



Newsletter June 2024



Welcome

The end of May has certainly seen some “growy weather”. Warm and wet is good for grass but also parasites. The Nematodirus forecast is showing very high risk over our area now, gut and lungworms will not be far behind. Getting muck samples for egg counting will help you plan your worming regime and a wormer resistance test could be done under the Animal Health and Welfare pathway grant. Likewise fly problems will be soon upon us. It will be interesting to see how our integrated fly program works out on some of our pilot farms. As with any control, early intervention is the key to success.

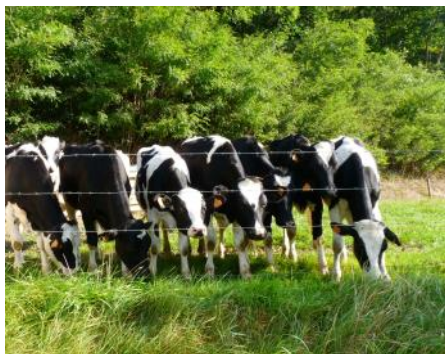
Mark Stott

Summer Mastitis

The sun is finally here! But that also means the flies are on their way... so, for those of you who graze your dry cows and heifers, summer mastitis is always going to be a concern.

- Know your risky fields - presence of sandy soil, tree cover and/or non-flowing water
- Being vigilant for any teat sores/damage which are likely the initial source of infection and keeping these animals away from your risky fields
- We have fly trap buckets available which are an extra tool in reducing fly populations and an early warning sign if you try to strategically graze your risky fields
- Getting a fly repellent on your cows to try to keep the flies away from those udders
- For dairy cows making sure all your cows have teat sealant at dry off (even if also being dried off with antibiotics) will help to prevent the infection tracking in.

Normally by the time it is noticeable that a cow has summer mastitis the damage is too severe to be able to save that quarter and treatment is to save the cow and stop her from aborting. Anti-inflammatories are critical as they will reduce the cow’s temperature - reducing the chances of her aborting and also increasing her fight to live. The bacteria that cause summer mastitis produce a lot of pus so Synulox or Tylan are normally our antibiotics of choice as it works well in pus but even this will struggle to be effective without the udder being stripped as often as possible.



Give us a ring for advice or if you want some more information on our fly trap buckets.

Rebekah Carling

Included this month

- **Summer Mastitis—** Rebekah Carling
- **A Bad Year for Ticks—** Thom Leman
- **Vet Techs vs Flies-** Ruby Allan
- **Antibiotic Resistance -** Sarah Harker
- **News and Diary Dates**



Ask us about our growing list of Vet Tech Services
-Calf weights and TP’s (Healthy Heifer Scheme)--Disbudding—Mobility Scoring—Vaccinating—Fly Treatments
including Biobest—Dry Off procedures—TB Scribing



A Bad Year for Ticks

As the weather warms up following a mild winter, it is likely that we will see an increase in tick activity if you have not already seen it. Hill flocks are at the greatest risk due to dense vegetation combined with warm, humid conditions but they are found on low, rough grazing and field boundaries. Ticks can cause significant health issues primarily in sheep through transmitting infectious diseases and/or causing hypersensitivity reactions around bite sites. The common spots you will find ticks are on and around the face and the undercarriage of sheep although this is not exclusively where they can be found. The prominent tick in the UK is *Ixodes ricinus* which can carry these common diseases;

- Louping ill: A viral disease affecting the nervous system. The affected animal starts with a fever and decreased appetite moving onto nervous signs including trembling, staggering/unsteadiness, seizure and paralysis.
- Tick borne fever: This presents as a fever with lack of appetite and depression. It tends to reduce immunity of affected animals leaving them prone to secondary infections.
- Tick Pyaemia: This tends to affect young lambs (<12 weeks of age) causing abscesses within muscles, joints and tendons commonly presenting as a 'crippled lamb' with severe lameness, hindlimb paralysis and death.

Ticks can also cause anaemia, however, this tends to be young lambs with a very high tick burden but it is something to watch for. Control is always better than treatment with Diazinon dip being the most effective method of tick control. This is not possible for all farms and if not topical cypermethrin products such as Crovect, Dysect and Ectofly provide protection against ticks for varying timespans. Planning a grazing pattern for at risk stock can also reduce the risk of tick associated diseases. If you have any questions regarding control plans please drop by or give us a ring.



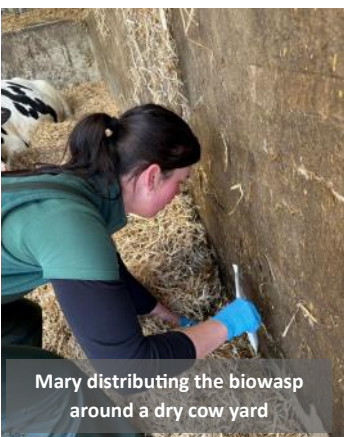
Ticks found on lambs in early April

Thom Leman

Vet Techs vs Flies

Our vet tech team have recently been busy “bees” distributing all of the Bestico fly control products. Bestico is a natural fly control method and has become popular for a lot of our dairy farms this season. Having a seasonal plan first (bespoke to each farm), the first release date came earlier than expected this year as the weather suddenly picked up after such a mild winter. Our first batch was distributed on 16th April, then every 2 weeks we have been topping up and distributing more of the-

- Parasitic Biowasps in bedding and muck heaps
- Biofly around slats
- Topping up bait in the bucket traps



Mary distributing the biowasp around a dry cow yard

Although one of the aims is to reduce chemical fly product usage, certainly in the first year we still recommend to carry on using spot on fly products on animals to really reduce the farm fly population. The biowasp and biofly do not go near the animal so they are unaffected by spot ons. The message with any fly control is to treat early before fly populations build up. (As a side we are also offering calf spot on treatments after we carry out disbuds through the summer, which seemed to work well last year).

Bestico deliveries and fortnightly distribution are all taken care of by the Vet Techs, which seems to be handy for clients who are busy enough. If you are interested in Biobest fly control please get in touch and we can come out to do a bespoke plan. It's not too late to start, but for best results don't wait until the flies become a problem.

So far..
149 x bags Biowasps
14 x bags Biofly
52 x bucket traps & bait

Ruby Allan

Antibiotic Resistance - Words of Wisdom from Sarah

Mark, Jim and I are the dinosaurs of the practice and our newer graduates are not much older than my children. With these graduates comes fresh knowledge and new ways of thinking and in us dinosaurs resides experience and an understanding of how the real world works. Working together leads to a merging and evolution of ideas that lies somewhere between the two, providing a realistic and balanced approach to our work. Now and again however, I see the need to up my game and am prompted to a more dramatic shift of mindset.....

The genetics of living things changes with each generation, allowing them to adapt to the environment around them and gain survival advantages. In humans

a generation may be 20 years, in parasitic worms 20 days and in bacteria, 20 minutes. So in bacteria, many small changes happen so quickly that big changes, such as the development of resistance to antibiotics, also happens quickly. Bacteria can share their DNA with each other, so resistance quickly spreads between different species. Levels of antibiotic use in cattle and sheep may seem moderate compared to the pig and poultry industry, but even so, resistance is here to stay and we are increasingly seeing examples on our farms. Within the last few months I can recall bacteria from joint ill in lambs, mastitis in dairy cows, and pneumonia and septicaemia in calves where laboratory culture has shown that many of the antibiotics available to us are ineffective. These were farms just like mine and yours, where usage of antibiotics was thought to be appropriate. It is becoming increasingly clear that what we have felt appropriate in the past, is not appropriate or sustainable in the future.

To put the importance of this into context, a Farmgate client took her daughter to A & E with pneumonia and the treatment of choice was amoxicillin. This antibiotic is used widely on our farms as Betamox and Trymox LA. It's not difficult to imagine how a child on a farm could be exposed to bacteria against which, antibiotics are ineffective.

There is a way forward and it's not rocket science. We need to farm our livestock in a manner that maximises their resistance to disease and when we do use antibiotics, we need to use them properly. Meticulous colostrum management, good nutrition, targeted vaccination and a clean environment are good starting points. Change of breed, reduced stocking densities and altered management practices may need longer term consideration. These points should be the fundamentals of good farming practice anyway, and not just part of a discussion around antibiotic usage. It may be a term that is used so frequently that we forget it's meaning but prevention really is better than cure. Farming livestock in a manner that limits disease is more successful and sustainable than papering over cracks with antibiotics. The reduced availability of oral antibiotics for lambs recently has led to a tightening of management practices and the realisation and confidence that they are maybe not as essential as once thought.

Vets and farmers will continue to use antibiotics to protect livestock but their use must be appropriate and responsible



or they won't work in the future. The appropriate drug should be used at the correct dosage for the correct length of time and by the correct route. Withdrawal times for milk and meat should be adhered to and waste milk not fed to calves. Our governing bodies are tightening the rules so you may find us asking more questions but we are not doing this out of awkwardness. We are trying to maximise the health and profitability of your livestock now and for the longer term, and keep ourselves and you the right side of the law.

We have talked about antibiotic resistance for a long time and made changes but we need to keep making changes.

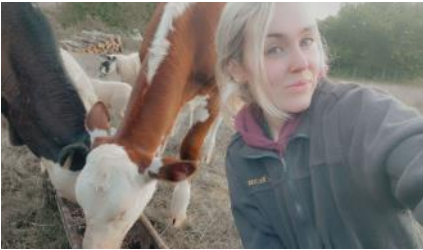
Sarah Harker



Warm Welcome to Helen and Beth

In the middle of the crazy lambing/ calving season we welcomed two new receptionists at J36, **Beth Whitfield** and **Helen Newton**. Please say hello if you haven't met them already.

Beth joined us in April 2024 as a receptionist based at J36 having previously graduated from Myerscough College with a Bachelors in Agriculture with Honours in Livestock Science. Beth grew up working on farms and with horses where she has always had a love for animals. In her spare time she usually works on her family beef and sheep farm as well as going to the gym and being outside. Beth says she looks forward to meeting some new faces within the industry.



Helen joined us in April, she also works on the family dairy farm where she grew up in Levens. She has four teenage children that keep her on toes! When she's not working Helen can be found galloping up the field on her horse or out on the fells with her dogs.



Welcome to the team both of you!

Reminder about the Health & Welfare Pathway



For those who applied for the Health and Welfare pathway funding over 10 months ago, please remember to apply again. The rules have changed so you can actually claim for the same species again. So if for example you claimed £522 for beef cattle 10 months ago you can claim

again for beef cattle. Amounts for sheep are £436 and for Dairy £372. The application link is here -

<https://apply-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-review.defra.gov.uk/apply/start>

Defra on May 15th have announced bolt on funds to be made available this summer for example to further investigate BVD in a herd. It's very much worth being signed up to this as future benefits and opportunities emerge.

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Bull Fertility Testing

Semen Testing

Semen Harvesting

As part of our Farm Vet Services for Beef Producers



Lancaster 01524 60006

Kendal (J36) 015395 67899

www.farmgatevets.com

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sheep club

Herbal Leys , Monday 17th June 6pm—Abbeystead Village Hall, Strait Ln, Abbeystead, LA2

9BQ. Pasture Walk (by kind Permission of Dusty and Michael Rhodes) Covering ley establishment and management with James Bretherton. Emily Grant will join us virtually in the village hall to speak about the benefits to livestock and the environment of mixed species pastures. More information to follow for Sheep Club members but to book your place please phone the practice or e mail linda@farmgatevets.com. **Supper included!**

Lancaster Office

Tel: 01524 60006

Open 8:30am-5pm

Monday-Friday

9am—12noon Saturdays

CLOSED Sundays

J36 Kendal Office

Tel: 015395 67899

Open 8:30am-5pm

Monday-Friday

9am—12noon Saturdays

CLOSED Sundays

Sedbergh Office

Tel: 015396 20335

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