



# FARM NEWSLETTER

JULY 2022



Rob Powell is now an owner of Shepton Vets, and I believe he will be a great asset to our young, enthusiastic leadership team. As well as continuing to work closely with his routine clients he will be overseeing the Exporting side of the business that Oliver steps down from. This picture was taken at our centenary party, for those of you who are not familiar with our small animal team Greg Elliot-Moustache (second from left) and Martin Law (far right) are our small animal directors – aren't we a funny looking bunch!

## CHANGES TO THE TEAM

The 30th June marked the last day at Shepton Vets for Oliver Tilling. We had a leaving lunch with the team and enjoyed recalling the highlights and more humorous moments of his 12 years at Shepton Vets. We will certainly miss Oliver's extensive youngstock knowledge, his organisational skills and some of you out there may miss the topless moments when he arrives on farm to calve a cow! We wish him all the best with the next chapter which sees him travelling and competing in some running races in Europe before going to University to do a Masters in Business Administration next September.

It's an exciting month as we have 2 new starters, Jamie Cowling and Jo Dunn, joining to start their rigorous Approved Tuberculin Tester training. We hope to have them fully trained for the busier winter months.

For those of you supplying Barbers, it is now recommended that you carry out Body Condition Scoring of your herd twice a year. Ray has been doing these alongside mobility scores and providing you with a report at the end. These reports are sent to the routine vets for discussion on farm. If you have the 2 scores done together, you'll receive a 60% discount compared to if you booked them separately. Contact the office to find out more.

/ Anna



## MOBILITY AND BODY SCORING OFFER

Give us a call to book Ray Creed for ROMs accredited mobility scoring - book this together with a body condition score and get a 60% discount compared to booking them separately!



Two cows with LDAs were found on one day on the same farm recently. Clearly this was not a good day for the farm, but both cows are now doing well following surgery, oral fluids and Keto-Fix drenching.

Another farm had a cow with persistent ketosis, so a Cholivite bolus was added to her Keto-Fix treatment, to boost intakes. And another cow elsewhere was found to have metritis and put on antibiotics and Metacam to get her eating again. Both farmers were advised to have the cows checked for LDAs if they did not make good progress.

Sick cows keep farmers and vets busy, and result in increased costs as well as lost milk production. With hot weather impacting intakes, we want to work with

## COW HEALTH AND SUMMER INTAKES

you to identify best practice and some simple changes that might help reduce hassle from sick cows, and get more milk in the tank from better feed intakes around calving.

One of the key things we'll be looking at with you over the next few months is water troughs and cows, and how fit they are for calving. Below are a couple of good examples we've seen recently - how do yours compare?

Talk to your vet about how your fresh cows are performing and how you can ensure they stay on top form.

/ Paddy



## TUP TESTING WEDS 10<sup>TH</sup> AUG 11.30<sup>AM</sup> - 4.30<sup>PM</sup>

We're running a dedicated 'Tup Testing Day' at the practice, where you can get your rams checked with an overall health assessment as well as an evaluation of semen samples, helping to make sure they are fertile and in optimum condition for maximum reproductive performance. Assessing fertility can help to avoid poor scanning percentages, prolonged lambing windows and the subsequent negative effect on flock profitability.

Bringing your flock into the practice on our Tup testing day is just £70 for the first animal and £30 for each additional one in the same session - and of course, you won't have to pay a visit fee! Booking is essential so please call the office to arrange your testing slot.





# JOHNES REVIEWS

However, there is always room for improvement, and, as farms do so, we come up with further refinements to your plans to break the cycle of reinfection on farm.

As the costs of production go up we know that the cost of carrying a Johnes cow go far beyond clinical cases. The increased use of sexed semen has given many of you a real leap ahead with cutting numbers of Johnes in your herds. What new step can you add in to your plan this year to reduce transmission of Johnes on your farm? As numbers reduce this can become easier to manage.

Please phone the office and book your 2022 Johnes review with any one of our Johnes advisors, Alex, Lottie, Rosie, Rob, Bibby, Charlie or Anna.

It's that time again as the Johnes plans need to be reviewed and it always gets busier as the deadline approaches, so please make use of the quieter summer months and phone Sam in the office to book in your Johnes review.

The National Johnes Plan continues to evolve and more processors look towards targets to reduce the numbers of Johnes positive cows in your herds. Some are nearing the target of having no red cows in the tank.

If you attended our Winter discussion group at Pilton, you will have seen what great progress you have all made in reducing Johnes across the practice group.



/ Alex



## TB TESTING & JOHNES SCREENING

Please allow 6 weeks minimum between TB testing and Johnes screening, as they can impact the results of each other.

Sam will be in touch to organise your annual review in the coming months.

## DOWN COW FIRST AID COURSE

We had another successful Down Cow First Aid Lunch and Learn last month, with 10 farmers joining us to learn how to maximize the chances of their down cows getting back up. We all appreciate that looking after down cows can be very time consuming and frustrating especially when the outcome is disappointing.

We had a couple of hours to discuss common causes of down cows, how to diagnosis them and treat them, as well as best practice for nursing cows to get back up. One of the take home messages from the course was prompt treatment and that optimal nursing is key to success - cows that are nursed well are 4 times more likely to stand back up again.

Our students also practiced hitting the jugular vein, the one found in a cow's neck. We did this with the help of Mr Freeze's Ice Pops - they are a similar size and when hidden under a drape feels very similar to a vein!

/ Bibby

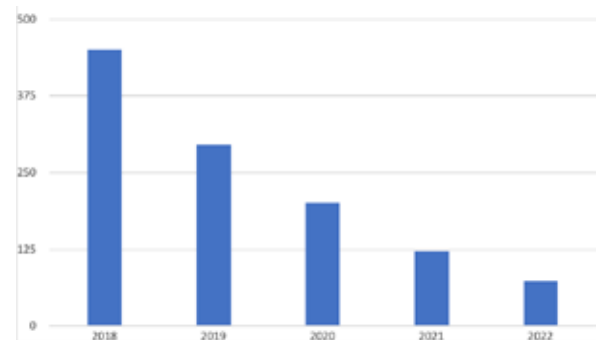
## Join our Worm Egg Count Club!

To encourage you to carry out monitoring we are offering an 'in house worm egg count' package. This is 10 samples for a discounted rate of £100 +VAT. (samples are usually £15+VAT each).

Please let the office know when you drop off your first sample if you would like to take advantage of this offer.

## TB OR NOT TB

Shepton Vets continues to keep a record of the number of skin TB reactors in the practice each year. From the graph, you will notice a year by year approximate reduction of 30% in the number of skin reactors from 2018 – 2021. However we had 122 reactors in the whole of 2021 and disappointingly 73 by the end of April already this year!



Why have we had an increase in the number of skin reactors this year? It's only my theory as I have no evidence to support it, but I suspect many people became despondent after going out night after night without getting any results - but you cannot give up now.

I realise how easy it is for me to say this but you must continue to take steps to keep the opportunities for your cattle to come into contact with the wildlife to a minimum. TBAS funded visits are available to help you identify ways of controlling TB on farm - contact us to book a visit.

/ Ralph

# CASE STUDY: MANAGING ABSCESSSES

Within the space of a week recently I saw four large abscesses on cows and heifers, a mix of housed and grazing animals. Three were dealt with quite effectively by lancing, but the fourth ended up spraying directly into my face – not so successful that one, for me at least!



Abscesses are generally formed by either foreign bodies making their way under the skin (such as thorns or rough forage) or a previously sterile collection of fluid such as a haematoma (bloody fluid) or a seroma (clear fluid) becoming infected – not uncommonly by a non-sterile needle being stuck into them!

My top tips for managing fluid filled lumps and bumps are as follows:

1. Have them checked by your vet – there are a wide range of causes (and treatments) and severities, from simple bruises to fluke infestation/liver failure. Outcomes can be very successful, but if managed wrongly can be disastrous.
2. Don't stick needles in to lumps – as previously mentioned, this can create a problem in an otherwise straightforward case. We will generally surgically prepare a site for aspirating fluid with a needle, if we are unsure of the fluid inside.
3. Don't reach for the antibiotics – there are few instances that these will provide significant benefit.
4. Deal with the problem promptly – whether it is pus or another type of fluid, having an early diagnosis and treatment plan will improve the outcome of the case.

5. If a vet goes near an abscess, stand well back – having pus spray in your face is not a nice start to a morning!!!

The main photo shows the biggest abscess that I've dealt with, and the second photo is the same animal looking much better 2 weeks later!

/ Charlie



## STUDENTS ENJOY FARM EXPERIENCE

We now have more local Bristol Vet students completing part of their training with Shepton Vets. This is a change from Surrey students. The Bristol students have chosen to do a farm rotation with us as they have an interest in farm practice, meaning hopefully it will give us more opportunities to meet potential future employees. We will of course adjust our billing to reflect teaching time when we have students on farm.

lone and Izzy, our first Bristol students, said: "We've really enjoyed our first final year rotation being out with Shepton Vets! It's been great to learn from both the vets and local farmers who have all been really helpful and we feel like we've made huge improvements in our knowledge practical skills already!"



## PARASITE CONTROL DURING THE SUMMER

Now that the majority of cattle have been turned out, there are several parasites we need to be aware of and take action on in order to maximise grazing performance.

Flies have started to cause problems on farm, we are seeing some nasty outbreaks of New Forest Eye this summer. More commonly seen in youngstock, head and nuisance flies transmit the bacteria *Moraxella bovis* between animals. UV light, dust, concurrent disease and poorer nutritional status have been identified as predisposing factors.

Flies can be controlled by using topical preparations - we stock 2.5 Litre bottles of Spotinor and this is extremely competitively priced. This needs to be reapplied 4-6 weekly throughout the fly season. Alternatively, fly tags can be put into each cow's ear, prior to turnout and should provide protection from fly bother throughout the entire grazing season.

We can also control fly population by managing the environment, parasitic wasps and fly boards can be placed around the farm in strategic locations. The parasitic wasps help to reduce the number of adult flies by consuming their larvae.

Gut worms and lung worm need to be monitored carefully as pasture levels increase as the season progresses. Worm egg counting can indicate an appropriate time to strategically dose youngstock. Alternatively, regular weighing sessions can help you calculate DLWG - if this is below 0.7kg/ day with sufficient grazing, it could indicate a worm burden.

If you would like more advice on maximizing parasite control specifically for your farm, please contact Rosie or Bibby at the practice.

/ Bibby

## FLY CONTROL OPTIONS

Using fly parasites is an effective way of reducing the problem before one takes place. Parasites are around 75-85% effective in consuming the fly pupa before it can hatch as a fly, thus breaking life cycle of flies.



Once the pupa has been impregnated, around 10 days later a new parasite will hatch to join the colony of parasites in the war against flies. One female parasite can impregnate around 300-500 pupa a day! The parasites used are UK native species and are used to our climate. Through the continued use of the parasites a community is built on farm.

We have been using parasites with great effect and clients have seen a significant drop in fly populations since they started using fly parasites.



Our Vet Techs can provide this for you with fortnightly visits to maintain parasite levels in the problem areas around your farm. We also continue to use fly boards to target the adult flies.

For more information on our fly parasite or fly board service, please contact the office.

/ Tom



# MEDS UPDATE

**Good news - Pen Strep is now back in stock! We're also still expecting to have stocks of Heptovac by early July.**

**Engemycin and Alamycin 300 remain out of stock.**

Engemycin is expected in July but we don't currently have an expected date for Alamycin 300. We have Tetracure in stock as an alternative long acting Oxytetracycline; Meat withdrawal 31 days, Milk 10 days..

**Don't forget, you can order medicines at any time of day by text or WhatsApp!  
07592 307 394**

# MEET OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS

As we welcome two new Approved TB Testers to the team, we thought we'd introduce them both to you this month!



## JO DUNN

I'm very local - currently living in Shepton Mallet with my partner but previously lived on my parents dairy and beef farm in Dinder near Wells since I was 2 years old.

My previous jobs have included milking cows, a horse riding instructor and Combat Medic in Army Reserves. I'm looking forward to being part of the team because I am a local farmers daughter, my family have been a long term customer of the practice and have experienced the high professional service that is delivered. I'm proud to become part of a team that has such an excellent reputation.

My favourite animals are cows, horses and dogs and my favourite biscuit is anything chocolate!



## JAMIE COWLING

I grew up on a farm on the Mendips and currently live in Coleford. I worked at Frome Livestock Auctioneers for the past 6 years and I'm really looking forward to working alongside the team at Shepton Vets, learning new skills and getting out and about meeting new people.

My favourite animal is a hedgehog and my favourite biscuit is shortbread (but to be fair any biscuit will do!)

# UPCOMING COURSES



**APHA APPROVED DIY AI COURSE  
WED 27<sup>TH</sup> - FRI 29<sup>TH</sup> JULY  
10am - 3pm**

**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.*



**MASTERING MEDICINES  
THURSDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST  
11am - 2pm**

Join us for this Red Tractor approved 'Lunch & Learn' course to learn more about safety, good practice and farm assurance requirements for giving, storing and recording on-farm medicines.

*£50+VAT per person, includes lunch.*

**Booking is essential - please call the office on  
01749 341 761 or email [training@sheptonvets.com](mailto: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 01749 341 761 to book onto a course or for a chat about how we can help with other training needs.



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

We also provide a 24 hour emergency service