



INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION AND MOVING ON TO PASTURES NEW



I had the great pleasure of presenting assembly to Wells Cathedral Pre-prep the other week. Talking to young children about where food comes from and why farmers are important: "Every day, three times a day you need a farmer" - was great fun.

I talked about my role as a farm animal vet - working with farmers and their animals to improve health, welfare and productivity was what I was trying to impress upon the 4-7 year olds. But inevitably the highlights were about me putting my hand up lots of cows bottoms, the use of the horn loppers, the enormous needles and syringes we inject cows with, the fluid pumps, and best of all we managed to demonstrate a calving with the help of some very enthusiastic volunteers!



As I come to the end of my time at Shepton Vets, reminding myself of the many highs I have experienced as a vet here has made me very happy. I would like to thank the whole team at

the practice for their fantastic work over the years I have known them - day in and out they go above and beyond to take care of our clients and their animals. A special mention must go to the directors at Shepton Vets who I have had the great pleasure of working alongside and learnt so much from.

Finally a huge thank you to you, our clients. It has been an immense privilege working with you and your animals over the years and I am tremendously grateful for all that you have given me over that time.

This farming community is a really special one and I am hugely proud to have been a part of it. Wishing you all the very best for the future.

/ Oliver



Last month I covered in some detail the increased risk of ketosis during the summer months. Ketosis is a gateway disease that results in more LDAs, more metritis and more cows that fail to perform as expected.

We think a really good place to start to understand the risks for your herd is to have a quick review at the routine visit of the close-up group with your vet.

Take a look at 3 crucial aspects:

How clean is the water supply? While all cows need a good water supply, dry cows can be on high straw or hay diets and with it high dry matter content. This is not very palatable and so feed intakes may be limited if water supply is not clean and accessible. Any limitations in intakes around calving will increase disease risk

TRANSITION HERD HEALTH

and reduce milk production. Our vets will take photos and there will be a prize for the best water supply found.

How fit are your dry cows? Take a look at 10 dry cows and check that all are in target body condition of 2.5 to 3.5, and that there are no underlying health problems, such as lameness or Johne's Disease. Identify how many are on target, and how many are at risk.

How effective is your milk fever control? Let your vet know what you use to control milk fever, and the level of supplement added.

Finally it is worth reviewing with your vet, what you consider is going well with fresh cows, and if there are any areas, such as intakes, milk yield, colostrum quality and health, that are causing you concern. With a rising milk price, getting more milk in the tank is very important, and fresh cows have the biggest potential.

/ Paddy

TB TESTING & JOHNE'S 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.

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.

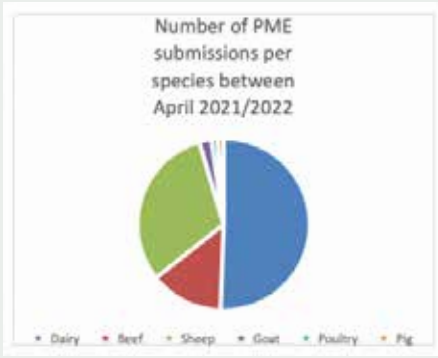


POSTMORTEM EXAMINATIONS

In the last year across the practice, we have submitted 87 carcasses for a postmortem examination (PME). All the data from these submissions has been collated and reviewed at a practice level to see if there were any interesting trends.

Of the submissions, 60% were carried out 'on farm' by Shepton Vets and the rest were carried out by external postmortem providers: Bristol University Langford or at APHA Starcross. Of the 'on farm' postmortem examinations carried out by Shepton vets I have performed the vast majority, drawing on my experience from working as a VIO at the postmortem center.

Approximately half of all the submissions were from dairy farms. One third of these were from sheep farms. This was interesting given that sheep flock health accounts for a smaller proportion of our day-to-day work.



The main presenting sign in sheep submissions was sudden death. From a flock perspective, it is very important to understand why an animal dies as this is often the first sign of a problem. Most sheep diseases are preventable so without this knowledge we cannot safeguard against further losses.

Of all the dairy submissions we received, youngstock (<12 m/o) accounted for three quarters of these with half being pre-weaned animals. As you would expect, the main presenting signs from submissions from this group were respiratory disease, scour or sudden death.

The common diagnosis's associated with the presenting sign of scour were Rotavirus/ Coronavirus and Cryptosporidium. Some calves had mixed viral and protozoal infections.

There were also a few diagnosis of

Salmonellosis, both type D (Dublin) and type B (Typhimurium) were isolated in both pre and post weaned calves. It is clear that achieving a diagnosis is vitally important to determine the correct treatment and control measures required. This is why as part of the Gold Package on our relaunched calf health scheme spear headed by Emily we offer discounted postmortem examinations.

Of the 27 sheep submissions, 21 of these were lambs. Pasturellosis pneumonia/septicaemia dominated the diagnoses as well as worms (PGE), all of which are preventable. Some lambs had trace element deficiencies; low selenium and cobalt impacting on lamb growth and immunity. These findings are mirror the sheep submissions in the South West England region 2021-2022.

If you have an unexpected death, and want to explore why please get in touch, and we can help to decide what would be the best course of action. Deaths on farm are disappointing, but can provide us with a valuable opportunity to get something useful from a loss.

/ Rosie

AN INTERESTING CASE...

This suckler calf was presented for a post-mortem following a period of unsuccessful treatment for a swollen joint.

There was severe infection present in many of the joints. Figure 1 shows a pus-filled tract running from the navel to the liver. The navel infection allowed for a route of entry for bacteria. Bacteria which enter

the blood stream is distributed to many joints around the body. In this case the knee joint was particularly bad (Figure 2).

These finding highlighted the key areas for this farm to focus on, both the colostrum and hygiene around calving was reviewed as well as reviewing navel dipping practices.

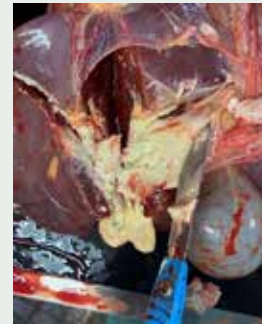


Figure 1: Abscess tract in the liver



Figure 2: Infected knee joint

CHECS TB ACCREDITATION UPDATE

Clients have shown a steady interest in the new CHECS TB Accreditation since it was launched last August because they want to keep their herds on annual testing.

However, the route to enrolling your herd into the scheme and staying on annual testing is not as simple as it would appear because there is only a small window (60 days since the herd was last tested) in which to apply. Then your application has to be processed by a Scheme provider before being passed to APHA who then award your herd with its 'Earned Recognition' status.

Yes, it is as bureaucratic as it sounds which is why some herd owners have

been told that because instructions for their next test have already been issued, their herds still have to tested be six months after their last test.

The other obstacle to staying on annual testing is resolved IRs which are still in the herd. Resolved IRs are Inconclusive Reactors which have retested clear Under Scheme rules, all resolved IRs must be culled within 6 months of retesting clear. The rule is open to misunderstanding as it only applies to resolved IRs which retested clear after November 2017. This was the date when resolved IRs were restricted to the farm for life, to all intents and purposes, until they were sent for slaughter.

APHA do not disclose to us if there are resolved IRs on your farm. The only way to find this information is to search through your herd's TB testing history on the APHA database and even then, they can be missed unless every test result is checked, a tedious process.

You might be thinking by now: Is the hassle of joining CHECS TB worth the cost and hassle? We would say yes and if I told you that we would earn more by testing your herd instead of getting you to join CHECS TB, it should show that Shepton Vets continues to give their clients their best advice as we have tried to do for the last 100 years.

/Ralph

CASE STUDY: CALVING COW MANAGMENT

I recently attended a late night calving for one of our clients and it made me reflect on how the management of calving cows can make all the difference to the outcome for cow and calf, and on the productivity of those animals for the farm.

The calf was coming with the head and one front leg, a presentation that can quickly lead to a swollen tongue and head and a dead calf as well as a down cow. Once complications have developed the calving can become protracted and may have to involve embryotomy; often the outcome is poor for both the cow and calf.

Thankfully, the client in question had spotted on his last evening checks that this cow was likely to calve overnight, so had gone back out again later to check her progress.

This meant that he picked up the problem promptly and we were able to correct it easily and deliver a strong,



healthy calf and happy cow who immediately got on with the job of mothering her calf.

In this instance, calving at least develops with visible signs of the calf presenting abnormally but we also see a lot of uterine torsions and breech presentations that lead to poor outcomes. With these, the cow shows all the signs of being close to calving, her udder fills, the ligaments around her tailhead relax and she may take herself off from the group, but often that is as far as it goes as the calf

cannot come up into the birth canal so contractions do not start and water bags don't appear or burst. If picked up promptly we can correct these and achieve a good outcome, but if left until the following day we are often left with a dead calf that is much harder to manipulate and a stressed cow that will have a much poorer outlook.

Both breeches and uterine torsions should be straightforward to identify on vaginal examination, so if in doubt about a cow that is not progressing with calving always pop a clean glove and some lubricant on and have a feel to see what is going on. You might just save yourself an expensive vet bill and an unproductive cow!

Shepton Vets runs practical calving courses, so if you have new farm staff, or want a refresher and some extra confidence around calvings give the practice a call to book onto our next course on the 6th July (see back page for more details).

/Lottie



CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

As part of our centenary celebrations, we hosted an evening meal at the Bath & West Showground.

Numbers were unfortunately limited due to space, but we were grateful to be able to share the evening with a number of colleagues and clients. We were also delighted to welcome our guest of honour, Bill Patterson - whose father Tom Patterson founded the practice in 1922.

Many of the guests joined us after a busy day at the show, for an informal meal and the chance to reflect on their association with Shepton Vets over the years. A raffle and auction featuring prizes from local suppliers and venues raised over £3,000 in aid of Farming Community Network, a charity that helps farmers and their families with practical and mental health support.

The evening concluded with the lighting of the B&W's jubilee beacon.



100 YEARS OF SHEPTON VETS: OUR STORY

With 100 years of memories now to our name, we decided to celebrate our centenary by documenting some of these in a commemorative book.

"100 Years of Shepton Vets" is our story - a beautiful hardback book with 180 pages of recollections, commentary and photographs from through the years. Featuring a forward by founder Tom Patterson's son Bill as well as contributions from past and present staff, it captures key milestones in our history as well as changes in veterinary practice and the farming industry. You're likely to recognise many of the featured contributors, and smile at many of their stories!

The book will be published this summer and will be available to purchase through the practice for a suggested minimum donation of £10 - with all proceeds going to the Farming Community Network charity.



UPCOMING COURSES



DOWN COW FIRST AID WEDNESDAY 22ND JUNE 11am-2pm

Bibby will be running another of these popular, practical courses which will cover:

- Caring for a down cow to optimise the chances of her getting up
- The correct way to lift a cow
- How to assess limbs for breakages
- Passing a stomach tube and giving oral fluids
- How to give IV injections
- Blood sampling allowing calcium levels to be assessed
- Prevention of down cows

£65+VAT, extra team members £15pp. Booking is essential.



PRACTICAL CALVING COURSE WEDNESDAY 6TH JULY 9.30am - 2.30pm

Join us for a practical calving course, covering:

- what is normal for a calving cow and how it can be different in heifers
- when and how to intervene in calving
- how to correct common malpresentations
- how to manage post-calving complications
- practical session with our artificial cows to practice putting head ropes on and correcting malpresentations

£134+VATpp - includes lunch, hand-outs and certificate of attendance. Booking is essential and this course always fills up quickly.



APHA APPROVED DIY AI COURSE WED 27TH - FRI 29TH 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, lunch and certificate of attendance. Booking is essential - please book your place by Friday 8th July.

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.



MEDS UPDATE

Cyclo Spray 422ml, Pen Strep and Ubrostar Red Herd packs are all now back in stock.

Heptovac remains out of stock and is now expected late June/early July. Due to ongoing national problems with Heptovac supply, we are able to order in Ovivac P (100ml bottles only). This is a suitable alternative for growing lambs, protecting against some strains of clostridial disease (Pulpy Kidney, tetanus, braxy and blackleg) and Pasteurella pneumonia. 2 doses 4-6 weeks apart are to be given to lambs over 3 weeks of age, this will protect this year's crop of lambs. We advise continuing to vaccinate your replacement ewes with Heptovac P pre-lambing once it is available again as this protects against the diseases above and lamb losses caused by Lamb dysentery. If you have any questions about this speak to Bibby or Rosie.



EMILY ZWAMBORN

MEET THE TEAM

Name: Emily Zwamborn / Job Title: Farm Vet

How long have you worked here? 1.5 years now - time flies when you're having fun!

Where are you from? I was born and raised on the West Coast of Canada, where the Coastal Mountains meet the Pacific Ocean. It is an untamed and unpredictable corner of the world, very different than where we are here. I currently live in the Somerset countryside not far from Shepton Mallet with my dog.

Where/what did you study? After finishing a bachelor's degree in environmental studies, I completed my Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVN) in the Canadian prairies.

Why did you want to do this job? I've wanted to be a vet for as long as I can remember, but didn't realise my passion for farm vetting until I was midway through vet school while on a summer work placement at a Dutch dairy practice. My favourite part of the job? The obvious thing would be that I love the animals, but actually you guys (the farmers) are what really make our job. I can't think of better people to spend my workdays with! Also, no two days are alike, so the job is always interesting.

Do you have any pets? Yes, a border collie named Kai. I survived one month living in the UK before getting a puppy.

Favourite biscuit? Not really a biscuit (cookie?) kinda gal. Can I say chocolate instead?

Hobbies? Anything outdoors (running, hiking), travelling, drawing and painting, writing and music.



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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