



# Newsletter

## October 2025



### Welcome

Kendal Show always brings mixed feelings for me. It's fantastic to see so many of you enjoying the "craic" and celebrating the best of local agriculture through our dedicated exhibitors. As one of the final events in the summer calendar, it also signals the shift toward the "back end" of the year. This year, the weather has had a real impact—not just on the show, but across the farming landscape—contributing to the rise of diseases like Blue Tongue and Haemonchus. With winter on the horizon, I'm not hoping for a long one, but a short, sharp cold snap wouldn't go amiss to help knock back some of these pests that are more at home further south.

**Mark Stott**

### Correct Injection Technique and Broken Needle Policy

An understanding of what to do if a needle breaks in an animal whilst being injected is part of Red Tractor Farm Assurance, but a reminder of accepted broken needle policy is always useful. Thankfully it rarely happens and risks are minimised by adequate handling and restraint, choice of an appropriately sized needle, regular changes to ensure they stay sharp and a clean, hygienic approach.

If a needle does break, palpate the area and try to retrieve it. If not possible, ensure the animal is permanently identified ie: by its tag number and record the date, animal identification, injection site and medicine used in farm medicine records.



These animals can be retained on farm for breeding. If they are store or slaughter animals, they must be finished on the farm. Whilst still on farm, they should be regularly inspected to ensure the needle isn't causing a problem. At the end of their breeding life, or if they are slaughter animals, they should go direct from the farm to slaughter. They should not be sold on and should not go through a

mart. The slaughterhouse should be informed of the incident and the needle site marked on the animal when it is taken in. Following this procedure avoids accidental injury of staff and prevents needles entering the food chain.

**Sarah Harker**

### Included this month

- **Broken Needle Policy**—Sarah Harker
- **Taking the Stress out of disbudding**—Hannah Lawrence
- **Anti-inflammatorys at Calving**—Rebekah Clayton
- **Fluke, Targeted Treatment**—Finbarr O'Sullivan-Green
- **Free Money** - Jim McKinstry
- **News and Diary Dates**



### Housing Vaccinations

Please speak to us about our range of Vaccines for Pneumonia.



## Taking the Stress out of Disbudding

The process of disbudding is a stressful time for calf and farmer alike. With the expert work of our vet tech team, we can take away the task of having to keep on top of disbuds and administer pain relief to keep the calves as comfortable as possible. Increasingly I am becoming a fan of adding in a sedative to “knock down the calves” meaning there is no need to physically restrain the calves. This is particularly useful when calves have got a bit bigger, calves are a bit wild and where staffing to restrain calves is limited. Calves are still given a local anaesthetic block and anti-inflammatory pain relief as all calves should. It can speed up the process with groups being knocked



down at a time and improves the calf's return to normal behaviour and growth. Sedating calves is a vet procedure, but we can work with farms to combine it with our vet tech service or to tie in with an existing visit to your farm. As someone who disbuds calves, I would challenge you to consider it and promise that your stress levels will be reduced!



Hannah Lawrence

## Non Steroidal at Calving

A couple of months ago I went to a conference extolling the benefits of Ketofen. Most of the talks were about foot health but there was one talk specifically aimed at giving it to cows at calving. The takeaway message from this was better welfare, more milk, and improved fertility.

Delving into the study, a direct quote from the research paper, '**Ketoprofen treated cows had a 305d mature equivalent milk yield 664 kg higher than saline treated cows**, irrespective of assistance status'.

The study was conducted on a Scottish dairy farm milking approximately 750 purebred Holsteins, with about 60 cows calving a month and average annual yield of 12,000kg.

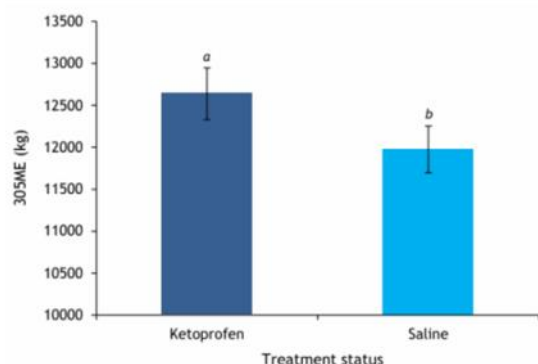


Figure 7.3: Mean (± SE) 305ME of cows treated with ketoprofen and saline. Different letters indicate significant differences ( $p = 0.011$ ). Ketoprofen treated cows represented by dark blue bar ( $n = 45$ ). Saline treated cows represented by light blue bar ( $n = 44$ ). 305ME = 305 d mature equivalent. Raw data presented.

For the study, cows at calving were randomly split into two groups, one to have Ketofen and the other saline.

All cows were

treated within 3 hours of calving. It was also noted whether they needed assistance during calving or not.

In the subsequent lactation, again regardless of whether they needed assistance or not, the **ketoprofen treated cows had higher 305ME** (amount of milk produced in first 305 days standardised for a 3<sup>rd</sup> lactation cow) **and tended to conceive more quickly and better conception overall** than their saline counterparts. For this herd this was another 664kg per cow which demonstrates a good return on investment from a single dose of Ketofen.

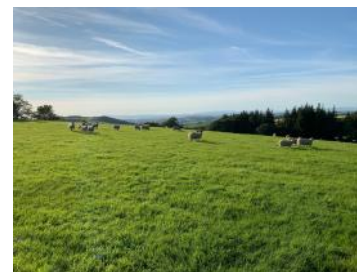


Rebekah Clayton



## Targeted treatment or just getting it right by fluke?

Looking at the embarrassment of grass in Lancashire and Cumbria and the relative starvation in other parts of the country you don't need much reminding that weather is doing funny things this year. To be fair that could be said for the last number of summers. Too wet, too dry, too cold, too hot we seem to be getting everything but normal seasons at the moment. This has lots of knock-on effects to agriculture but one of the most dramatic areas that this can be seen is fluke.



The liver fluke has a two-host lifecycle with more than half its life spent outside sheep and cattle. This second host, a mud snail, a cold-blooded creature, needs heat and moisture to thrive. Therefore, weather has a huge impact on when the fluke season starts.

No flukicide product has persistence. In other words, if you dose for fluke, it will kill the target stages in the sheep **today** but will have no effect on fluke stock are picking up **tomorrow**. Take a farm that traditionally doses sheep at tugging and scanning. If there's nothing about in October and the fluke season starts with a bang in November or December you can, and we do, see significant issues.

This is where testing comes in. Antibody testing this year's lambs several times through the autumn and into the winter can help you find out when your season starts providing invaluable information in planning a fluke control strategy for the

year. This can either be a blood sample sent to the lab or via a new pen side lateral flow test.

	Pen Side Test	External lab
Cost	£120+vat for 10 tests – you need 6-10 tests to test a batch of lambs.	£75 plus vat for 6 (gets cheaper with bigger numbers as postage is spread across more samples)
Pros	Immediate result, easy to use	Slightly more accurate so gives you a little more information but unless 6/6 are positive it probably needs follow up testing to best inform treatment.
Cons	As it is so sensitive you occasionally get false positive results. A negative is almost definitely a negative. A positive needs to be confirmed with further testing before treating.	Veterinary time required to take samples – but can be done at the practice.  Results not immediate as sent to lab.

The elephant in the room is that you can often treat sheep for fluke for less money than testing them, however if your timing is out and things go wrong; with increased mortality, abortion, or thin sheep going into lambing with ill thrift in subsequent lambs, the losses go into the thousands. This is by no means every farm but sadly this is a scenario that every vet in the practice is starting to see every year.

For more information on antibody testing check out the

following SCOPS podcast here or search for SCOPS on your normal podcast app <https://www.scops.org.uk/podcasts>

A recent episode, titled **Liver Fluke—Using antibody testing to decide if and when to treat sheep in the autumn and early winter**, features Michael Rhodes a local farmer sharing his experience with antibody testing with sheep.



Otherwise, as ever, speak to the vets about how testing may fit into your system and target your fluke treatments rather than let treatment success down to fluke!

**Finbarr O'Sullivan-Greene**

## Free Money !!! - Conditions apply



Well, that should get you attention. I need you to stay with me on this, I am going to talk about BVD testing (yawn). We have talked about this recently, but we think we need to tell you why you need to get involved. In the near future (2027, it is only 15 months away) there will be mandatory BVD testing to find out your herd status. We do not know the finer points, but this is coming. At the moment there is the Animal health and welfare pathway, and this will pay for the testing and the vet time with some money left over to find out your herd status. I can not see why everyone is not doing this. I am doing

this in our herd at home as it is really straightforward. The link to sign up is here - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/farmers-how-to-apply-for-funding-to-improve-animal-health-and-welfare#start-an-application>

We would like to test herds over the winter when we are out TB testing as the animals will be in the crush so it will be a piece of cake to do. We will be contacting you before the TB test to talk about the testing. You do not have to do it, but it is not going to be a cost to you at all. Please have a word with one of us about this and take advantage of this scheme while it is still here.

**Jim McKinstry**

## A Successful 2025 Westmorland Show!

The rain held off (mostly), the sun shone and two great days were had by all our team at The Westmorland Show last month. Thank you to all of you who came to see us. Our hamper winners were **Catherine Cornall** and **Valeria Gornall**, well done to you both. The ice cream supplied by Gibraltar Farm, Silverdale also went down a treat! Well done to all exhibitors, the amount of work that goes in behind the scenes is incredible and those wins and rosettes were truly deserved, congratulations.



## Don't Forget to Use our -

### 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.



## Courses

Please register your interest for -

- First Aid for Feet (Cattle foot Trimming).
- Red Tractor Understanding Veterinary Meds
- MilkSure
- 2026 Lambing Courses (starting Jan)
- DIY AI in association with Semex, 20th Oct 2025

Please e mail [linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto:linda@farmgatevets.com) or phone the office.

## Diary Dates



**Sheep Club Member Meeting Tuesday 18th November 2025,  
7pm at J36**

**-Sheep Worring and Rural Crime with The Rural Task Force,  
Lancashire Police.**

**-Orf Control in Flocks with Zoetis**

Supper included, to book your place phone the practice or e mail  
[linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto: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

CLOSED Saturdays

CLOSED Sundays



**[www.farmgatevets.com](http://www.farmgatevets.com)**



Find us on

Facebook



**PLUS 24 hour emergency service 7 days a week**

