



Welcome

Living on the North Atlantic coast, we shouldn't be too surprised by the variability of our weather. However, it does seem harder than ever to predict what will happen next. Over the May Bank Holiday we were dealing with dogs suffering from heat stroke, yet now, at the beginning of Flaming June, the forecast appears to be little but rain for the next fortnight—and the school summer holidays haven't even begun.

Disease patterns have traditionally been closely linked to the seasons and prevailing weather conditions. Increasingly, however, our unpredictable climate means there is no longer a reliable "time of year" when certain diseases can be expected to appear. Add to this the gradual warming of our climate, which is allowing traditionally "exotic" diseases such as bluetongue virus and Haemonchus to become established in the UK, and it is clear that we all need to be more vigilant than ever when it comes to animal health.

Many of the old assumptions no longer hold true. We can no longer confidently say that a disease such as liver fluke won't occur at a particular time of year simply because the textbooks suggest its life cycle shouldn't allow it. The patterns are changing, and increasingly we must be prepared for almost anything, at any time of year.

This changing landscape makes careful observation, prompt investigation of health problems, and regular discussion with your vet more important than ever. So please don't be afraid to pick up the phone and discuss issues you might have sooner rather than later.

Mark Stott

Practice Computer System Upgrade



As the administrative burden of medicine records increases for both vets and farmers, we have decided to upgrade our practice computer system in order to make the way we work more efficient. This will allow us to improve our communication particularly around medicine withdrawal periods moving this from a paper based to a digital system.

How will it impact clients?

Initially there should be very little change to how we work although your invoices and delivery notes will look a little different. Information from the system can be sent by sms or email. Therefore, ensuring that we have up to date emails and mobile numbers will greatly improve your experience of the new system. Our change over week will be the last week of July and you should see the new system being introduced in August. Although we need to carry out a significant volume of staff training that week, we are hoping to keep service disruption to a minimum and 24/7 emergency cover will be in place as usual. Thankyou in advance for your patience as we implement this practice upgrade.

Finbarr O'Sullivan-Greene

Included this month

- **Computer System Upgrade—** Finbarr O'Sullivan-Greene
- **If Enzo and Toxo had a 6ft Wing Span—** Fraser Jackson
- **Getting Cows in Calf Quickly—** Liusaidh Troughton
- **Medicine Update—** Jim McKinstry
- **Slippery when Wet -** Jim McKinstry
- **News and Diary Dates**



If Enzo and Toxo had a 6-foot wingspan, more farmers would probably vaccinate!

A recent consultation on the proposal to release Sea Eagles in Cumbria, rightfully caused an uproar from farmers concerned about the potential lamb losses that could result. It is however worth keeping in mind that although they are not as visible as a bird with a 6ft wingspan **infectious bugs are the biggest cause of lamb loss** and abortion in sheep.



As the chaos of lambing has come to an end, it's good time to think about how lambing went this year and what things could be done differently next year. Abortions, weak lambs and barren sheep were hopefully few and far between but unfortunately some people may experience more of these than others and we certainly investigated plenty of these cases.



Toxoplasmosis and enzootic abortion (EAE) are two of the biggest causes of poor reproductive performance. Luckily, unlike the threat from predatory sea eagles, they can be prevented through vaccination, at least 4 weeks before tupping. Knowing what has caused lamb losses can help in deciding a vaccination plan. Flock Check which offers subsidised blood testing of 6 aborted ewes is available until the end of June so please make use of this. As the saying goes, prevention is always better than cure!

Fraser Jackson

Getting Beef Cows in Calf Quickly

There are a number of benefits to a compact calving interval including easier management of both calving and weaning times, improving calf health by having groups of the same age and size, and improving profitability by ensuring cows produce a calf every 12 months (not every 15 or 16 months!). Resulting in having older, bigger and heavier calves to sell.

Aiming for 65% calving in the first 3 weeks would mean 98% of cows calved in less than 12 weeks (1st April finished before end of June).

So how do we reduce our calving period?

The most important factor in getting cows back in calf is **condition** of the cow, aiming for body condition score 2.75-3 – you don't want to see ribs and want good coverage over the back end and tail. Getting heifers pregnant after their first calf is usually where time is lost, so calving heifers earlier than cows can help to give them more time, and allow supplementary feed before they go back to the bull.

Disease status (lameness, infection in the womb after calving, mastitis, milk fever) all impact how quickly a cow will start cycling- it may be a good idea for us to check any cows who had a rough calving/twins/ held cleansing before they are turned out with the bull to make sure they are clean and ready to go.

The bull is of course 50% of the fertility of the herd so ensuring he is fit for work (and fertile!) is key – we are semen testing more bulls all the time many of which throw a poor sample despite looking well so always best to get them checked before putting them out with the cows.

If all of the above is correct then the best way to get late calving cows to 'gain time' and get back to calving with the rest of the herd is to synchronise them. There are various programmes out there but we find the most success with the following:

- ✦ Day 0: Vet check, PRIDs in and Jab (2ml Acegon IM)
- ✦ DAY 7: Pull PRIDs and Jab (2ml Estrumate IM)
- ✦ DAY 8: Jab (2ml Estrumate IM)

DAY 10: Fixed Time AI + Jab (2ml Acegon IM)/ put with bull
This involves 4 handlings total, 1 of which is a vet visit.

Synchronisation programmes -including using AI- can achieve conception rates of 65%, similar to natural service, however relies on selecting fit, healthy cows and heifers and having handling facilities fit for the job.



Photo from our recent suckler meeting at Maidenlands Pedigree Livestock, Ulverston

Liusaidh Troughton

Medicines Update

I do get a lot of grief from some of our clients about the new medicines on our shelves and that I am constantly changing them. IT IS NOT MY FAULT! Certain medicines especially antibiotics are getting increasingly difficult to source. Is it the raw materials? Is it Brexit? Is it the companies are not making enough money from them and are switching sites to produce more lucrative human medicines? The bottom line is that we do struggle to get some medicines and must go to new suppliers for them.

MSD have discontinued 2 long standing products, Oxytocin-s and Leptavoid-h. We have OXYTOBEL to replace the oxytocin and SPIROVAC to replace Leptavoid-h.

We have been struggling to get Alamycin LA. We have ALAMYCIN LA 300 which is a stronger version so 1ml will do 15kg instead of the usual 10kg. There is also OXTRA DD, which at double its usual dose will do the same as Alamycin LA.

We have a new product to replace Betamox. Betamox has been out of stock for quite a while now and we have had to rely on long acting amoxicillin products as a replacement which has not been ideal. We now have REDYMOX which is exactly the same dosage as Betamox and has the same 24-hour milk and 18 days meat withhold in cattle. This is a very useful product as it is a category D antibiotic that we are urged to use as a first line treatment. I like it to treat foul of the foot, uterine infections and any infected wounds in cattle. A bit of good news to end with.



Jim McKinstry

Slippery when Wet



There have been some good cuts of young first cut silage getting put into clamps. Everything seems to be perfect, the weather, the grass and the clamp filling. Analysis is good and when it is starting to get fed the cows are milking well. What can go wrong? An avalanche is what. Many of our clients on multicut systems have the silo face slipping. This allows air into the silage, it starts to go off and it loses its energy.

Young, wet, short cut silages are at high risk of slipping especially if they are put on top of previous cuts. The line between the cuts is a fault that allows the top cut to slip.

A study in 2020 by Dave Davies found these 3 risk factors for silage slippage.

- 1) Density of silage within the clamp, especially variation in density within the clamp
- 2) Filling the clamp too steeply (over 20 degrees)
- 3) Silage chop length. Younger grass should be chopped at 5cm.

The main points Dave recommends to decrease the chance of silage slippage are

- Be consistent when filling the clamp
- For 30% DM silages, roll in 15cm layers
- For wetter silages, roll in 25cm layers
- Consolidate using the same method for every load when you fill the pit. The speed of filling the clamp should be determined by the person on the buck rake, not the contractor filling the silage trailers!
- If you are filling the clamp and sealing in a single day, fill at a 10–15-degree angle
- If taking more than one day to fill the clamp, you can fill at a slightly steeper angle (but no more than 20 degrees)
- For wet silages (less than 25% DM), increase the chop length to 75mm to help stabilize the clamp.

I know how difficult it is to get silage made perfectly. I hope this advice will help to keep that good silage producing the milk.

Jim McKinstry

A warm welcome to Katie Spence

Hi, I'm Katie – the newest addition to the team! I graduated from Bristol in July 2025 before taking some time out to go inter-railing around Austria, Switzerland, and Slovenia, volunteer with Mission Rabies in Tanzania. I joined the team at the beginning of March and have really enjoyed getting stuck into the busy spring season. Although I'm not from a farming background, I spent much of my undergraduate years helping out on a beef and sheep farm in Hexham. From my first lambing season, the family took me under their wing and have since become like a second family to me – much to my mum's despair, as I probably see them more than her! They're a huge part of the reason I'm so passionate about becoming the best farm vet I can be.

Outside of work, I love keeping fit through running and CrossFit, catching up with friends over coffee, and spending as much time outdoors as possible. I'm looking forward to meeting more of you over the coming months, and thank you to everyone who has made me feel so welcome already.



Auction of promises—THANK YOU from Finbarr and Kathrine !



Just a quick note to say thank you for your support with our promise auction. On the night over £13,000 was raised and after costs were settled £12,788.55 was sent to Aspire. This event has helped the 3 northern members of team Narwhals over their individual targets and the three from down south are well on their way to hitting theirs. It goes without saying that we couldn't have pulled this off without the support of Sandra Blades, Gill Lumb, Claire Capstick, Will Alexander and North West Auctions along with the support of our friends and



families. More importantly we wouldn't have been able to do this without the generous support of our donors and bidders. It's not often I am lost for words, but it is safe to say that Kathrine, Sarah (Harper) and I were truly humbled by the support on the night. We will continue to keep you updated but for now we are off to Dover for a qualifying swim (1.5h swim then an hour to warm up followed by another hour - no wetsuits!)

If anyone still wants to support us the group just giving page is: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/aspire-narwhals-arch2arc-2026>

And for information on the charity, we are raising money for is here: <https://www.aspire.org.uk/>

Whatsapp order no.
07442 862092

Diary Dates



Open Farm Sunday - 7th June 2026

This year we will be at Low Bank Side, Cartmel LA11 7NR with the Fishwick Family, and at Fernhill Farm Preesall FY6 0JA with the Raby Family. Good luck to all farms participating.



Dairy Client Coach Trip to Metcalfe Farms, Leyburn

Tuesday 16th June 2026. 9am leaving J36 to return approx. 4pm.

Focusing on Young stock rearing along with a tour of their other enterprises. We are expecting a full coach so please book your place asap by phoning the practice or e mail linda@farmgatevets.com



Shaping Future Flocks Roadshow

Practical Advice on ewe nutrition and health throughout the breeding cycle

Tuesday 7th July 2026, 4pm—8pm at J36 NWA.

Please book direct with Downland, booking link and further information to follow.

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

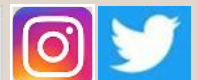
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