



FARM NEWSLETTER

NEW LOOK!

MARCH 2022

Early Spring is our busiest time of year in the practice. As well as being called out more in the night, there's also the usual rush to get cows tested before they are turned out for summer. An increase in TB breakdowns and 6 monthly testing is making it feel rather busy at the moment.

As we celebrate our centenary we have been looking back through some old pictures. This picture from 1977 shows a



Shepton vet treating a milk fever. Does anyone recognise the vet? Back then, typical mornings would have included 4 or 5 visits to these but call outs to milk fevers are infrequent these days as farms have got bigger and are able to treat these themselves.

Disappointingly, the Dairy Industry has received some negative publicity thanks to the BBC's Panorama programme last month. The scenes on the Welsh Dairy Farm showed unnecessary abuse to cows which I was disappointed but unsurprised that the BBC chose to publicise. This programme is of course designed to shock and showed the best and the worst of our industry.

In response to the programme Red Tractor have launched a "Tell Us" reporting service, where the public can report breaches in compliance. Our industry is being scrutinised

more than ever before and what we do on farm and how this looks to the public is so important.

I work with an increasing number of clients that are finding it difficult to find skilled labour, which is making the day to day running of these businesses very demanding and we want to support you and help you.

Managing down cows can be challenging and stressful - our Cow First Aid course will help you or any newer members of your team learn about the best way to deal with these cows giving you the very best chance of getting them up again. More details on the back page.

If any farmers are considering hosting Open Farm Sunday this year, we'd love to hear from you and we will happily provide support to demonstrate to the public what the vast majority of British Farmers do so well.

/Anna



EMILY UPDATES OUR YOUNGSTOCK SERVICE

With regular visits from our Vet Techs, growth rates, colostrum management and disease levels are regularly monitored and assessed which - along with understanding your goals - means we can advise on ways you can improve the future of your herd.

We've made some changes to the service, allowing you to select how much veterinary input you receive - so you can now choose from bronze, silver, and gold schemes which have different levels of involvement from me and our Vet Techs. Every option includes Vet Tech visits and a monthly vet telephone consultation as well as discounted stress-free disbudding, whilst Silver and Gold include more on farm vet time as well as discounts on in-house scour analysis and post mortems.

The service is specifically tailored to each farm in order to meet specific needs and calving systems - for example, block calving or all-year-round calving herds may require different visit patterns. If you are interested in learning more about our Youngstock service or would like to sign up, please contact the farm office on 01749 341761.

/ Emily



STARTING THEM YOUNG

Sam from the farm team's daughter Georgia has been busy helping feed colostrum to the newborn calves at the farm - she knows how important it is that they receive this 'liquid gold'.



LAMBING SEASON IS HERE!



offer the option to bring the ewe into the practice. We have a purpose-built facility here, so coming in for small ruminant operations is something we strongly encourage - we've got everything we need to hand and you save the call out fee!

This ewe was brought in to be examined as her owner noticed that she had started to lamb but wasn't progressing as he would have liked. When Oliver examined the ewe he found the lamb was too big to be born naturally so he performed our first ewe caesarean of the year with me and vet tech Tom. A week on and we had a lovely photo to show mother and baby were both doing well!

I always say there are three important components of successful surgical procedures, a triad if you like. I (the vet) do my part, ensuring that the surgery goes smoothly and treatment



is commenced. You (the owner) do your part, ensuring good aftercare and completion of treatment, as well as watching for any signs of post-surgery pain or discomfort. And finally the ewe (the patient) must do their part in the recovery and healing process, as well as taking care of her lambs. Everyone has an important role to play in this exciting event. Happy lambing everyone!

/ Emily

One of the most common call outs at this time of year are ewes that experience difficulties during lambing and need a caesarean section. This might be because the lamb is too large to be delivered naturally (this is a much less common problem for ewes compared to cows), vaginal prolapse, ringwomb (incomplete cervical dilation), uterine torsion or other malpresentations that cannot be corrected manually.

A ewe caesarean, like a cow caesarean, can be performed on-farm, but we also



This cow - with a very large mass under her skin - was certainly not one of our normal clinical cases but I do quite like a challenge....

Although the mass hadn't been causing her a problem historically, it was now becoming a nuisance. The mass had grown so large that it was obstructing her mobility and was getting traumatised whilst feeding and being milked.

We decided that it would be the right thing to remove it. Under heavy sedation and local anaesthetic, the tumour was carefully removed. It had developed a large blood supply, so all the individual blood vessels had to be tied off. You can

see in one of the pictures of the finished surgery that she looks much better than before.

The tumour was sizable, weighing in at 16kg. Of course, I had to cut into the mass once we had finished to have a look inside! All the tissue was black, and although we didn't send it off for histopathology to confirm, we can be fairly confident that this was a cutaneous melanoma. These occur only infrequently in cattle, usually accounting for 5-6% of all tumours in cows. Typically, Angus cattle seem to be more predisposed. However these tumours do tend to be benign, so happily for this cow, excision should be curative.



/ Bibby

SURGICAL FOCUS

There are certain clinical presentations that you see quite regularly as a farm vet - calvings, uterine prolapses and LDAs are all a fairly common part of the day job really. Sometimes, however, we see things that are a little more unusual.



OUR LATEST AI COURSE

Everyone had a *great* few days on our latest DIY Bovine Artificial Insemination course.

This 3 day course combines classroom theory - with the help of our training cow - and on-farm practicals, and leads



to a Licensed AI Certificate in Fertility Management.

We've got more AI courses planned as well as lots of other training going on - see the back page for details.

APHA's Endemic Disease Alert: Diarrhoea Outbreaks in Adult Dairy Herds

We've been notified about outbreaks of diarrhoea in a number of adult dairy herds throughout England, Wales and Scotland.

With acute onset diarrhoea and variably severe milk drop, it's suggestive of winter dysentery although there are also other possible infectious and feed-related causes.

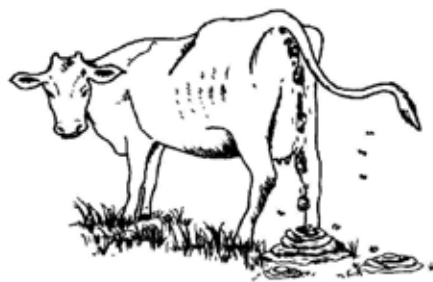
Winter dysentery is a highly contagious disease that is caused by bovine coronavirus infection. The outbreak spreads rapidly usually amongst adult cattle but with up to 100% of the herd including youngstock potentially developing signs.

Most have watery diarrhoea but there can also be a more dramatic presentation of bloody diarrhoea (dysentery). A significant reduction in milk yield

is also commonly reported.

Whilst many cows recover after a few days without treatment, others can become very sick and need oral fluids and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories.

The APHA are asking us all to watch for outbreaks so they can monitor occurrences and possible novel infections, so if you notice your herd displaying symptoms, please let us know so we can report it for you and provide any necessary treatment.



PARASITE CONTROL

We had a great session at our most recent Pilton discussion group, joined by both Dairy and Beef farmers to discuss sustainable parasite control in cattle. Following a tasty curry and a pint, we settled down to listen to our speaker from Norbrook, Paul Uglow, who gave us a fresh perspective on parasite control.

Paul was extremely knowledgeable drawing from his vast experience within the industry both working for the trade and a pharmaceutical company. We learnt that testing is key to understanding parasite risks, (carefully) allowing animals to be exposed to some parasites will help them develop immunity and that each farm's risk is unique so there is no 'one size fits all plan' and working closely with your vet to devise a dynamic plan is essential to successful sustainable control.

Many thanks to Norbrook who supported the meeting.

Our next Pilton Group session will be discussing Johnes Disease, hosted by Eamon Watson from NML and our own Shepton Johnes Advisors. We look forward to seeing many of you there on 8th March (last minute places may be available - give us a call to check!).

/ Rosie

HELPING WITH HUSKVAC

We know that this is not an easy job but the good news is, it's yet another thing our fabulous team of Vet Techs can help with! For just a £5 visit fee they can help you with vaccinating, to make the job a little easier! Just give the office a call to book them in.

UPCOMING COURSES

NEW
DATE

**LUNCH
&
LEARN**

MASTERING MEDICINES

THURSDAY 24TH MARCH
11am - 2pm

We've got a new date for our next 'Mastering Medicines - Lunch & Learn' session. Join us on Thursday 24th March for this Red Tractor approved course to learn more about safety, good practice and farm assurance requirements for giving, storing and recording on-farm medicines.

Spaces are £50+VAT per person and booking is essential - call the office or email training@sheptonvets.com to confirm your place.



DOWN COW FIRST AID WEDNESDAY 18TH MAY 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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

MARCH

Johnes Disease Pilton Discussion Group
Tuesday 8th March 7.30pm

Mastering Medicines Lunch & Learn
Thursday 24th March 11am - 2pm

APRIL

APHA Approved DIY AI Course
Wednesday 27th - Friday 29th April

MAY

Cow First Aid Course
Wednesday 18th May

JULY

Calving Course
Wednesday 6th July

We can also organise bespoke training 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.

MEDICINES DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR



Do you know we can deliver your medicine order? Save yourself some time and let us deliver it all to your farm! We deliver across the area on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays - it's £5(+VAT) for a one off delivery, or £7.50(+VAT) for the monthly subscription service which gives you one delivery a week. Give our Pharmacy Manager, Vin, a call for more information or to sign up.

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



BIBBY THOMAS

MEET THE TEAM

Name: Bibby Thomas / Job Title: Veterinary Surgeon

How long have you worked here? Almost 7 years.

Where are you from? I grew up locally and went to school in Frome. My parents still live just outside Leigh on Mendip. We're in the process of moving house and, fingers crossed, should be living in Stoke St Michael by the Summer.

Where/what did you study? I got my veterinary degree from Liverpool University - the best one!

Why did you want to be a vet? I always remember wanting to be a vet, I've always loved animals and the outside and I still do! I enjoy the variety of cases that I see, being outside working with animals and talking with all the practices clients.

Favourite animal and why? I love all animals really, but I do particularly like goats, especially little kids. They are so joyful, interactive and cute. What's not to love!

Do you have any pets? I have Piggy the Poodle - more princess than pet - and a kitten called Pippi Nora, who is very naughty and enjoys winding the dogs up. Hopefully when the move is complete, I'm looking forward to getting some chickens.

Favourite biscuit? Party Rings, Custard Creams, Golden Crunch Creams... most of them really!

Hobbies? I love growing flowers and hope we'll have time to get our new garden going this year but if not they should be splendid for 2023!



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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