve profitability.

Join us on Monday 9th January 7-30pm at Pilton Working Mens Club to find out more.

****Christmas opening hours****

The office will be closed on the 26th & 27th December and 2nd January 2017.

We will be open as normal on the 28th –30th December. Out of these hours our 24 hour emergency service will continue as normal.

Dates for your Diary

Winter Discussion Meetings: 9th January—Transition health & Imrestor with Paddy and Elanco

6th February— Tips to reduce lameness on farm

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



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COLOSTRUM – A free gift with every calf

The importance of calves receiving adequate colostrum after birth to reduce disease and death cannot be over emphasised. There are additional long-term benefits which colostrum also provides including:

- Reduced risk of death post-weaning
- Improved rate of gain and feed efficiency
- Reduction in age at first calving
- Improved milk production in both the first and second lactation
- Reduced likelihood of first lactation culls



Effective colostrum management should aim to feed only high quality colostrum measured using a colostrometer or Brix refractometer. A volume of mother's colostrum that equals 10-12% of the calf's bodyweight should be fed within 4 hours of birth and a further 2 litres within 12 hours of birth. Some cows fail to produce adequate colostrum post-calving and in these circumstances a high quality alternative must be found. The obvious alternative is stored, clean, frozen colostrum from a Johne's negative cow from your own herd, but this is not always a viable solution. On some farm's with a known Johne's problem this can become a real headache as medium or high risk cows (red / yellow on your Johne's report) should not be used.

Here it may become necessary to use an artificial colostrum replacer.

At Shepton Vets we now stock Calf's Choice Total colostrum replacer. Unlike many products this is made from whole colostrum rather than being mixed with other ingredients to produce a "formula". Calf Choice Total mixes in less than 15 seconds into a convenient volume to fit a standard 2 litre calf feeding bottle. It is always worth keeping a couple of packets on farm for when colostrum supply becomes short.

To aid with successful colostrum management regularly monitor the blood antibody levels in calves aged 1-7 days. We have the equipment at the practice to assist with this and to determine if calves are receiving adequate colostrum.

Please speak to Oliver for further info.

Vet Tech update

Clare goes off on maternity leave on the 23rd December and we wish her and her husband best wishes for the birth of their first child, due in January.

Hannah will be covering Clare's visits and the vet tech service will continue as normal. If you would like more information on the vet tech service please speak to one of our vets or call the farm office.



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Water Testing

Many farms are now using borehole water and its contents can vary widely. A fertility problem with low conception rates on one farm was put down to poor silage quality last season but continues this year despite better quality silage. Water analysis shows very high iron and manganese levels, high enough to indicate that this source should not be used as a supply of drinking water for cattle. *Iron and manganese are very common pollutants that can occur naturally in groundwater and can result in reduced water intake and reduced milk production.* Our own experience is that there can also be an impact on fertility, perhaps through lock-up of other trace elements.



Water analysis on another farm showed high nitrate levels and public health recommended that no-one on the farm drank the water. The levels were safe for adult cows but we were suspicious that they contribute to calf scour problems, and the calves have been changed to mains water.

Borehole water can give a significant saving for many farms, but it is advisable to test water quality from time to time. We can send water samples to an external laboratory to be tested for bacterial content as well as mineral analysis. If you would like any further advice, please speak to your routine vet.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year