

January Newsletter



Happy New Year

We hope that everyone had a chance to enjoy the festive season and would like to take this opportunity to wish all our clients a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Shepton Vets Youngstock Service

At December's Winter Discussion Meeting Oliver discussed our new service, focused on his area of expertise – Youngstock. All 5 farms enrolled on the initial trial of this service have seen improved growth rates in their calves, improved colostrum management and less disease and death. This service is now available to all of our clients and we would encourage you to get involved.

The service includes a visit every two months by Hannah Olsen to:

- Weigh every calf up to 100 days of age
- Blood sample all calves ≤ 7 days for total proteins (checking colostrum management)
- Collate disease and death data

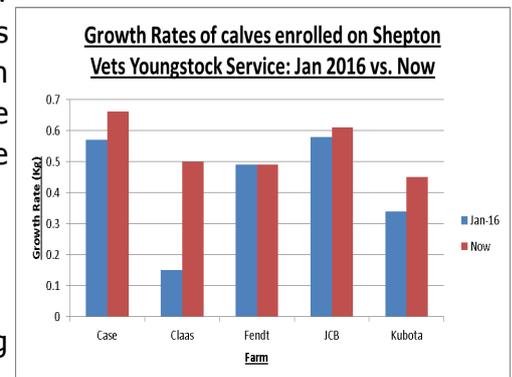
After each visit you will receive a report produced by Oliver on your data with comments and actions points, followed-up with a phone call to discuss findings and progress. Every 6 months you will be invited to a benchmarking session with all members of the youngstock group to assess progress and discuss further youngstock topics.

The initial focus will be on calves with potential to expand to all stages of rearing until the heifer enters the milking herd.

In addition if you sign up to this service you will also be eligible for:

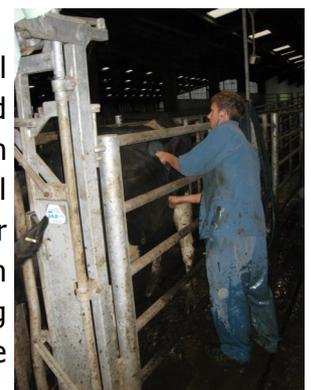
- Free of charge administration of calf pneumonia vaccine at the 2 monthly visit
- A reduced disbudding rate of £5 per calf (vs. £7 normally).

The Youngstock Service costs £50 per month, or £600 per year. This is less than the cost of raising one heifer for 12 months.



Farm Vets of the future

Accompanying our vets from January to March will be vet students from Bristol University. Each year we take final year students to give them additional skills and experience before they graduate. We look to build on their knowledge, skills and confidence in clinical decision making, and also run practical workshops for them on surgery. We have had great feedback from the students in the past, and look forward to helping the farm vets of the future. Thank you for letting these students learn on your cows!



Dates for your Diary

Winter Discussion Meetings: 9th January Transition Health and Imrestor
6th February—Tips to reduce lameness on farm

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

Medicine Delivery Service Offer

Sign up to Shepton Vets Medicine Delivery service in January and receive your first month of deliveries free! Our delivery service costs just £5 a month and includes a weekly delivery on your dedicated delivery day (orders must be placed by 5pm on the previous day).

Speak to Jo for full details and signup by 31st January.



Antibiotics – looking to the future

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a hot topic at the moment. The UK is among the lowest antibiotic users in the EU but the current UK Government target is to reduce antibiotic use in farm animals by 20% by 2018. So what does this mean for your farm?

- We will continue to work with you to ensure that you are able to treat animals that need it. We are always available to offer advice if you are unsure what drug to use
- We can review your medicine usage as part of your herd health review to make sure that you are using the most effective treatments and to highlight any areas where you may want to look at extra preventative measures
- We can help you to implement selective dry cow therapy successfully using your milk records to identify those cows that need treatment
- We can help identify problem cows within the herd that may be acting as a source of infections for the rest of the herd, allowing you to plan health culls more effectively
- We will also increasingly test clinical cases to improve the accuracy of treatments



Why Do We Vaccinate For BVD , Lepto and IBR Again??

The majority of dairy herds that work with Shepton Vets vaccinate against BVD, Leptospirosis and IBR. Some have been doing this for a very long time. This is excellent proactive disease prevention. But when vaccination has been done for so long, it is worth reminding yourself why you started, and why you continue to do it?

1. Prevent sick cows. Milk drop, high temperatures and other vague illnesses are associated with these infections. Outbreaks of Leptospirosis used to be associated with "Flabby bag" – not a phrase heard commonly these days and yet if protection is not secured against this disease then this condition would soon be seen again.
2. Increased severity of disease. The immunosuppressive effects of BVD lead to cows and calves becoming sick with other diseases – the underlying cause of scour and pneumonia in calves are often identified as BVD. IBR causes respiratory disease and can even lead to death when introduced to a naïve herd.
3. High abortion rate. All three infections are associated with abortions.
4. Biosecurity. As herds get larger and groups of cows get bigger vaccination becomes more important as the potential for spread of infectious disease is greater—the 'domino' effect where disease moves from one animal to another.
5. Neighbours. Over the fence contact or break-ins, and break-outs, can all result in infection being introduced.

Vaccination is not a silver bullet, but by employing it appropriately we reduce the opportunity for infection to spread or to be introduced. Vaccination is an insurance policy against disease. It can also mean higher value stock when selling. Protect your herd against BVD, Leptospirosis and IBR before turnout this spring.

Talk to your routine vet about your vaccination plan for this Spring. Plus if you commit to purchasing your vaccine with us in January, the cost can be spread across 3 months again this year. This applies to Huskvac and IBR, as well as BVD and Leptospirosis.

If you would like help with vaccinating your herd, our Vet Tech Hannah can assist with vaccination programmes. Please contact the practice for more details.