



# Newsletter

## November 2022

### Welcome

November already. it will soon be Christmas!!! November is a bad month for stock health. The weather can be mild and damp which is deadly for housed animals. Ventilation is the key and keep stocking densities as low as possible. As the weather cools calves need more energy, this is when we see problems with calf milk powders as they can sometimes not provide the enough energy to keep the calves warm. Check you are giving calves 150g of powder per litre of water, calves are getting 3 litres of milk twice a day and they have their jackets on. I know I have reached for the fleece so think about the baby calves. TB is front of our minds at the moment as we are busy testing after having a couple of confirmed cases in the area. Like farmers, it is not our favourite of jobs but we all know how important it is to get it done to keep our area free from TB.

**Jim McKinstry**

### TB Preparedness

Many of you will either be in a Radial TB testing zone or have noticed we have been somewhat busier than usual. Radials are not uncommon and have been a constant feature of farm vetting life as long as I have worked in a low risk area. To get two within a month of each other is just unlucky!

We won't know how significant this incident is until we complete the first round of radial tests but thankfully the vast majority of radials I have be involved with end up as isolated events. With a glass have full approach I am determined not to worry about TB until we have the evidence to do so. I grew up in a TB area. Whilst on holiday with family last month, my father received a phone call from the Department of Agriculture (Irish APHA) to say a bullock we sold 2 months previously had turned up positive at the routine test on the purchasing farm. We had been clear for two years following the last outbreak and were starting to build the foundation of a closed herd.



### Included this month

- **TB Preparedness-** Finbarr O Sullivan
- **Milk Fever—** Jim McKinstry
- **CODD -** Rebekah Carling
- **What is this? -** Sarah Harker
- **Management of Toxoplasmosis in Sheep—** Sarah Harker
- **RABI - meet our local representative**
- **Diary Dates**

#### REMINDER FOR DAIRY CLIENTS

All Johnes declarations must be completed by the end of the year. If you haven't had a review in 12 months, please contact us ASAP.

## TB - Continued...

This particular animal was clear on a pre moment test. Even though we are used to TB, events like this prompt immediate logistical challenges. The herd is currently locked up and we have weaned calves to sell; if that's not possible do we have enough space and silo? After spending an hour totting up fodder, stock numbers and space; along with identifying a list of cull animals we would ideally have kept for another year... we have a plan. But what would happen in your herd was locked up?

My take home from this experience is, it is worth planning for the worst and hoping for the best. This is why a TB management plan is now a Red Tractor requirement for dairy herds but also a sensible exercise for beef units. It is worth knowing where you can send stock if you are under restriction (red markets and approved finishing units) and what shed space you have available if you need to hold animals for longer than planned. Regarding testing, at home we take an approach of the sooner you know you have a problem the sooner you can do something about it, and that approach has worked well for us in the past. Have a look at the TB hub for more information but equally feel free to speak to one of us the next time we are on farm.

[www.ibtb.co.uk](http://www.ibtb.co.uk) – current outbreak maps

<https://tbhub.co.uk/> - Info on TB planning and risk reduction

To put it mildly having a TB reactor on your farm is a stressful experience. For this reason it goes without saying it is worth keeping those affected by this disease in mind when discussing TB in the community over the coming months.



**Finbarr O Sullivan Greene**

## Milk Fever

When I was a new graduate a cow down with calcium at 6am was a common call. A bottle of red top in the vein and one under the skin, give the cow a prod, up she got and the farmer thought you were a hero. There are not as many cows down with milk fever now but sub clinical milk fevers and the odd cluster of down cows still show that this old condition can still be a problem.

Milk fever is the shortage of calcium. Calcium is needed for muscles to work so cows with milk fever are floppy. Sub clinical milk fever shows as an increase in cell counts (teat ends do not close properly) more held cleansings and other niggling problems.

We can check blood sample cows 24-48 hours after calving to see if they have low calcium levels.

Can we not just give them a bolus or a bottle under the skin and job will be sorted?

In the short term yes. It will keep them on their feet but as their calcium regulation is under pressure, they will be prone to sub-clinical milk fever and the subtle problems that it can bring about.

To stop milk fever, we need cows to have a low calcium diet with low levels of certain salts (potassium and sodium) that will predispose cows to milk fever. Forage mineral analysis is a great thing to do to see if your forages could cause cows to struggle with calcium.

Having that information will allow you to plan your feeding of the dry cows to help to prevent milk fever.

Talk to one of us about milk fever prevention and transition cow diets as a little bit of planning now can save problems over the winter.



**Jim McKinstry**

## CODD in Sheep

Most of our conversations in the last month with sheep clients have been about CODD – Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis. The highly contagious nature of it and the difficulty in catching sheep in the middle of the field in order to treat them makes this a really difficult disease to get on top of. There have also been murmurings of resistance developing which will just add to the problem.

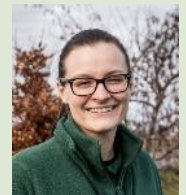
Here is a brief summary of things that I think are worth trying if you have CODD on your farm:

- Injectable antibiotics are an absolute necessity. Blue spray and footbathing alone will only kill surface infections which is fine for scald but not CODD and footrot as these infections are deep in the tissue.
- Treatment length is also important. Trymox LA only actually lasts for 48 hours which is not normally long enough to completely get rid of the infection so animals will usually need at least one extra dose 2 days later – I wonder whether this is why farms get on better with Draxxin as this lasts upwards of 9 days so it could be the longer treatment length that is making the difference not because they have resistance to Trymox LA.
- Prompt treatment: I completely understand that it is easy for me to say you need to treat them within two days of going lame and the reality is that trying to catch a barely lame sheep in the middle of the field is quite difficult! However this does not retract from the fact that the earlier you can treat them, the faster they will heal and the less spread will occur.
- Footbathing can definitely be helpful in controlling spread however does not help and will actually potentially hinder healing, so it is not recommended to run lame sheep through the footbath. Plus you don't want to contaminate your footbath with CODD before you run your unaffected sheep through it.
- Vaccination: there is no specific vaccine against CODD however Footvax is considered to be helpful indirectly as a damaged foot from footrot will be more likely to become infected with CODD.



Photo credit NADIS

Photo showing the primary lesion at the coronary band with under-running of the hoof wall from the coronary band towards the toe.



Rebekah Carling

## What is this?

Sarah came across this specimen on farm, the question is what is it? This is what we in the trade call an amorphous globus, or literally translated, a 'round blob'. They are most common in cattle in twin pregnancies where one calf develops normally and the other just becomes a ball of flesh covered in hairy skin. Interestingly, they may have started as an identical or a non-identical twin. They are merely an



interesting curiosity rather than being of any consequence. I always remember being taught about them at college, being referred to as the ideal pet, requiring no food and incapable of making any noise or mess!!

Sarah Harker

## Management of Toxoplasmosis in Sheep:

Supply of Toxovax has been variable this autumn so despite being back in stock now to protect hogs or later lambing flocks, some will have missed out. Control in the absence of vaccination should take into account the following:

1. **Infective oocysts are shed in cat faeces.** Protect fodder and concentrate feed from contamination. Adult cats are safer than kittens so neuter farm cats.
2. **Decoquinat**e in feed (blocks, buckets, cake etc) for the last 14 weeks of pregnancy gives some protection but is expensive and provides practical challenges. It could be an option with high value flocks however.
3. If possible, **keep track of unvaccinated** stock and inject after lambing/before tugging next year.
4. **Antibiotics are of no** value in the control of toxoplasmosis so don't be tempted into oxytetracycline treatment in late pregnancy.
5. Toxoplasmosis is not spread between ewes but it is still good practice to **isolate aborted individuals** and dispose of aborted lambs/contaminated bedding carefully.



Sarah Harker

## A Word from Lauren Codling from RABI

Last month we had the pleasure of a team talk from Lauren Codling from RABI, we learnt a great deal from her and realised that help is out there for people in agriculture. Here we hear from Lauren herself on the work RABI do-

For those who don't already know me, hello! I'm Lauren Codling the new North West Regional Manager for the RABI. RABI is an agricultural charity which supports farming people both financially and emotionally, when they need it most.

It was great to meet with the Farmgate team earlier this month to share updates on RABI, hear about the great work their team does for farmers and how we can work together going forward.

Recently RABI have offered masses of support across the country with the rising cost of household fuel and have recently provided a grant to support families sending their children back to school. RABI continues to support farming people financially should they need our support.

In January 2022, RABI also launched a counselling service to provide professional emotional

support for anyone in the farming community who need it. This service has received over 120 referrals since it launched and continues to provide outstanding support.

For anyone who is looking for financial or emotional support, please contact our 24/7 helpline **0800 188 4444**.

In Cumbria, I am currently looking for volunteers who would like to support RABI with raising awareness and funds within the county. If you are interested in learning more, please contact me via email on [lauren.codling@rabi.org.uk](mailto:lauren.codling@rabi.org.uk)



## Dates For Your Diary



**Red Tractor Approved, Understanding Veterinary Medicines** - Tuesday 6th December 2022, 1.30pm at J36 meeting room. Course cost is £35.00 plus VAT including course book and certificate. To book please phone the practice or e mail [linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto:linda@farmgatevets.com)



**Halal, Dispelling the Myths and Exploring the Market**, Thurs 24th November 2022, J36 Rural Auction Centre Exhibition Hall, 6.30pm for supper, 7pm start, in conjunction with AHDB this will be very informative meeting for sheep farmers. To book please ring the office or e mail [linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto:linda@farmgatevets.com)



**Christmas Charity Quiz Night !!!** Thursday 15th December 2022—7pm for 7.30pm start at Kirkby Lonsdale Rugby Club, £10 entry per team of up to 6, raffle, complimentary Supper included.

### 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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