



FARM NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2022



THE SEARCH FOR CENTENARY FARMER OF THE YEAR AND LAUNCH OF OUR 'SHEPTON TOP 10'

At the time of writing, preparations are well under way for this year's dairy show, although for most of you, at the time of reading the show will have been and gone. We hope that many of you enjoyed visiting our stand and voted for our Shepton Vets Centenary Farmer of the Year.

Paddy was given early access from NMR to a new sustainability index that measures dairy herd performance in 5 key areas. We've combined this index with some antimicrobial usage benchmarking Rosie has done to generate 6 nominees for our highly prestigious, Centenary Farmer of the Year award!

Nominees have been selected by identifying our top performer in each of the 6 categories that make up the index. This year we have anonymised nominees, you can see the categories and Shepton's top performers below.

Leading on from our Farmer of the Year Award, in our centenary year we would like to acknowledge and celebrate efficient, sustainable milk production. Shepton Vets would like to be able to facilitate knowledge transfer and generate discussions on how high

performance in key health and productivity areas can be achieved.

We will hold a series of Pilton meetings during the next two winters that are focused on important areas of health and productivity. This winter's topics will be Antimicrobial Usage, Milk Quality and Udder Health and Lameness.

We have identified simple, measurable metrics for each topic, and we will anonymously benchmark our clients, with certificates being awarded at Pilton to those of you that are already "Shepton Top 10" in the area being discussed that night. The evening will then be spent discussing how farms can improve their current metric, learning from each other and from our own team of vets.

The best farm in each area will be crowned a "Shepton Champion". They will receive a prize and be invited to host a lunch meeting where they share how they became "Shepton Champion". We hope that the Shepton Top 10 includes as many of you as possible and hope to inspire many from all farm sizes and systems.

/ Anna



We are pleased to launch the 'Shepton Top 10' - a new concept supporting our farm clients to improve performance on farm.

We are introducing a series of simple, measurable metrics that represent high performance in herd health, efficiency and sustainability, across key topics which we consider to be essential to top performing herds:

- Fertility
- Production
- Youngstock
- AMU
- Lameness
- Udder Health
- Genetics
- Infectious Diseases

We will provide high performance targets for each topic for farms to aspire to, offering practical advice, herd health services and support from our vets - as well as knowledge sharing amongst each other - to help you achieve them.

These topics will also form the basis for our Pilton Discussion Groups over the coming months.

SHEPTON CENTENARY FARMER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

All nominees have between 181-270 cows, produce between 6,900-11,800kg of milk per cow per year and include both housed and higher input herds as well as more extensive grass and forage-based herds. They now need your vote to decide our Centenary Farmer of the Year. Complete a voting form at the show or in our farm reception, and return it to us by the end of October. We will announce the winner at the first Pilton meeting on 22nd November.

FARM A

FERTILITY: This farm has a Calving Interval of 381 days and the Age at First Calving is 751 days.

FARM D

NUTRITION: This farm has a consistent 1.2 fat:protein ration, milk production 36kg at 3.25% protein and urea level of 0.028.

FARM B

PRODUCTION: This farm is producing milk with 4.24% fat and 3.48% protein.

FARM E

GENOMICS: This farm is in the top 10% of UK herds for all health and welfare traits and PLI. Their genomically tested heifers are in the Top 1000 UK animals and their Heifer Crop Feed Advantage PTA is 153, which is in the top 1% of UK herds.

FARM C

HEALTH: This farm has an average Johnes test value of 4.7, no red cows, somatic cell count of 116 and 22% of the herd are heifers.

FARM F

ANTIBIOTICS: This farm is using 5.57 mg/PCU, 24% of the herd received dry cow therapy and 8% of cows are receiving lactating cow therapy.



IT'S JOHNES TIME AGAIN!

It's Johnes time of year again when - after the introduction of the National Johnes Management Plan - we started looking in more detail on more of our farms. Now any Red Tractor Farm needs a NJMP compliant plan in place delivered by one of our 8 accredited NJMP advisors.

not booked in yet call Sam in the office and get booked in. A huge number of our clients require their declarations to be returned to milk buyers by 31st October, with the rest being due by December end.

/ Alex



ANTIMICROBIAL USAGE

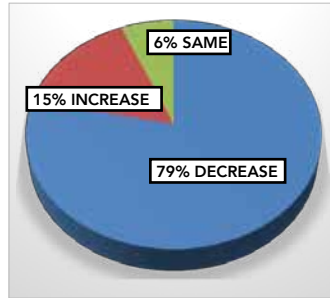
**TUES 22ND NOVEMBER
@ 7.30PM
PILTON WORKING
MANS CLUB**

Our Pilton Discussion Groups are back! Join us for supper and a discussion about Antimicrobial Usage. What does high performance look like? How can you improve metrics on your farm?

Farm Vet, Rob Powell will be using data from our Shepton dairy herds to review the progress we have made in responsible antimicrobial use. Using herd examples, he will highlight key areas where disease prevention has led to reduced antimicrobial use, and improved health and performance long term.

There are limited spaces available so please call us on 01749 341 761 to confirm your place and let us know of any dietary requirements.

We reviewed our progress with Johnes at our Pilton Discussion group earlier in the year. Eamon Watson from NML came and helped us digest the data.



As a practice, 79% of our herds have reduced Johnes prevalence on farm since 2015. Of those that have 'increased' the vast majority have done so since they actually only started testing regularly at that time.

We have seen the addition of the Johnes Progress Tracker as a great tool to help understand areas any farm is making leaps ahead as well as areas that could do with improvement.

This has also helped us benchmark ourselves against the national herd with 60% of our Herdwise clients having an Average Test Value at or below the ATV of 253 NML Herdwise herds across the country.

As with most things infectious, Lottie and I take the lead on our Johnes activity, so we look forward to continuing to working with you on this. And please, if your review is

A REMINDER OF OUR TOP TIPS FOR REDUCING JOHNES ON YOUR FARM

PROMPT IDENTIFICATION of high risk animals J5-J2 and any daughters born to infected dams.

PROMPT CULLING DECISIONS - within 3 months. All 'amber' J2-J4 should be scrutinised on an individual basis.

STOP THE CYCLE OF REINFECTION OF YOUR FARM Don't feed pooled colostrum or milk, after colostrum feeding use a milk replacer. Never feed waste milk.

CALVING PEN HYGIENE IS KING. NO positive, Red or Amber cow should go into a communal calving area where she could contaminate the whole area. There must be a separate area to calve these cows.

DON'T KEEP REPLACEMENTS FROM HIGH RISK ANIMALS

BIOSECURITY Bought in animals and bulls, CHCS.

SLURRY MANAGEMENT: do not graze youngstock on fields where slurry has been applied in past 6m. Do not import slurry. Discuss with your vet ways to mitigate risk.

REMINDER

Annual Johnes reviews need to be completed and returned to your milk purchaser by 31.10.2022.

If you have not yet booked your review, please contact Sam in the office ASAP.



Many of you will be aware of the severe outbreak of Avian Influenza that is continuing to affect bird populations. A spike in cases last month in the southwest has put Cornwall, Devon and parts of South Somerset in a AIPZ (Avian Influenza Protection Zone) meaning there is now a legal requirement for all bird keepers to follow strict biosecurity measures to lower their risk of disease.

Currently our area is not in a protection zone, but we feel it is only a matter of time.

AVIAN FLU PRECAUTIONS

If you keep birds, please consider trying to follow these biosecurity measures:

- 1. Feed and water** – should be kept inside and any external feed spillages should be cleared up immediately.
- 2. Visitor policy** – do not let visitors into your poultry sheds or bird areas as this is an unnecessary risk.
- 3. Foot dips** - should be used by all people entering the bird area, using an appropriate disinfectant at the appropriate concentration (e.g FAM 30 @ 1:100).
- 4. Potential fomites entering the bird area** – bedding, packaging, machinery, crates, etc. should be disinfected first.

5. Wild bird proof your poultry enclosure if this is possible, by using small diameter mesh to prevent visits from wild birds. If this is not possible consider trying to improve drainage to minimise standing water that will attract wild birds

The only defence against this disease is good biosecurity so it is important we all try to take steps to prevent the spread of this disease.

The above list is not exhaustive and more information can be found on the government website; www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu

/ Anna

A BUSY AND INTERESTING FEW WEEKS FOR OUR NEW VET, ANNA...

My first few weeks at Shepton Vets have been very busy and I am starting to learn my way around the practice area. I am really enjoying getting out on farm and meeting farmers, and have seen a variety of cases including ketosis, LDAs, calvings, several cases of New Forest Eye and suspected acorn poisoning.



I also saw a case of Schistosomas Reflexus - a very rare condition that most vets only see a handful of times during their career, so I was 'lucky' to see one in my first week of being a vet!

Otherwise called an 'inside out calf', the spine is folded backwards so that all 4 limbs are facing forwards with the abdominal contents hanging freely behind. It is thought to be caused by a genetic abnormality that results

in the calf forming inside out during early embryonic development.

These cases present where either all 4 limbs, a head and a tail can be felt, or abdominal contents are hanging out of the cow's vulva. Due to the structure of these calves, they are unable to be born naturally and the majority require a c-section.

Performing a c-section with these cases can be very difficult and a large incision in the uterus is needed to get the calf out. Some schistosome calves are already dead when they are born, but others are alive and require euthanising.

In the case that I saw, the schistosome calf was a twin, and a healthy twin had been born beforehand. We performed a c-section which went as well as it could have done given the circumstances and, after a few post-surgical complications, the cow has recovered.

No doubt there will be more busy and interesting weeks ahead too!

/ Anna H



...AND FOR NEW VET HARRY, TOO!

New vet Harry has also had a productive first few weeks with us, pictured here suturing up the uterus of a "very well behaved patient".

We were called to check a cow who was overdue but showing no signs of impending labour. We discovered she had a uterine torsion with a closed cervix so correction would have been difficult and the farmer opted for a caesarean section. The calf was unfortunately dead and lots of fluid was in the cow's abdomen, but the dam is now doing well.

/ Harry

SHEPTON TEAM COMPLETE CENTENARY 100K CYCLE



In August and September as part of Shepton Vets centenary celebrations we dusted of our bicycles and embraced the challenge of cycling 100km to celebrate 100 years of the practice and raise money for the Farming Community Network. The challenge took two formats a 100km month long challenge and a one-day ride.

We created a live leader board for those who were participating in the month-long challenge and like a dog to a bone, our competitive nature took over. Small animal vet Ellen was first to complete the challenge

racking up her kilometres within two weeks. Both vet Anna Hares and farm office manager Zoe worked steadily through the distance despite a few adventures getting lost on the Strawberry Line! Rob left us all hanging on the edge of our seats when a puncture curtailed his total at 99km until the very last minute.

The 10th of September was fast approaching, and after a week of weather systems bringing sharp showers and blustery conditions, high pressure prevailed, and we got a perfect riding weather day.

The nine strong cycle team was made up of members of the farm team and farm clients alongside our support vehicle driver Sam.



The day started at the Shepton practice and the first part of the route took us across the Mendips, past

Wells Cathedral and to the Wells branch for breakfast.



Next, we crossed the Somerset levels to Glastonbury. After skirting around the Tor via Wick we headed for 'The Pennards', West then East en-route to Barbers Maryland farm for lunch.

From here the route would begin to climb, first to Bruton and then onto Kilmington for cake. This would be the highest point of our journey, after a well-deserved freewheel down to Trudoxhill the final push took us back through Mells, Downhead and Cranmore. We were greeted with cheers from friends and family and a cold cider.

A big thankyou for those who have supported us in raising money for such a good cause.

/ Rosie

RETENTION & RECRUITMENT WORKSHOP Reducing the 'Staffing Churn'

Keeping staff and recruiting the right staff can be frustrating, costly and daunting for owners and managers of farms. Employing the wrong person is costly and can quickly demotivate the entire team.

REAL SUCCESS and **THE FARM CONSULTANCY GROUP - SHERBORNE** invite you to a workshop to learn how to retain your current staff. They will also share how you can recruit effectively. There is strong demand for staff currently and they will demonstrate how you can become an employer of choice.

FCG will cover current grant opportunities. With any grant it is important to ensure that it does not impact on the day to day management of your business. They will discuss how grants can be applied practically on farm.

Date: Thurs 20th October, 11am - 2pm

Venue: Batcombe Village Hall, Batcombe, Shepton Mallet BA4 6HE

Cost: £50 for your first attendee, and then £30 each thereafter. Lunch & refreshments included. Voucher given to attendee for £50 off REAL Success and FCG Sherborne services.

Book via EventBrite (search 'retention & recruitment' in 'Batcombe') or email Becky@real-success.co.uk or emilybunn@fcgagric.com.



MEDS UPDATE

UK stocks of Calciject 5 are running low again. We currently have a small supply, but once this is out we will be stocking Calciject 2, which provides an equal amount of calcium for milk fever cases. There are no supply issues anticipated with Calciject 2 and we will update you again once Calciject 5 is available.

Spirovac has had some supply issues, meaning only 5 dose bottles are available but we have sufficient stock of these for vaccines that are due over the next few months until supply chain is re-established.

All sheep vaccines from MSD are now available, with the exception of Toxovax. Supply of these vaccines has been challenging and last minute communications about product outages are not uncommon so we advise you to plan in advance and get sheep vaccines ordered early to avoid any issues with supply.

/ Charlie

UPCOMING TRAINING



APHA APPROVED DIY AI COURSE

WED 26TH - FRI 28TH OCTOBER

Our 3 day APHA approved DIY AI course includes:

- a combination of classroom theory (with the help of our training cow) and on-farm practicals, covering anatomy, fertility management and AI technique including lots of practice passing AI guns through cervixes on our training cow, cadaver tracts and live barren cows
- leads to a licensed AI Certificate and includes a follow up visit on your farm a month later to check progress

£550+VATpp includes comprehensive course notes and lunch



HERDSPERSON COURSE

WEDS 9TH & THURS 10TH NOVEMBER

**** SEE LEAFLET FOR FULL DETAILS ****

An intensive two day practical course designed to provide essential skills for those working as a dairy herdsman, including:

- calving, fresh cow care and calf-rearing
- cow first aid
- fertility management
- hoof care and lameness
- milking routines and mastitis

£350+VATpp includes comprehensive course notes, lunch & dinner.

Booking is essential - please call the office on 01749 341 761 or email training@sheptonvets.com

We can also organise one to one foot trimming training with Charlie and other practical support sessions for your team - give us a call on to book onto a course or for a chat about how we can help with other training needs.



SAM CLEVELY

MEET THE TEAM

Name: Sam Clevely

Job Title: Export Co-ordinator and LA Administrator

How long have you worked here? 18 months. Before that, I worked in finance for 15 years.

Where are you from? I grew up in suburban Sussex and moved to Somerset in my late teens to study at Bath College. I now live in Shepton Mallet with my husband and 2 daughters.

Why did you want to do this job? My husband is a herdsman on a local farm and, living with a farmer, I soon realised there's a lot more to farming than just milking cows! I had reached a crossroads in my career and fancied a change so joined Shepton Vets.

What do you like best about it? My main role is co-ordinating exports - did you know any product of animal origin that leaves the UK has to be signed off by a vet? Here at the practice we cover a variety of exports from cheese, milk powder, fish food and eggs to name just a few. I also look after infectious diseases and day to day office admin. I love the variety of my role.

Favourite animal? Has to be a Jersey cow - who can resist those lovely eyelashes!

Do you have any pets? A black cat called Salem (people of a certain age will remember the 90's TV show Sabrina - and no, unfortunately my Salem doesn't talk!)

Favourite biscuit? I am really boring and love a nice crisp rich tea dunked in a cup of strong Yorkshire tea, or a shortbread if I'm feeling fancy!



Shepton Veterinary Group
Allyn Saxon Drive
Shepton Mallet
Somerset BA4 5QH
Tel: 01749 341 761

Email: farm.animal@sheptonvets.com



Office Opening Hours
Mon-Fri: 8am - 5.30pm
Sat: 8.30am - 12.30pm

We also provide a 24 hour
emergency service