



Newsletter

August 2026



Welcome

At the time of writing, the current hot, dry spell is forecast to break. I think most farmers will be breathing a sigh of relief. That said, these periods of extreme weather are becoming more common, and we have seen in our own area just how much they can affect livestock and production.

Looking at the bigger picture, there are growing concerns about food security. Recent reports from DEFRA, along with warnings from security organisations including MI5, suggest that food insecurity could become one of the UK's biggest challenges over the next decade. We also rely heavily on imports for food, fertilisers, animal feed and veterinary medicines, which means the pressures are not just on what we produce at home. As global demand for these resources continues to grow, competition is likely to become increasingly intense.

Apologies if that sounds a little gloomy! The reality is that many of these challenges are beyond our control. What we can control is how we respond. Here in our corner of the world, our focus is on helping farms become as efficient, resilient and sustainable as possible, making the best use of the resources available today while preparing for the demands of tomorrow.

As your veterinary practice, we are proud to play our part. We see ourselves as one small cog in a much bigger machine, working alongside you to keep your livestock healthy, productive and profitable. By continuing to work together, sharing knowledge and embracing practical improvements, we can help ensure our farming businesses remain strong, whatever challenges lie ahead.

Mark Stott

Lungworm in Cattle

This hot weather is great at keeping worms at bay as they hate sunlight and dry conditions. But as sure as eggs are eggs, as soon as the rain starts, they will leap out onto the pasture from the dung and cause problems.

One of the main problems we see in cattle is lungworm infection from now on. If you are grazing untreated cattle on a set pasture or move young cattle onto pasture that has been grazed by older cattle, they are at high risk of lungworm infection.

The first sign is a cough when you move the cattle. It may be in only a few of them, but this is the start, the other cattle will be starting to cough in the next few days.

You need to treat them as soon as you hear coughing. I would recommend an injection over a pour-on as they do work a lot better. If you are using a pour-on, make sure you are dosing for the heaviest animal, do them in a crush and make sure that all the product is getting on their backs and is soaking in. We have a full range of wormers that will treat and prevent lungworm. Please ask one of us about them.

Dairy cows (including dry cows) at grass are also at high risk especially if they have not been vaccinated. If you notice any coughing or milk drop, please get in touch.

The best prevention for lungworm infection has always been vaccination with Huskvac. We have just been told that 2027 will be the last season that it will be available. This is very sad as it has been the only UK licensed parasitic vaccine and it puts a lot more reliance on wormers and grazing management. We do see resistance and lack of efficacy to some of the products already, so losing Huskvac will only cause more pressure on the wormers.

Jim McKinstry

Included this month

- **Lungworm in Cattle**– Jim McKinstry
- **Fairy Dust & Foundations**– Sarah Harker
- **New Forest Eye, What's New** - Liusaidh Troughton
- **Sheep Sales, Don't buy in more than you bid for?**– Alex Vayro
- **News and Diary Dates**

Fairy Dust and Foundations for Buying in Calves



Our recent trip to Metcalfe Farms clearly demonstrated that an optimal start in a heifer calf's life is fundamental to the success of a dairy farming enterprise. Calving pen hygiene, colostrum management, calf building design and management, vaccination protocols..... The list goes on, but all were carefully considered and carried out to a high standard. There was also a sprinkling of magic that only comes with good staff and top-notch stockmanship!

The farming systems of many of our clients are changing as suckler and dairy herds are dispersed, yet they aren't quite ready to let to a neighbour or put up the for-sale sign. Buying calves or stirks to rear seems a logical option but is not without its problems. When buying in stock, you have no control over those critical factors that give a calf the best start but your sourcing policy can help. Without this start, you can run into problems once the calf is on your farm and be very limited as to what you can do to solve them.

Ideally buy rearing calves/stirks direct from a known source. The more information you have from that farm, the better. Talk to them and talk to their vet. Know and trust their colostrum management, hygiene and vaccine protocols. Ask the wider disease status of the herd. Ongoing vaccine protocols on your farm can then be planned.

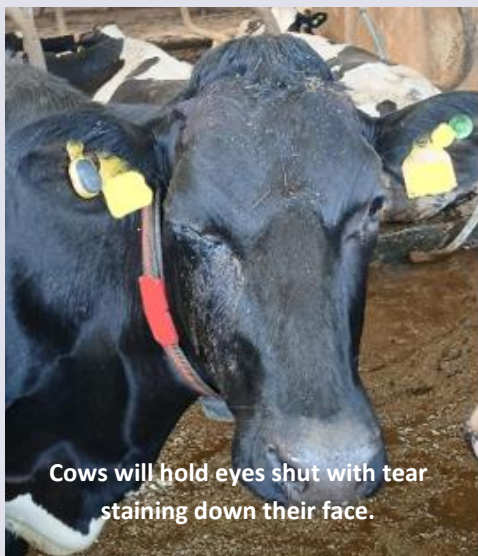
If you can't source from one farm, buy direct from as few as possible. Calves coming through auction marts have the chance to pick up all sorts. Strong calves from known and trusted sources are again your best bet but can bring more disease with them.

Calves coming from a dealer are a gamble on many fronts but numbers and cost maintains this trade. The trade for calves and store cattle often seems stronger than it should be in relation to fat price and it's understandable that price is a major factor in what you buy and where from. If you are purchasing young calves, try to buy from the safest source possible, even if that is a premium price. As they get older, although still influenced by the start they have had, they are more robust and sourcing is perhaps a little easier.

Please talk to us about your purchasing policy and get us involved in discussions with the farms and their vets. We will ask more searching and direct questions to get the information you need to help make calf rearing work and help you plan to keep these calves healthy once on your farm.

Sarah Harker

New Forest Eye—What's New?



Cows will hold eyes shut with tear staining down their face.

We have already seen and treated a number of cases of New Forest eye this year. It is a painful infection of the surface of the eye caused by bacteria *Moraxella Bovis*. It is often worse in the summer months as it can be spread by dust and flies- which we have plenty of this summer! As it is highly contagious, it spreads quickly within herds from contact especially around feed troughs.

Symptoms may begin as mild, but progress if left untreated, and can include:

- Tear staining
- Holding eye shut (as more painful when exposed to sunlight)
- Discharging pus from eye
- Ulcers on surface of eye
- Blindness
- Poor performance- reduced feed intake, weight loss, reduced milk yield
- Rupture of cornea requiring surgical removal of eye

Continued.....

New Forest Eye - What's new? Continued..

Treating promptly is essential, usually with a combination of topical ointment on the eye as well as injectable antibiotics and anti-inflammatories.

Up until now, prevention has been controlling the flies and therefore reduce the chance of transmission.

There is, however, a vaccine now available '**Maxiguard**'. This is given as a single injection under the skin and comes in 10dose and 50dose bottles, and often is far more economical and more straightforward than treating cases after they become infected.

Ideally, it is given 30d prior to the onset of fly challenge, however evidence suggests it is 'not too late to vaccinate', even if infection is already within the herd, it will reduce severity of infections and help to reduce spread within the herd. It will of course also protect for later in the summer, as it doesn't look like flies will be disappearing any time soon.

Give the practice a call if you would like to discuss further.



Left untreated, a mild case can quickly progress to a rupture of the eye, as in this case, which required surgical removal of the eye.

Liusaidh Troughton

Sheep Sales—Don't Bring in More than you Bid for!



With the trials and tribulations of lambing time in the distant past, it has come to the time of year for our sheep farmers to forget how tired they were and buy *more* sheep!

Culling older ewes from the flock and buying in replacements is a great way to keep a young and fit flock but does not come without risks of buying in unwanted diseases including worms, scab and CODD.

On arrival, put sheep on hard standing for 24-48 hours.

This allows for assessment of any lame sheep which can be separated and treated, and any faeces containing resistant worms can be shed here.

Drench all sheep with a group 4 (orange) wormer e.g. Zolvix

This is a wormer with no known resistance in the UK so should effectively kill any worms in the sheep. In the autumn consider fluking with triclabendazole to tackle immature fluke.

Worm egg count at 14 days post worming

Bring a worm egg count in to allow us to check that the ewes are free of worms.



Isolate the newcomers for 28 days on 'dirty' ground

Taking a 28-day quarantine period means sheep can be monitored for any unwanted infectious diseases including scab or CODD and treated without infecting the rest of the flock. Foot bathing the sheep twice weekly will help prevent any lameness issues.

After 28 days your sheep should be ship-shape and ready to mix with the rest of your flock.

Alex Vayro

An Interview with Fiona Wallbank



It's about time we interviewed Fiona, she's been here a while now and her sense of humour is probably what she has become best known for in the practice (at least we think she's joking!?) - along with her excellent veterinary skills of course!

1) What was your first ever job? I worked in the local chippy.

2) What do you enjoy most about working at Farm Gate Vets? A night on call where I get a full 8 hours and my colleagues are out all night (yes, I'm a horrible person).

3) Where is your favourite holiday destination? Driving around Montana, enjoying the view and hiding from bears.

4) Who would you most like to have dinner with? Honestly anyone who will pay the bill

and isn't vegan!

5) How do you relax after a hard days work? A nice glass of wine and a game of darts.



Reference Question 5—allegedly this is Fiona's Dart Board !?



Baby News from Hannah

Huge Congratulations to Hannah and Richard on the birth of their lovely twin boys, George and Alex on the 11th of June. All back home and doing well.

Update to Our Computers—In August we are moving over to a new IT system for our diary, booking drugs, billing etc.. please bear with us we get up and running. Please give as much notice as possible for medicine orders (ideally 24hrs) and please use our

Whatsapp order no.

07442 862092

Diary Dates



Cartmel Show -Wednesday 5th August 2026.

We are pleased to be sponsor the cattle tent again this year and look forward to seeing many of you on the stand for refreshments and strawberries!



Westmorland County Show

Wed 9th and Thurs 10th of September 2026

Please join us on our stand for refreshments, cake, ice cream, competitions and some good chat. **All Welcome!**



Healthy Heifer Members Meeting— Back to Basics - Rearing Healthy Calves.

Wednesday 23rd September 2026, 11am—2pm On Farm—Venue TBC

Please join us on farm for this practical meeting covering colostrum management, milk powder, tubing, hygiene, calf jackets, common calf diseases and how to treat. Please phone the office to book your place or e mail linda@farmgatevets.com



Lancaster Office

Tel: **01524 60006**

Open 8:30am-5pm

Monday-Friday

9am—12noon Saturdays

CLOSED Sundays

J36 Kendal Office

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Open 8:30am-5pm

Monday-Friday

9am—12noon Saturdays

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Sedbergh Office

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