



# Newsletter December 2025



## Welcome

As we reach the end of another busy year, we'd like to thank all our farm clients for your continued support and partnership throughout 2025. We wish you, your families, and your livestock a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year when it comes.

This month we're looking forward to our annual **Christmas Charity Quiz**, always a great evening and a chance to raise money for a good cause while having some festive fun. Keep an eye on our social media channels as well — our **Farm Gate Christmas song and video** will be making an appearance, and we hope it brings a smile to your day.

Wishing you a healthy, productive and restful festive season.

**Mark Stott**

## We Don't have a Clue!

Driving about on my calls the other day I saw a sight that brought bad memories back. It was an egg collection lorry at the gates of the farm with the driver in full Hazmat suit spraying disinfectant on the wheels. This sight brought me back to the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak. This will be the precautions they are taking for the upsurge in avian influenza (bird flu) cases in the poultry industry. Pretty much foot and mouth in hens as if they catch it the whole flock is taken out. I know what the fear and desperation that foot and mouth instils in cattle and sheep farmers so it must be the same for poultry farmers.

It got me thinking how important biosecurity is and buying in stock with little or no disease history is commonplace. The 6-day rule is seen as a hinderance but is there to slow down movements in a small attempt to slow disease outbreaks.

I don't think cattle and sheep farmers can go back to what we did in 2001, but I do think we need to be more aware of what we are buying in and what hidden delights might be hiding to cause problems in the future.

Biosecurity is so important. Get it wrong and it can cost you a lot in time and money.

**Jim McKinstry**



## Included this month

- **We Don't have a Clue -** Jim McKinstry
- **Foot Bathing Sheep**— Beth Thornton
- **Get their Coats On -** Jim McKinstry
- **Interstitial Pneumonia**— Alex Vayro
- **New Waterproofs**— Jim McKinstry
- **News and Diary Dates**

**Whatsapp  
Ordering  
Number  
07442  
862092**



Reminder for Dairy Clients  
Johnes Declarations for 2025 must be completed by the end of December



## Take Bacterial Soup Off the Menu - Top Tips for Foot Bathing Sheep

Foot bathing can play an important role in managing minor conditions such as scald, but it's not always the right tool — particularly when dealing with infectious diseases like CODD (Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis). In those cases, a foot bath can quickly turn into a “bacterial soup”, spreading infection rather than preventing it. Key points to remember are-

- **Purpose and Timing**

Foot bathing is a disinfection technique, not a routine gathering reason. Use it after essential gatherings such as shearing or scanning — not as a standalone management event.

- **Choice of Solution**

Formalin (3%) is suitable for walk-through disinfection.

Avoid antibiotic foot baths.

Zinc sulphate can be effective but requires long standing times to work properly.

- **Concentration Matters**

Don't just “glug it in” — measure it!

Too weak, and the solution won't work.

Too strong, and it can burn feet and cause pain.

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for dilution rates and handling.

- **Clean feet, better results**

Use a clean water bath first to remove dirt and muck — contamination reduces chemical effectiveness.

After bathing, stand sheep on hard standing for about 20 minutes to allow the solution to dry and prevent it being washed off.

- **Hygiene and Maintenance**

Change the solution regularly, especially when it becomes soiled.

A dirty bath is ineffective and can spread infection between animals.



Beth Thornton

## Get their Coats On

The north wind and icy blast has me reaching for another fleece and the porridge has replaced the Weetabix for breakfast. This gets me thinking about calves on farms as they will be feeling the cold. Some clever people have called the point when you start feeling the cold as a lower critical temperature, for calves in the first week of life the temperature is 15°C. Below this they start using energy to keep themselves warm. If they can't keep warm their immune system is weakened and they get sick.

Here are some easy ways to keep calves warm

- Put a jacket on them
- Bed them up well with straw so they can nest in it
- Make sure they are getting enough **QUALITY** powder. We want calves on 900g per day. What I mean by quality is a milk powder that is mainly skimmed milk and not whey. The difference a good milk powder makes is unbelievable sometimes.
- Stop any calf level drafts. We want ventilation above calf height and no drafts.



Jim McKinstry



## Interstitial Pneumonia

As the weather turns damp – as it always does at this time of year – we're once again seeing more coughing cows and calves. The usual pneumonia bugs love these warm, wet conditions, so it's no surprise they start causing trouble. But not every cough is caused by your typical viruses and bacteria. One condition we're keeping an eye out for is **Interstitial Pneumonia**. This is a term pathologists use to describe a particular type of lung damage where air gets trapped in the lungs (a bit like emphysema), meaning they can't contract properly. One well-known cause of this in adult cattle is **Fog Fever**.

Fog Fever tends to crop up when cattle are turned out onto very lush autumn pasture. Some grasses contain natural amino acids that, once they've been through the rumen, are converted into a toxin. This toxin then travels in the bloodstream and damages the lungs. Signs can be anything from mild to very serious – fast breathing, obvious difficulty breathing, frothing at the mouth, and sadly, sometimes sudden death. Diagnosis is usually based on the animal's history and post-mortem findings. Prevention is mostly about pasture management: avoiding turnout when the grass is at its lushest, or easing cattle in gradually so they're not suddenly exposed.

Interstitial Pneumonia can also affect **youngstock**, and a recent study showed a high number of cases in calves around 4–5 months old. Interestingly, the highest levels nationally were found in North Yorkshire and Cumbria. The signs look much the same as Fog Fever, but the causes can be very different – things like lungworm, respiratory viruses such as RSV, or even irritants like smoke.

The key difference is that, unlike Fog Fever, **both lungworm and many viral pneumonias can be controlled in the herd with the right vaccination plan**. If you're seeing any coughing, or just want to review your prevention strategy, please get in touch with the practice – we're always happy to help you work out what's going on and how best to protect the herd.

**Alex Vayro**



## New Water Proofs for Christmas!

Like farmers, we vets do live in waterproofs, and I hate having holes in them. I have just got some SWAMPMAS-TER leggings and coat, and they are really good quality and value compared to other brands. Trust me I have tried plenty. So good in fact that we are going to stock them for clients to buy. Size wise they are generous. I wear a 2XL to give you an idea of sizing. We will have coats, leggings and bib and brace. A perfect Christmas present for the hard to buy for farmer.



**Festive Jim !**



## Good Luck Ruby

Ruby has taken up a new challenge with



Warrendale Wagyu and left us at the end of October. We would like to wish her good luck and all the best in her new venture!

### Charity Christmas Quiz Night

**Tuesday 16th of December 2025**  
**7pm for 7.30pm start at**  
**Kirkby Lonsdale Rugby Club**  
Raygarth, Kirkby Lonsdale LA6 2DS

**Supper included**  
**Raffle**  
**Christmas Jumpers**  
**Essential !!**

Teams of up to 6, £15 entry per team. Teams can be made up on the night. All proceeds donated to St John's Hospice. Please call the office to book in your team / place for catering numbers. J36 015395 67899 Lancaster 01524 60006

### Lambing Courses 2026

**Practical Lambing PLUS - Sat 17th January 2026, 9.30am—2pm (includes farm visit & light lunch) £60.31 inc. VAT**  
**Practical Lambing - Saturday 21st February 2026, 9.30am—12.30pm, £48.89 inc. VAT**

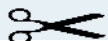
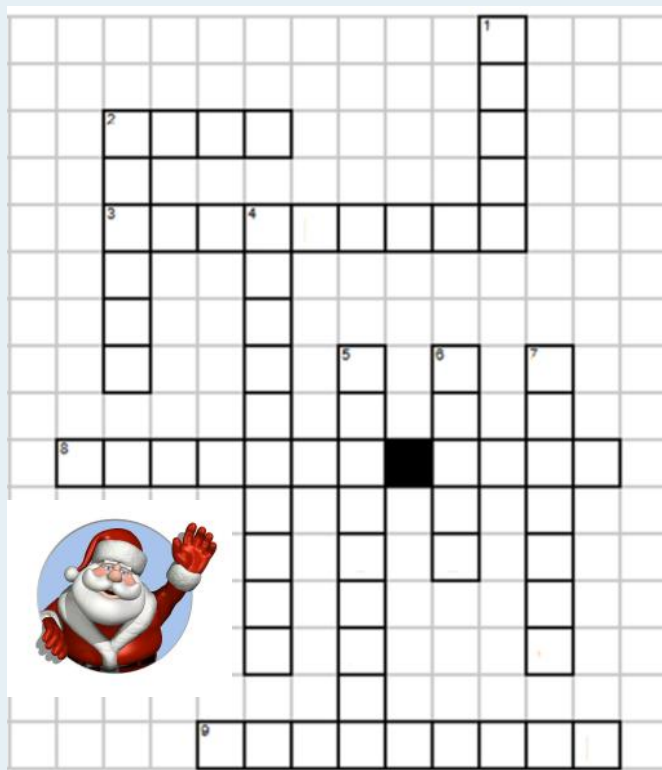
Aimed at all levels of experience we cover-

- 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 gift!

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

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

## Beth T's 2025 Christmas Crossword—WIN Chocolate - hand in before the end of December



### Across

2. Four letter word that the wise men are also known as (4).
3. In the Nativity story, who visited baby Jesus first after his birth? (8).
8. Common name for the sheep gut worm Haemonchus (8, 4).
9. In filmography, which large dog went on a Christmas adventure? (9).

### Down

1. Surname of the writer of 'Little Drummer Boy' (5).
2. Santa's tractor, if he fancied swapping the sleigh for six cylinders and a loader (6).
4. Popular red Christmas plant not so good for cats or dogs (10).
5. Phrase we use to describe either wormers or antibiotics that are no longer effective (9).
6. A very loving antlered employee with impeccable night vision and poor job security after December (5).
7. Daily farming duty that doesn't pause for tinsel, turkey or tiredness (7).

Name -

Farm Name -

## Warm Welcome to Liusaidh Troughton

Hello! I'm Liusaidh (just pronounced Lucy!). I grew up on a sheep and beef farm on the Isle of Arran, just off the west coast of Scotland, and graduated from Edinburgh University in 2018. Since then, I have worked in mixed practice in the South Lakes but farm work has always been my main interest. I am based towards the west of the practice in Broughton in Furness but I am looking forward to getting out and meeting lots of new faces and getting to know the area better. Outside of work I have been involved in young farmers since I moved down here as well as keeping fit, spending time with friends and heading back home to visit family. I also help my husband on his fell farm as apparently this is 'quality time' and not a busman's holiday.



### Diary Dates



**2025 Charity Christmas Quiz—In aid of St John's Hospice**  
**Tuesday 16th December 2025, 7pm at Kirkby Lonsdale Rugby Club -**  
 6 per team, Raffle, Christmas Jumper Competition, Supper Included.  
 £15 suggested donation per team, cash on the night. To book in your  
 team or place, please call the office or e mail [linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto:linda@farmgatevets.com) (for food numbers).



#### 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

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