



# Newsletter

## June 2022

### Welcome

Green fever has started earlier this year, more and more fields are turning white as the grass is buzzed off and then brown as the slurry goes on. The turn around seems to get quicker every year!

I was on a farm the other day and the farmer was asking me advice about a cow that was due to calve. Nothing odd about that, but when I asked how many calves she has had he said 16. This stopped me in my tracks. Then he told me she was 19 years old, who says Holsteins have poor fertility? This is one cow that has definitely earned her keep. We very rarely see animals keep going as long as this. Has anybody got older animals that are as productive? If so I would love to hear about them as we usually only hear about the animals that have done something wrong!

Jim McKinstry

### Here to Help!

May was mental health awareness month, a subject we don't talk about enough. Farming isn't always the easiest job and as farm vets, we go through some of its highs and lows with you. Working hours can feel long and lonely for little reward, and quality time off is limited. One client recently confided that the hardest thing is feeling that you are the only one with problems and that it is somehow your fault. Believe me, we keep busy seeing everyone's problems and you are far from on your own.

Farming businesses have many unique challenges and as part of our regular contact with you, we can be there to listen. Quite often, our discussions with farmers involve an element of support and understanding of your circumstances in addition to our veterinary advice. Hopefully a cheery word and a kind ear from us makes a difference. If your struggles run deeper, please don't feel alone. The right help is out there, please see this page on the AHDB website which has links to numerous associations that are out there to help. <https://ahdb.org.uk/support-for-farmers>

Sarah Harker

### Included this month


- Here to help - Sarah Harker
- Trace elements in growing lambs - Beth Thornton
- Picture competition!
- Summer Mastitis - Hannah Tatham
- Sheep Club meeting report—Sarah Harker
- News - Jim B's Retirement!
- Diary Dates

Dairy Client Notice—30 cow 6 monthly Johnes screens are due for those who completed their declaration at the end of 2021. Please contact the practice to arrange.



## Trace Elements in Growing Lambs

Trace element use in sheep can seem like a minefield! This is a short summary of the ones to consider in growing lambs. Please remember trace elements are more often than not over supplemented and that supplementation of copper should be undertaken with caution. Farms, pasture and soil quality are all extremely variable so blood testing should be considered in certain circumstances.

Mineral / Symptoms	Prevention
<p><b>Cobalt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced appetite and weight gain.</li> <li>• Poor fleece quality.</li> <li>• Increased risk of disease e.g. pulpy kidney and salmonella.</li> <li>• Can often come hand in hand with high gut worm burdens.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cobalt boluses for growing lambs over 20kg.</li> <li>• Cobalt drench for short term drenches (monthly), can be useful for fat lambs, they are also very cheap!!</li> <li>• For longer acting Cobalt options please speak to us.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Selenium (Vitamin E)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stiff, lame lambs that are between 2-6 weeks old.</li> <li>• Often meat breeds such as Texel/Suffolk.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ewes receiving a suitable pre lambing cake should pass adequate Vitamin E onto lambs.</li> <li>• Injection of new born lambs can also be used in higher risk flocks.</li> <li>• Drenches can also be used for older lambs, but be aware that overdose can happen!</li> </ul>
<p><b>Copper</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor fleece.</li> <li>• Poor growth.</li> <li>• Swayback.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careful dosing/ bolusing of ewes mid pregnancy.</li> <li>• Careful dosing/ bolusing of lambs.</li> <li>• <b>*A note on copper toxicity*</b></li> <li>• White faced sheep e.g. Texels, Charolais are extremely susceptible and should not be dosed with any form of copper.</li> <li>• Not all lambs that go off their back legs will have swayback (there are many reasons for this!)</li> <li>• Plasma samples can be useful in diagnosing a problem as can post mortem samples sent to the lab.</li> </ul>

Beth Thornton



Picture round!! – One of our vets found this (metal 3 cm long) in the stomach of a cow last week. Cases like this always involve some detective work... what do you think it could be? See the July newsletter for full case details!

**farmgate**  
vets

**Vet Tech Services**



Gill Lumb    Hannah Fulford    Ruby Allan

*Ensuring those herd health jobs get done on time and correctly.*

- Calf Weighing
- Calf Disbudding
- Calf Vaccinating
- Mobility Scoring
- Fly/Wormer Treatments
- Herd Vaccinations
- TB Test Assistance
- Faecal Egg Counts

## Summer Mastitis

Isn't it grand when you can get the heifers outside and make your job list a bit shorter! Unfortunately, there's always something with animals and there's nothing more disappointing than fetching heifers back to calve and realising they're three quartered. The most likely reason for this is summer mastitis – this is caused by several bacteria spread by flies. It is most common in heifers and dry cows at grass. Early infection can be subtle but enlargement of the quarter and irritation occurs, this is why it is important to regularly check the udders of all stock at grass. The infection can progress and make the animal sick in herself, however some animals will not ail and the quarter will most likely die off. Summer mastitis is difficult to treat and early intervention with both antibiotics and anti-inflammatories is needed.



In the case of this disease prevention is definitely better than cure. Prevention focuses on reducing exposure of grazing cattle to flies – avoiding sheltered areas with woods and streams if possible. We also need to reduce the fly population as much as possible – apply fly control products early in the season. Spot ons such as Spotinor (in stock at all our branches) are very effective and will kill flies after they have been exposed to the product – which means we can break the lifecycle if cattle have the product on their backs nice and early! At high-risk times Spotinor can be reapplied every 4 weeks to keep the flies at bay. Other options are fly tags and sprays. Good old Stockholm tar on the udders is very effective but requires regular re-application which can be difficult with grazing stock. Dry cow tubes can be used to prevent mastitis infections in the summer months, these can be used carefully for in-calf heifers as well as cows. Careful preparation of the teat with surgical spirit is needed to make sure you don't introduce infection with the tube. Speak to us today about fly control options on your farm.



**Hannah Tatham**

## Sheep Club Meetings Back in Full Swing!

After an enforced break due to COVID, it was great to have a lively meeting of our Sheep Club members in May. Discussion was based around the causes of thin sheep with a focus on Johnes disease and the role of vaccination (Guidair from Virbac) in its control.

Unacceptable levels of thin sheep contribute to inefficiency with reduced productivity, low cull value and deaths. An almost endless list of possible causes was discussed from liver fluke to teeth to the 'Iceberg' diseases.

Benefits of our Sheep Club membership include free worm egg counts and post-mortems, and time on-farm to investigate areas of concern. Our findings don't always result in the need for extra treatments or vaccinations, often just more targeted and better timed.

Although stock prices have improved, rising costs and uncertainty with regard to the level and structure of future support payments means it is a good time for farmers to scrutinise their businesses. An open and honest debate amongst members in the room showed that this is already on people's minds. Breeds and individuals within breeds need to be fit for purpose and suit the farm type. The peculiarities of the pedigree and show worlds should not detract from the functionality of individuals as profitable commercial animals. Stock need to perform without excessive inputs of labour or feed and provide an output that leaves a profit. Grassland and homegrown forages need to be maximised in the face of rising feed costs.

There was also appreciation in the room of the value of knowing what diseases are in your flock and how to manage them to minimise impact on profitability. Johnes disease for example is overlooked in many flocks but local post-mortem findings suggest it is fairly common. This led to discussion regarding biosecurity and risks posed by purchased stock, and the need for openness and honesty between farmers for the greater good of the industry.

If this inspires you to join our Sheep Club, please contact Sarah or Linda at the practice. For those of you already converted, please keep coming forward with your suggestions for future meetings.

**Sarah Harker**



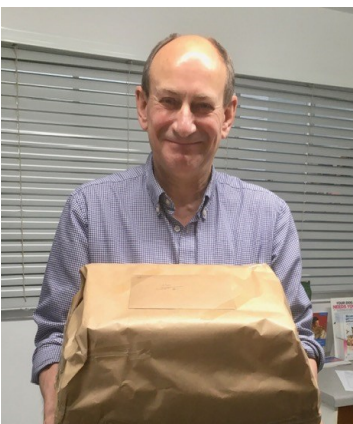
## A Retirement Cheerio from Jim Bramley

The years have rolled by all too quickly and as I have now reached OAP age, it certainly is time to hang up my stethoscope.

My veterinary journey started when I graduated from Edinburgh in 1980, taking me to mixed practices in Stokesley, Richmond and Harrogate, all N. Yorkshire then a brave move to Cumbria.

Nick Preston and I went into partnership in 1989 and ran the surgery in Sedbergh until we joined with Farmgate in 2016. Quite an adventure but well worth it. Nick and I weren't business men at all but somehow we managed, with great help in the surgery from Lisa Bramley (my wife not daughter!) Claire Pope and Nick's wife Wendy (who fortunately is an accountant), to muddle through.

I've met many great characters in the farming, town and school communities and a wide variety of animals along the way, some awkward, some downright dangerous but all interesting!



*Jim receiving 12 bottles of beer as a retirement present, someone knows him well !*

Joining Farmgate in 2016 was quite a change, not just the computer systems. I have been dragged into the 21st century by the enthusiastic vets who have come up to help, and who will now be running the Sedbergh surgery, Kathrine, Sarah and Becky who will be helped by Lisa, Lesley and Kelly.

I'd like to thank Mark and Jim for the opportunity to continue working in Sedbergh for the last 6 years and all clients who have used the surgery. Lisa and I will continue to live in Sedbergh, in my opinion nowhere quite like it!

I'll miss everything about the job, the whole range of emotions in just one day could be exhausting, but I have many stories for the book!

I wish all Farmgate staff and clients all the best for the future.



*A very young Nick, Lisa, Claire and Jim!, the young student at the front is Lucy Keats (Ogg) who was a local from Middleton, she now lives in USA and is a vet working for overseas welfare agency. We taught her well!!*

Jim Bramley

## Dates For Your Diary



**Understanding Veterinary Medicines - Red Tractor Approved Course, Tuesday 5th July 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) 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

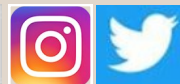
Monday-Friday

CLOSED Saturdays

CLOSED Sundays

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