



Newsletter

July 2025



Welcome

As summer gets into full swing, the weather in this corner of the world could certainly be called “growy”. Other parts of the country are less fortunate with very hot and dry conditions stifling grass growth. The down side is that grass won’t be the only thing taking advantage of the weather. Gut and lung worms love these conditions. The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway funding is still available and can be used among other things to monitor gut worm levels and wormer resistance.

It's a good time to reflect on the spring calvings and lambings and prepare for the bulling and tugging periods coming up. Even better, get that health plan done now rather than having it done in a hurry because “the inspector’s coming tomorrow!”

Mark Stott

Bull Selection



It is great to see calf trade flying at the moment. There is nothing like a shortage of beef cattle to get buyers wanting calves out of dairy cows. We are seeing a lot more beef semen going into cows with bigger continental breeds which can lead to problems.

I do say it tongue in cheek to dairy farmers if they are a dairy farmer or a beef farmer. For me the most important thing in a dairy herd is the cow, the calf is a bonus. I want a cow to calve with the minimum of

fuss, with no intervention and go on to eat, milk and do its job which is to put milk in the tank.

Cows and heifers put to Limousins, Charolais, and Simmental can have bigger calves and they usually have a longer gestation which means that you loose milk. Bigger calves that need a bit of pull to calve them will cause some more inflammation to the cow’s reproductive tract. This can add up to another 30 days onto her calving interval loosing you milk. I haven’t even mentioned vet calvings, caesars and down cows after calving which we do see more of with these bigger beef calves.

All companies always sell Easy calving beef bulls to dairy farmers. Look at the numbers. Look at the accuracy of the numbers. Look at the number of calvings they are basing their numbers on. Angus, Hereford and British blue calves on the whole calve well and do not usually go over time. They are also good to sell. You may not get as much as a Limmy or Charolais, but your cows will thank you for it.

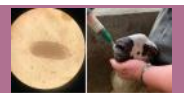
Jim McKinstry

Included this month

- **Bull Selection–**
Jim McKinstry
- **Calf Health, Habits and Gut Health–**
Tommy the Vet
- **CCN—Star Gazing Lambs–**
Rebekah Carling
- **Squeaky Clean Colostrum–**
Beth Thornton
- **News and Diary Dates**



TEST DON'T GUESS with WORM EGG COUNTS
Wormer and Fly Products all in stock for the summer season.



Calf Health, Habits & Gut Health: A Visit to High Farm with Farm Gate Vets



On June 24th, I had the pleasure of crossing the Irish Sea to join the exceptional team at Farm Gate Vets for a calf health meeting held at the Pye family farm. It was a fantastic day — a well-run farm, an engaged group of clients, and a veterinary team full of energy, knowledge, and genuine passion for improving outcomes on farm.



We took a deep dive into calf health, exploring not just the science but also the practical habits and routines that underpin successful rearing systems. My core message throughout the day was simple but vital: attention to detail and consistency are what calves thrive on. If you want to optimise performance, your daily routines around calf care matter more than any one-off intervention.

Topics Covered

- Colostrum management: the "Four Qs" — Quality, Quantity, Quickly, and Cleanliness. One area that often needs more focus is the cleanliness of colostrum harvesting and storage. It's worth having a detailed SOP in place, and I encourage all farmers to work with their vet team (like Farm Gate Vets) to critically assess this process.
- Feeding strategy: We talked about feeding rates, the biology of the calf, and ensuring we're not just feeding to meet minimum targets but actually building resilience and growth.
- Hygiene: I shared my story about the "glitter effect" (you had to be there!) to emphasise how bacteria can spread in calf-rearing environments. From calving pens to feeding equipment, keeping things clean directly reduces the infection pressure calves are exposed to.
- Housing and comfort: Straw bedding, temperature, airflow — small adjustments in the calf's physical environment can yield big improvements in health and performance.
- Water quality: Often overlooked but critical. A quick test and some basic checks can ensure water isn't undermining calf health.
- Stress and gut health: This led naturally into our discussion on the microbiome and Precision Microbes, our unique fermented postbiotic liquid.

We explored how supplementing calves from birth with 30 ml/day in milk, and increasing that dose for 3–4 days during any digestive upset, can support gut development, immunity, and resilience. The feedback from Sarah and the Pye family on their use of Precision Microbes — particularly the impact on antibiotic use and overall calf vitality — was incredibly rewarding to hear.

As someone who travels extensively and works with many vet practices, I want to highlight how impressed I was by the Farm Gate Vets team. Their collaborative, customer-focused, and forward-thinking approach is a real credit to them. They're clearly committed to making a lasting difference on farm, and it was a privilege to share the day with them.

Thanks again to the Pye family for hosting us and to Farm Gate Vets for the invitation. Wishing you all continued success — and keep up the great work helping farms and calves thrive.



Tommy Heffernan, Veterinary Consultant

CCN - Star Gazing Lambs

With the recent flush of grass growth, CCN will be something to keep an eye out for, especially in your growing lambs. It is caused by a deficiency of B1 due to bacteria in the rumen removing it. These bacteria are more common in the weeks following a better diet. Early signs are blindness and circling, which if left untreated will progress to unable to stand with their head thrown back (stargazing) and then seizures in end stage.



Photo credit NADIS

Treatment is several injections of B1 and if you can catch and treat it at the early stage then you should get a full recovery. Dodicile contains B1 and dose is 2.5-5ml/50kg in the muscle every 3 hours for 5 times.



Rebekah Clayton

Squeaky Clean Colostrum

We often talk about how important it is to give colostrum quickly and the correct amount. But the importance of cleanliness is often overlooked. For any parents or grandparents out there- think about how important it is that baby bottles are sterilised- the same applies for calves. The calf's guts deliberately 'leak' into the bloodstream in the first 24 hours after birth. This allows vital immunoglobins from colostrum to enter and kick start the calf's immune system.

If bugs from unhygienic colostrum enter the gut two problems are caused.

- They may pass straight into the calf's blood stream, causing septicaemia and/ or gut disease.
- They can bind to the immunoglobulins and stop them entering the bloodstream. This means a weaker immune system and could stop scour vaccines working.

On farm tips

- Prepare the cows udder before harvesting as you would do prior to milking.
- Use scrupulously clean containers for storage and freezing. Disposable colostrum bags are practical and hassle free. Teat and bottles and/or feeding bags should be disinfected and cleaned between each use.
- **DO NOT LEAVE COLOSTRUM AT ROOM TEMPERATURE!** Bacterial counts double every 20 minutes at room temperature. Colostrum should be refrigerated or frozen within an hour of harvest. If a bucket of colostrum had a bacterial count of 35 at 7am by 3pm it would be around **147 million!**
- If you're curious to see how clean your colostrum is, we can send samples to the lab for a bacterial count.

Additional tips

- This advice should also be followed for sheep and lambs.
- Colostrum should be tested for quality prior to freezing into a bank.
- Colostrum can be stored in a fridge for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 12 months.
- When warming frozen or chilled colostrum use a water bath at 35-40 °C. Using boiling water or microwaving will destroy the immunoglobulins and is not recommended.
- Avoid using pooled colostrum.



Beth Thornton

An Interview with Alice Hayton

Alice works on reception at J36 and Lancaster, a local farmers daughter and a familiar face in the Gritstone Sheep lines at shows!

What was your first ever job? My first ever job in my early teens was waiting on and helping at Maggs Howe B&B in the valley. A great little job to earn some sheep spending pocket money!

What do you enjoy most about working at Farm Gate Vets? There's many things I love about my job at Farm Gate, the team, learning more about livestock and having craic with farmers! Farming can be isolating at times therefore having a good chat and a smile can help. **Where is your favourite holiday destination?** My favourite current holiday destination is St Ives in Cornwall. We were very lucky as kids to have gone there most years. However I am ready to see more of the world, it would be nice to experience a warm sea!

Who would you most like to have dinner with? (a famous real or fictional person). A good looking film star!

How do relax after a hard days work? After a day at work, I like to take my sheepdogs out for a walk or go round the sheep, usually most time is spent looking at the precious Derbyshire Gritstones taking pride of place on their hill above the farm!



Congratulation Mr & Mrs Clayton

Way back, one snowy day in January (sack the newsletter editor for this belated news!), our vet Rebekah tied the knot with her husband Joseph. Huge Congratulations from all the team. This may explain who Rebekah



Clayton is on recent articles!



Congratulations Mr & Mrs Oston

Last month our receptionist Becca, a well known friendly face at all three of our branches, celebrated her wedding to Tom. A couple of extra pictures here of some of the team scrubbed up and then attempting to keep up with the Irish band on the dance floor.

Huge Congratulations to you both.



Whatsapp Ordering Number

07442 862092

Please include-

- Name and Farm Name -
- Collection from Lancaster, J36, Sedbergh or Tynedale
- Medicine requested and quantity
- Reason for use - e.g. lame cows.



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J36 Kendal Office

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