



Newsletter

May 2025



Welcome

We have some exciting news to share with everyone. From the start of April Farm Gate Vets have 4 new directors Sarah, Linda, Finbarr and Kathrine. Mark and I started Farmgate Vets over 14 years ago now and it is time for us to be looking to the future of the business and adding to our management team. We have a great team through out and it is marvellous that some of the more experienced members of staff have become directors. Mark and I are not retiring but we will have to at some point, so succession planning is very important to us to retain an independent business, as we do not want to be answering to a large faceless corporate owner. We have grown significantly since we formed in 2011 which would not have happened without the support of all our clients. We look forward to carrying on providing you with the best service we can and moving the business forward with our new team.

Jim McKinstry



Keep Them Growing

It has been a wonderful lambing time. We have had t-shirts and sunglasses this year compared to waterproofs and waders last year. We have seen very few problems with joint ill and watery mouth due to sheep being in good condition and lambs have been clean and dry.

With the warm weather there can be problems. Nematodirus and fly strike are the main ones.

We have already seen lambs born in February with Nematodirus. Nematodirus likes things to warm up before it starts to cause problems. With an early spring the lambs may not be eating a lot of grass as the Nematodirus eggs hatch, so you may not see too many problems. It is difficult to predict. Nematodirus infection shows as a green scour in lambs. Lambs get dehydrated so you see them at drinking troughs or in the beck. If lambs are dull, scouring and not growing then Nematodirus is usually the problem at this time of year. Faecal egg counts can be misleading as the lambs will scour before there are any eggs in the dung.

All wormers will kill Nematodirus. I usually advise using a white drench as it is cheap and effective. Another problem with growing lambs is Fly strike. Fly strike is an awful condition when maggots eat a lamb alive. There are 2 excellent products, Klik Extra and Klikzin, that give up to 19 weeks protection from blowfly strike from 1 application. It always annoys me when farmers get fly strike and they have never thought to use these products. With the value lambs are at the moment you do not want to lose any with a completely preventable problem. Have a chat to one of us about it if you have never used them.

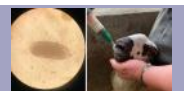
Jim McKinstry

Included this month

- **Keep them Growing –** Jim McKinstry
- **Johnes control changes–** Sol Elliott
- **Cow Rehydration –** Rebekah Clayton
- **Twinning–** Beth Thornton
- **Bluetongue –** Jim McKinstry
- **News and Diary Dates**



Wormer and Fly Products all in stock for the summer season, please speak to us.



Johnes Control Plan Changes

Many of our dairy farmers will be familiar with the National Johnes's Management Plan (NJMP) – some may know it well from the panic of finding that purple form at the end of the year! However, there are some changes happening to the scheme to be aware of. A new target has been set to come into play at the end of March: "To control and then reduce the incidence of Johnes disease in dairy cattle with the aim of achieving a **national mean average test value of less than 5.5 by 2030**". It may have previously felt as though you were chasing an ever-decreasing target; the harder you farmers worked at controlling Johnes's (and succeeded), the goalposts had to constantly change for your Average Test Values (ATV) to make it into the top 25% (green boxes) and unfortunately, you may see further changes to these colours going forward. The good news is with a new fixed target of an average test value of 5.5, that is the main thing you need to focus on achieving with Johnes's going forward.

If you have been using the 30-cow screen of the highest risk animals (where you were likely always getting high results), you will now need to do either a whole herd screen or a **random 60 cow sample**. This change came in on the 31st March. If you have done your Johnes's declaration already in 2025 with a vet, that is valid for the year as normal. At your next review, we will discuss with you how we implement these changes and how we can help you achieve that ATV of 5.5.

To finish, you may like to know that the national average test value for Johnes's has decreased by 25-31% between 2020 and 2023. That wouldn't be possible without your continued commitment, engagement and decision making to reduce the risk of Johnes's on your farm. Keep going, you are making a difference!



Sol Elliott

Cow Rehydration

I have recently spent some time in a courtesy van (not my fault, promise!) and my lack of drawers meant I had to have a bit of a sort out as to what is essential to carry. One piece of equipment wasn't even questioned... my stomach pump.

There are multiple benefits to stomach pumping a cow:

- Corrects mild dehydration (severe dehydration requires IV fluids)
- Physically weighs down the rumen therefore making it more difficult for the abomasum to pass under it i.e. reducing the risk of an LDA.
- Enable easy use of a stomach powder which combats milk fever, slow fever, grass staggers, acidosis and supports the rumen microbes

The tube can also be used in a choke situation to push the obstruction safely into the rumen.

Accidentally causing drowning seems to be the main reason more of you don't take the advantage of having your own. However, there are several checks that enable you to be confident in your tube placement:

- Seeing or feeling the tube separate to the windpipe
- Hearing gurgling sounds down the pipe
- Being able to hear bubbles blown down the tube when listening at the rumen

Next time one of us is on the farm and about to stomach pump one of your cows, take the opportunity to pass the tube and perform these checks yourself to feel more confident in purchasing your own.



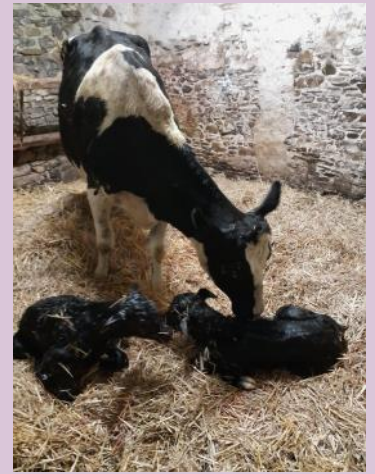
Rebekah Clayton

Twinning in Dairy Cattle: Why does it happen?

Rate of twinning has more than tripled in the past 30 years. It has been estimated to cost the US dairy industry \$96 million per year. Risk factors are not fully understood. But studies looking at correlation have found the following:

Twins are produced by either double ovulation or splitting of embryos. Double ovulation is the most common mechanism.

A hormone called progesterone (what we use with PRIDs) needs to be high in the cow's bloodstream to ensure a successful single ovulation. Lower blood progesterone can be caused by a higher milk production and subsequent higher DMI. Or conversely, an energy deficit in high yielding cows. Higher parity cows in mid-lactation are the most likely to have a double ovulation, increasing the risk of twinning. There is a genetic component which contributes. If a cow has conceived twins once, she is more likely too again. Cows can be genomically selected to reduce the risk of twin pregnancies.



Beth Thornton

Blue Tongue—to Vaccinate or not?

This is a disease that has been on our radar since last year. It has absolutely devastated sheep flocks in northern Europe and it has caused fertility problems and milk drop in cattle.

We have had just over 250 confirmed cases of bluetongue in England up to press. There has been a Bluetongue protection zone pretty much from Ripon straight down the middle of the country and taking in the south coast. Far enough away. Things changed a couple of weeks ago when there was a confirmed case in Lancashire. That is a bit close!

What is Bluetongue? It is a virus that is spread by the midge. Animals cannot spread it between themselves. Getting cases in sheep and cattle tells us the midge population is infected. It causes an inflammation of

the blood vessels around the face and the feet. Clinical signs in sheep are swelling of the face, discharge from the eyes and nose and sores in their mouth. Their feet can also be involved with swellings at the top of the hoof. Affected animals get a fever which can cause abortions and foetal loss in pregnant animals and milk drop in milking animals. Sheep are a lot more affected by bluetongue than cattle and the outbreak in Europe was causing about 30% deaths in affected sheep. Cattle are poorly for a few days but do get over it but with decreased fertility and production.

The sheep flock in northern Europe is down by about 20% and milk production is down by 10% due to the bluetongue virus. I have no figures for cattle fertility but it will be decreased as well.

Why am I worried about it? If the above figures were not scary enough, current thinking is that the virus will have overwintered in the midge population. The midge that carries bluetongue is a soft southern midge and can not cope with a bit of cold. The problem is the virus is now in the harder northern midges and will be circulating earlier instead of being blown over from Europe in mid summer. This means infection will get going earlier and will spread more widely.

Unlike Europe when they were just starting with bluetongue infections, we do have vaccines to protect stock. The vaccine will not stop infection but it will massively reduce the clinical signs. This means vaccinated stock will be protected but they

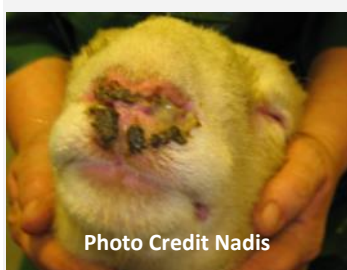


Photo Credit Nadis

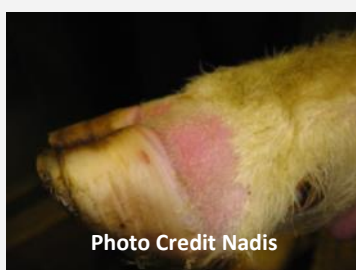


Photo Credit Nadis



Client BTV meeting at J36

can still infect midges that can then infect surrounding stock. The vaccine is in high demand and stocks are limited but vaccine should get more readily available as time goes on.

My personal advice is to vaccinate. Stock is worth too much to risk the devastation that Europe has seen. At the end of the day the choice is down to the individual farmer.

Jim McKinstry

An Interview with Alex

Many of you will have already met Alex on farm, our Yorkshire Lass has settled in well over the border, here we find out a bit more about her life when not vetting..

What was your first ever job? I actually got paid to play the piano as part of a pit orchestra for a local school production!

What do you enjoy most about working at Farm Gate Vets? I love the variety! The caseload is so interesting when covering both farm and small animals.

Where is your favourite holiday destination? Probably the Alps- the scenery for hiking is beautiful in the summer, and of course the skiing in the winter!

Who would you most like to have dinner with? (a famous real or fictional person). I would love to chat with Rebecca Adlington about her career and what it was like to live and breathe swimming!

How do relax after a hard days work? You'll find me either walking in the fells or going for a nice relaxing swim.



Whatsapp Ordering Reminder

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.



Open Farm Sunday

Sunday 8th June 2025

We are once again proud to be supporting the Fishwick Family at Low Bank Side, Cartmel.

Please help us to promote this event to the general public by sharing posts etc.

Great British Beef Week

Once again our staff put on their aprons to support #GBBW2025, (23rd—30th April) at the time of print a ferocious voting battle will be happening on social media, the winner to be announced here next month. Apparently disqualifying Sol's entry cooked by Miller & Carter was in her words "unfair".



What Should we be doing about Blue Tongue Disease? A second meeting will be held very soon.

Please make sure you look out for e mails, follow our facebook and Instagram for information.



Medicine Course (Dairy Focus) - Thursday 22nd May 2025— 11.30pm –2.00pm (pub lunch included) . The Smithy Inn, Milnthorpe Road, Holme LA6 1PS Cost £40 plus VAT per person which includes work book and certificate. This meets the new Red Tractor Requirements for a Course every 5 years for Dairy.

To book your place please phone the office 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

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

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