



Newsletter

October 2026



Welcome

"I bet you're busy now with all these new clients" has been a regular greeting over the past few weeks. And, to be fair, we have been busy!

The welcome influx of new clients from Westmorland Vets, taken on at very short notice, coincided with the challenges of introducing a new computer system and the rush of concern surrounding Bluetongue virus. The perfect storm, some might say! At times, we have certainly creaked under the pressure, but we are determined to weather it without compromising the level of service we provide to our clients.

Our team currently consists of 15 vets, with James Penrose joining us this month and Kathryn Stott, formerly of Westmorland Vets, joining us next month. Together, this growing team is spread across our three surgeries, with a senior vet heading each branch.

We also continue to offer a dedicated out-of-hours service. Unlike some of our competitors, night and weekend calls are covered by a team of three vets, each responsible for their own region of west, north and south. When you call us out of hours, you speak directly to a vet — meaning advice can be given and a response initiated without delay.

It has certainly been a busy few months, but we are grateful for the warm welcome from our new clients and, as always, remain committed to providing the service and support that all our clients rely on.

Mark Stott

Blue Tongue and Tup Fertility



I'm sure you will all be fed up hearing about Bluetongue, but the effects of the outbreak are unfortunately still relevant. With the cooler weather coming in the chances of them being bitten by an infected midge are getting lower. However, tups will soon be going in and it is important to be aware that tups can still be infertile 150 days after infection.

Generally, anything that can cause a high temperature will cause damage to sperm which can temporarily affect fertility for around 8 weeks. This includes lameness, abscesses and pneumonia to name a few, so it is always important to think how the tup was 8 weeks prior to putting him to the ewes, especially if he's working alone.

Tup fertility testing is always recommended, as no one wants to wait to scanning, or worse lambing, to find out the tups

were firing blanks. Please do contact the practice to get your tups booked in.

Sol Elliott

Included this month

- **Blue Tongue Tup Fertility—** Sol Elliott
- **The Summer that keeps on giving—** Jim McKinstry
- **Liver Fluke, Haemonchus and our new machine —** Sarah Harker
- **Free Money—** Beth Griffiths
- **Beef 1% Club**
- **News and Diary Dates**

Whatsapp order no.

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The Summer that Keeps on Giving



Sitting here with the rain hitting the window, our long hot summer seems a distant memory. It all comes back when we start to scan cows. We are seeing higher empty rates, more twins and more cysts. Why is this? Summer is a while ago and the cows seem much happier and cooler now.

Ovaries and follicles have a long memory. When you serve a cow, the follicle that the egg is ovulating from started its journey about 3 months ago, right when the weather was very hot. The heat stresses the cow (as well as farmers and vets) and she eats less. A cow must use energy when the ambient temperature goes above 25°C. This makes her burn fat as she doesn't want to eat more in the hot weather. The heat and the fat breakdown

products get into the follicle and hurt the cells inside it and the egg.

When these damaged follicles come to ovulate, they cannot communicate properly with the brain. Think of it like an old, damaged telephone cable. The brain and follicle need to stay in close contact, so the cow shows heat at the right time for insemination. This is why we are seeing more silent heats: the brain does not know when the follicle is ovulating. We are also seeing more follicular cysts because the brain does not send a strong enough ovulation signal, so the follicle keeps growing. In cows that do get in calf, the chance of twins is higher because the ovulating follicle may not be strong enough to stop another follicle ovulating too. If everything lines up and the cow is bulled at the right time, she may conceive. Around 90% of cows do conceive after being bulled, which is good news. However, a damaged egg can form a weak embryo, which may then die, leading to either a return to service or an empty cow.

This is why scanning cows regularly is invaluable to pick up empty and non-cycling cows. It is good to know if a cow has twins so that they can be checked before drying off to make sure she has not lost them.

Hotter summers are probably going to be the norm. Over the winter it would be wise to consider how you can keep cows cool over the summer. Better ventilation and air flow help all year round to keep beds dry and air fresh. This improves cow health and fertility which will improve your profits. Have they got enough water in the hot weather. Like us, cows drink to keep cool. They need lots of water and more drinker space when the weather is hot.

Jim McKinstry

Liver Fluke, Haemonchus and our New Machine

Typical symptoms of chronic liver fluke include pale membranes as adult flukes feed on blood in the liver and a bottle jaw or 'poke' due to associated protein loss. Haemonchus worms also feed on blood, but in the abomasum or true stomach rather than the liver, and do not cause the scour typical of worms that affect other parts of the gut. This is why symptoms of liver fluke and haemonchus can be confused, potentially resulting in inappropriate treatment and management.

The Ovacyte machine allows us to do prompt faecal worm egg counts at the practice, but also means we can speciate for haemonchus, determining the percentage of the worm burden that is down to this particularly pathogenic parasite. We can also test for liver fluke eggs with the Ovacyte, again helping us to differentiate between similar presenting diseases.

Continued.....



Continued Post-mortems still remain a gold standard in the diagnosis and monitoring of liver fluke and haemonchus so please don't waste the opportunity to gain invaluable information from dead sheep. Post-mortems and worm egg counts are included in the monthly fee for our sheep club.

The diagnosis of coccidiosis can also have its complexities as there are a dozen different species in sheep, most of which cause no problems at all, yet shed eggs into the muck. We can now speciate the cocci oocytes at the practice, and determine what percentage of them are from the 3 most pathogenic strains. This allows us to determine exactly what the numbers mean and avoid unnecessary or inappropriate treatments.

Sarah Harker

Free Money

Now that I have your attention, the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway (AHWP) provides government funding to help farmers investigate diseases affecting sheep, pigs and cattle. All claims must be submitted by **June 2027**.

To qualify you must have either:

- 11 or more beef cattle
- 11 or more dairy cattle
- 21 or more sheep
- 51 or more pigs

You can claim for multiple species. For example, farmers with beef cattle and sheep can claim for both, and those with more than one flock can claim for each flock.

Species	Part one payment	Part one testing and targeted disease	Part two payment	Targeted disease
Sheep	£574	Wormer resistance	£658	Endemic diseases
Dairy Cattle	£447	Bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD)	£1,714	PI identification
Beef Cattle	£647	Bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD)	£258 - £954	PI identification
Pigs	£648	Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS)	£1,087	Advanced diagnostic PRRS testing

The AHWP has two parts. For sheep, part one focuses on wormer resistance, while part two covers other endemic conditions, including lameness, infectious diseases and trace element deficiencies. For cattle, both parts focus on BVD. Previous applicants can claim again, provided at least ten months have passed since their last claim.

Please get in touch to discuss how we can best use the AHWP to support your business!

The link to sign up is below, or scan the QR code.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/farmers-how-to-apply-for-funding-to-improve-animal-health-and-welfare>

Beth Griffiths

Beef 1% Club

We had a fantastic turnout down at Nateby Hall Farm for our Beef 1% Club meeting kindly organised and hosted by Scope Vets and their client Luke Gardner. A very informative farm walk and talk by Luke was followed by Liv from Dalehead Vets speaking about the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway in beef cattle using some great examples. Lora from Scope Vets spoke about nutrition and stressed the importance of weighing cattle as you can't manage, what you can't measure. The next meeting will be hosted by ourselves or Dalehead so please watch this space. To sign up for meeting updates please join the Beef 1% community by scanning this QR code.



Linda Dawson



Well done to Finbarr and Kathrine!



Raising over £35,000 for Aspire, a charity who support people with spinal injuries was a fabulous outcome from what was an incredible accomplishment for Finbarr and

Kathrine last month. As part of a team of 6 they ran from London to Dover, swam across the English channel and then cycled to Paris. All in two days!

The pair would also like to extend their sincere thanks to all the farming community who donated and supported them with the charity auction they held in May at J36 this year. We are now all holding our breaths waiting for the next crazy challenge announcement!

Westmorland Show 2026

Thank you to everyone who visited the stand this year, both existing clients and new. The weather was kind, the ice cream was delicious, (thank you to Gibraltar Farm for supplying us again) and the chat was super. The winner of the "brew time" hamper was Gavin Hill, congratulations!

Also, a huge well done to all the livestock exhibitors, prize winners and competitors in the cattle tent and sheep lines for all the work you put in.



Congratulations to Beth Whitfield



A warm welcome to our newest team member, baby Evie. Born on August 18th 2026 weighing 8lb 5oz. We got to meet Evie at the Westmorland Show and we can confirm Beth is doing great and not missing being on reception too much!



Diary Dates



Understanding Veterinary Medicines Red Tractor Course Wed 4th November 2026 - 1.30pm at our J36 meeting room.

Course cost £40 plus VAT which includes the course book and certificate. To book please phone the practice or e mail linda@farmgatevets.com

**** Dairy Clients if your last course was over 5 years ago, you need to complete a refresher, please book in!**



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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