



# Newsletter

## April 2022

### Welcome

Spring has well and truly sprung. The fields are either filling up with sheep and lambs or getting covered with slurry. The change in the weather has been welcomed by everyone. We are living through some very turbulent times. I have never seen input prices rocket by as much as they have. With this in mind we must be more efficient and this is where we can help. Disease drops production and whether you are a dairy, beef or sheep farmer we must minimise disease so most of what we put in the front end either goes on their back or out their udder. This is where health planning is really useful to identify the problems that hold back production and doing something about it. If we have to live in a world with high feed, fuel and fert prices, we do not want disease eating away at our bottom line.

**Jim McKinstry**

### Tips for Managing Downer Cows

Given the recent media attention on farming some practices such as down cows have come under the spotlight. In response to this the BCVA (British cattle veterinary association) has published a guide on down cow management best practices. Building on this here are a list of Farm Gate Vet’s top tips on managing the downer cow. Understanding the reason that a down cow is down is key to understanding whether or not she will recover. Early diagnosis and prompt treatment is key to success.

- If the animal does not respond to treatment as expected or within 24h early veterinary intervention is crucial to get find the causal factor.
- The biggest risk to a down cow is often not necessarily the reason that she cannot stand (e.g. milk fever) but the damage to her muscles (think of it as internal pressure sore) from being unable to stand.
- Always check the udder
- Always consider fracture/injury



### Included this month

- **Tips for managing downer cows**—Finbarr O Sullivan Greene
- **Scabivax vaccination site.**
- **Sheep abortion testing.**
- **Milksure** - Finbarr O Sullivan Greene
- **Nematodirus** - Hannah Tatham
- **News**
- **Diary Dates**



**Turn Out Vaccines** Supplies of turnout vaccines are reasonably ok but please give us as much notice as possible as we are experiencing some hold ups with some. Thank you.



**Continued ... Tips for Managing Downer Cows.** Regardless of the cause there are some key principles of down cow management -

- **Pain relief** is indicated in all cases.
- Move the cow from side to side every 3 hours, flex and extend the hind limbs each time the cow is moved
- Even though cows are great at tipping water over, access to food and water at all times is key. These animals need all their strength to recover. Tempting them to feed 4 or 5 times a day can help give cows the strength they need.
- Deep bedding is key – this can be outside if the weather/ground is suitable but the bedded area under the cow must soften the pressure on its muscles.
- Regularly hand strip milk from the udder or use a mobile milking machine
- **Hip lifters** are a useful tool to help cows to their feet which allows blood to circulate through the muscles but needs to be carried out with care. For guidance, apply firmly and lift gently, once the cow stands on her front legs allow her to take weight on her hind legs. Rocking gently from side to side can help get muscles moving but **do not keep cows lifted for more than 20 min twice daily**. Do not release the hip lifter on a standing cow if she is at risk of falling again and applying a halter to the cows head can help control the cow as she gets up.
- If you have to move a cow this is best done with a smooth bucket on a loader or rolled onto a board on a pallet fork. What is key is that the whole animal should be supported and it should be done as gently and calmly as possible.

***“Down cows are frustrating to manage, but with the right plans in place you give your stock the best chance of recovery. Gentle handling, intensive care and early veterinary intervention give you the best chance of success practically if initial first aid (calcium and pain relief) are not effective”.***

### Prognosis

If a cow is down for more than 24h it will carry a poor prognosis.

If a cow is down for more than 4-5 days it has a near hopeless prognosis.

Bloods taken soon after a cow goes down can help identify cows that are worth persisting with and those with a hopeless prognosis early, thus enabling early euthanasia if necessary.



Finbarr O Sullivan Greene

### Scabivax Scratch Site

As many clients mark lambs over the next few weeks it is timely to remind you that unlike the original Scabivax the scratch site for our current Scabivax Forte is under the front leg, **not in the groin**. This makes the vaccination scab less accessible to the



ewe and other lambs and prevents infection spreading from the vaccination site, which is a major cause of vaccine failure. Also, once opened the vaccine starts to die off so prolonged periods in warm sheep pens may render the vaccine ineffective.

### Sheep Abortion—if you know better you can do better.

Knowing if an infectious bug is involved in sheep abortion is key to its control. There are two ways we can test-

- 1) Send fresh aborted lamb(s) and placenta away to the lab.
- 2) Blood sample ewes who have aborted (within 3 months of abortion).

Both routes are currently subsidised so please speak to us to find out more.



## MilkSure—Dairy Farmer Training Opportunity

Television programs over the past couple of months have again highlighted the media scrutiny on the dairy industry. Thankfully in the UK the checks and balances in dairy production make it relatively easy to defend the industries track record of producing safe, quality food.



One of the checks to ensure that milk is a safe product, is the surveillance system to prevent dangerous drug residues entering the food chain. Even though medicine tainted milk will not enter the food chain, it can still have significant financial implications for farmers if an accident means milk in a bulk tank, tanker, or worse still a milk silo needs to be destroyed.

- **Milksure** is an interactive course for dairy farmers aiming to update on the current testing system and to help farmers risk assess and prevent bulk tank failures on their individual farms. It is suitable for both farm owners and farm workers highlighting the importance of simple but effective procedures to protect the bulk tank.
- **Milksure** which **counts as a farm assurance medicine** course is a two part course, the first part looks at the testing system and gives examples of where accidents have occurred the second part is a farm specific risk assessment and will be held on your farm.

Normally costing three hours vet time (2x 1.5h sessions) we are looking to hold a group Part 1 session at J36 which will make the course significantly cheaper. The part one cost per person will be £45 discounted to £30 pp if more than one person attends from a particular farm. To book in (see diary dates) or to register your interest e mail [linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto:linda@farmgatevets.com) or speak to the office.

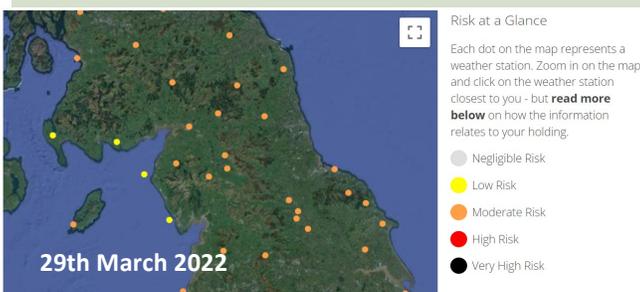


Finbarr O Sullivan Greene

## Nematodirus - Stay Alert!

Given the untimely hot weather this spring we are already getting reports of lambs with Nematodirus and the forecast is up and running – keep an eye on this at <https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/> Currently our part of the world has a moderate risk for the disease. Nematodirus can cause sudden and severe diarrhoea in lambs which can cause death, so a quick response is needed.

Eggs from last year survive over winter, hatch out and cause disease in lambs when they are ingested. Classically the risk period for Nematodirus is when the weather comes warm after a cold snap but with weather patterns changing, we are seeing the disease almost year-round now. If the temperature is above 10°C and lambs are old enough to be eating grass (**from around 6 weeks old**) then they will be at risk. Whether the eggs are present on pasture will depend on grazing patterns in the previous year – it is advised to avoid grazing lambs on the same pastures each year. Any signs of scouring or ill thrifty lambs need to be investigated promptly by getting faecal samples to us so we can carry out worm egg counts – **we have packs of pots available to collect samples**. Coccidiosis can also cause the same signs in lambs this age so getting a diagnosis is important so we can treat them appropriately.



Nematodirus is effectively **treated by all groups of wormers** and we advise using a white drench early in the season if Nematodirus is what we are targeting – beware other worms may also be present so sampling and getting a diagnosis is important. Grazing management is also an important part of all worm management – speak to us today about effective worm control.

Hannah Tatham

## Delivery Service Update

As of April 4th 2022 we are introducing a minimum delivery order value of £50 to our service. Hopefully clients will understand that this is due to the recent eye watering fuel costs! We will review this accordingly if prices come down. Please do make use of this **free** service when we are in your area-

**Monday - North Kendal and Sedbergh**

**Tuesday - South Lakes and Ulverston**

**Wednesday - Lancaster South and Morecambe**

**Thursday - No Deliveries.**

**Friday - Lancaster North, Kendal South**



## Raising Money for Dent Primary School

Well done to Sarah and Lesley from our Sedbergh Surgery for completing the Dentdale Run last month in its first year back since Covid. Extra points for Sarah as she completed the run pushing baby Wolf and his pushchair!



## Which Staff Member Did this Keen Young Farmer Grow Into?



Answer to be revealed in our May Newsletter!

## Dates For Your Diary



**Wednesday 27th April 2022 - Milksure Course Part 1, 11.30am—1.30pm** at our Junction 36 Practice Meeting Room. Please see the article overleaf for further details and phone the office or e mail [linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto:linda@farmgatevets.com) to book a place. Lunch Included.



**Understanding Veterinary Medicines - Red Tractor Approved Course, Wednesday 11th May 2022 - 1.30pm - 3.30pm** at our J36 Practice Meeting Room. Course cost £30 plus VAT including Course Book and Certificate—to book please call the practice or e mail [linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto:linda@farmgatevets.com).



**Tuesday 17th May 2022—Sheep Club Discussion Group - Iceberg Diseases** with a specific focus on **Johnes In Sheep, 7pm** at our J36 practice meeting room. Supper included and kindly sponsored by Virbac. To book in please e mail [linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto:linda@farmgatevets.com) or phone the practice.



**Wed 25th May 2022 - On Farm Suckler Herd Fertility Meeting - Making Sure Every Cow Earns her Place - 11am—1pm.** Covering Bull Fertility Testing, Synchronization of Suckler cows and Infectious disease. **At Yealand Manor, Yealand Rd, Carnforth, LA5 9SQ** by **Kind Permission of Mr M Allen.** Lunch included and kindly sponsored by Ceva. To book in please e mail [linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto:linda@farmgatevets.com) or phone the practice.



### 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

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