



Newsletter

January 2025

Welcome

Where has 2024 gone? They say time flies when you are having fun, well I must be having the time of my life! I am not going to ruminate on the last year, it has had its up and downs but let us look forward to 2025. The government is not doing the farming community any favours but our milk, beef and sheep are in demand and prices are nudging up, which is what you need. Pneumonia and calf problems are rife with the damp and mild weather we have had over the past few weeks. Try not to over stock buildings, maximise airflow and get youngstock vaccinated to help to prevent problems.

Jim McKinstry

Suckler Cow Spotlight



As we approach the time of year for our suckler cows to enter the spotlight, it's time to give them a little attention so that they can produce those A-list calves that makes it all worthwhile. Any stresses on the dam that could reduce her ability to calve and mother effectively should be identified and removed. **Lameness** can provide an unnecessary pressure on the dam. Picking up feet and treating any lameness will improve the colostrum and milk availability for the calf. The colostrum can be further enhanced through **vaccine** administration to the dam. Scour vaccines like Rotavec Corona and Fencovis will help to

protect the calves from scour, and should be administered 12-3 weeks prior to calving. On vaccine administration, we need to assess **body condition score**. This should ideally be 3 at calving, so any adjustments to feed should be made now. Additionally, administration of a **mineral bolus** 12 weeks prior to calving will provide essential vitamins and minerals for both dam and calf. Boluses high in iodine are essential to neonatal development to produce the thriving calves that we have all been waiting for.



Alex Vayro

Included this month

- **Suckler Cow Spotlight** - Alex Vayro
- **Consumer Safety**— Mark Stott
- **Health & Safety - Sheep abortions**— Alex Vayro
- **They Haven't Gone Away** – Jim McKinstry
- **Metabolic Profiles**— Fraser Jackson
- **News and Diary Dates**



Lambing Preparation

Please look out for our 2025 lambing list, the usual free biscuits and prize draw competition will apply. Lambing Course Dates are on the back page.



Continuing to Keep the Consumer Safe

After the social media frenzy over Arla's trials with Bovaer to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by dairy cows, it is worth reminding ourselves that the food we produce in this country is very safe. This is primarily due to farmers, producers and processors following rules and regulations which have been developed to protect the consumer. Regular checks throughout the food chain ensure that the food is not contaminated by products such as veterinary medicines. It is our collective responsibility as vets and farmers to ensure that food leaving the farm does not contain medicine residues.



Regular herd and flock plans along with frequent updates and guidance from us is important to ensure that the need for medicines is kept to a minimum; the right medicine is given for the right condition at the correct dose rate; and the appropriate withdrawal periods are observed.

Medicine courses are not just an obligatory requirement but are a good way to ensure farmers and their staff understand how medicines fit into the production of healthy food. In the case of dairy farmers, Milksure is an industry standard course giving detail on how and why medicine administration and withdrawal times should follow the data sheet or our written guidance.

Doing what you've always done with medicines is not the way forward, things change, medicines change, and their withdrawal periods change. Even if you've done a medicine course in the past, refreshing your knowledge or sending a new member of staff to one of our courses will help to ensure we keep our food safe.

If you would like to join one of our medicine courses or Milksure course, please contact the surgery.

Mark Stott

Health and Safety at Lambing Time - Aborted Material



As we approach lambing season, now is a good time to remind ourselves about human safety when handling aborted lambing material. Whilst we hope you don't have to battle issues with abortion, here are some tips to keep everyone safe if we must do an abortion investigation on farm.

- Wear gloves and PPE when dealing with lambs/aborted material or contaminated bedding.
- Pregnant women should avoid contact with sheep at lambing time. This will also include any clothing worn by family members, so please all familiarize yourselves with the workings of your washing machine!
- Thoroughly disinfect any contaminated area and dispose of aborted material in a sealed container.
- Wash hands after dealing with any aborted material or foetal fluids.
- Please package any samples brought into the practice in a suitable container. This should be adequately sealed and double bagged (ideally a strong bag like a feed bag).

For lambing 2025 we have started a policy that **no abortion samples should enter reception**. Please leave them in your vehicle and reception staff will guide you on where to put samples when you arrive.



Alex Vayro

They Haven't Gone Away

To start the new year off I thought I would write about a topic that I have written lots about over my career, infectious diseases in cattle. In particular, IBR and BVD. When I started vet school there was no vaccine for BVD and only 1 intranasal vaccine for IBR. Now we have 2 vaccines for BVD and a few for IBR. You would have thought with more vaccines and all the knowledge we have that these 2 diseases would have been history. Oh no. We still see these 2 "old" diseases causing problems on farms. We probably have had 5 BVD breakdowns on farms in the past year. This is due to unvaccinated pregnant animals coming into contact with PIs in the first 3 months of pregnancy. We also have herds that have been vaccinating but some animals have been missed or timings have been wrong.



This has allowed BVD to get in and cause PI's. Vaccination has to be done correctly before cattle are pregnant for full protection. Biosecurity, vaccination and identifying PIs on the farm will quickly control BVD in your herd.

There has been some progress with IBR. We very rarely see the severe outbreaks of dead cattle or cattle with streaming noses and sky-high temperatures. IBR usually shows as snotty cows that are not milking as well as they ought to be. We pick it up a lot on bulk milk samples. Again, timing of vaccinations and age when animals are first vaccinated are key to getting this disease under control.

A simple bulk milk sample will tell us your infectious disease status. The animal health and welfare pathway will pay for the sampling and vet time to review the disease levels on your farm. What a good way to start the new year by giving your infectious disease plan a good overhaul.

Jim McKinstry

Metabolic Profiles

Now that the ewes have been tupped, lambing may seem far away, but for some its well under way, with the first caesarean at Farm Gate being just a couple of weeks ago! Therefore, it's a good time to think about pre-lambing considerations, starting with stocking up on lambing essentials. These include things such as lube, iodine, Metacam, blue spray, stock markers, colostrum powder, stomach tubes, needles/syringes.

One of the most important areas is providing the ewes with an adequate diet, one which will ensure good foetal growth and high-quality colostrum production without over conditioning ewes as this can predispose them to prolapses and difficult lambing. This means ewes need feeding adequate levels of protein and energy, with the focus being on forage such as silage rather than just concentrates alone as this can lead to decreased forage intake due to ruminal acidosis.



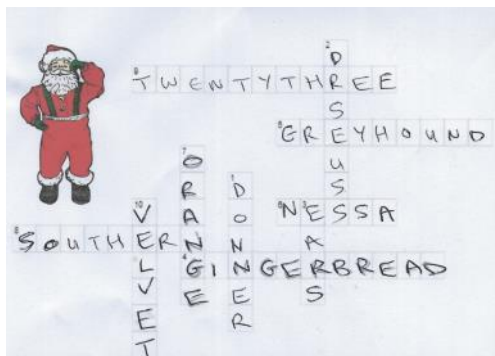
Assessment of the ewes can initially be started with body condition scoring as this can give a rough idea of where the ewes currently stand, with lowland ewes ideally around 3-3.5 and upland around 2.5-3. However, for more accurate assessment of energy deficiencies we can blood sample ewes and use metabolic profiling around 4 weeks before lambing as this is when the lamb is actively growing and the energy demands are the highest.



Fraser Jackson

Beth's Christmas Crossword Winner

Thank you to all those who participated in the Christmas Crossword, the correct answers are here. Penguins live in the Southern Hemisphere



which was the most common incorrect answer.

The winner of the Christmas Chocolate is Linda Kirkby, Park House.



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Wishing all our clients all the best for 2025 and thank you again for your continued support.

New Legislation Notice

If you have employees, you may be aware that there is some new legislation around "anti-bullying and harassment" that requires employers to take action to protect their staff from harassment or abuse by clients. Fortunately, we have a wonderful bunch of clients and incidents are very rare. We have put some posters in our reception areas and reminded staff that they should let the Practice Manager know if they are made to feel uncomfortable. We are also looking at our lone working arrangements to ensure that our colleagues feel safe and supported when they are out working. Thank you.

Lesley Faulkner (Practice Manager)

Lambing Courses 2025

Practical Lambing PLUS - Sunday 26th January 2025, 9.30am—2pm (includes farm visit & light lunch). £58 inc. VAT

Practical Lambing - Saturday 22nd February 2025, 9.30am—12.30pm, £47 inc. VAT

To book please phone the practice on 015395 67899
**Free place for Farm Gate Sheep Club members

Aimed at all levels of experience we cover-

- A presentation on all aspects of ewe and lamb husbandry.
- Practical lambing techniques.
- Disease prevention and simple treatments.
- Hands on training in general skills including injections and stomach tubing.
- All Welcome, light refreshments provided.
- An ideal Christmas gift!

Farm Gate Vets, Unit 2B Rural Auction Centre, Crooklands, LA7 7FP

New Year Calf Scour Meeting

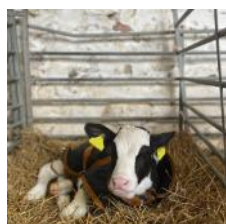
The challenges of Cryptosporidium and Coccidiosis

Thursday 9th January 2025, 12.30pm at Kirkby Lonsdale Rugby Club, LA6 2DS

A meeting for Dairy and Beef Farmers, includes information on a new vaccine for Crypto.

Complimentary Pasty and Chips for lunch kindly supported by MSD Animal Health.

To book please phone the office or e mail - linda@farmgatevets.com by Mon 6th Jan



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

Open 8:30--5pm

Monday-Friday

CLOSED Saturdays

CLOSED Sundays

www.farmgatevets.com



PLUS 24 hour emergency service 7 days a week