



Newsletter

September 2026



Welcome

August is usually a quiet month and this is why we decided to move onto a new computer system called vet drive at the practice. This has gone as smoothly as it could and I hope it has been a relatively easy change over for our clients. August has not been quiet. Bluetongue has raised its very ugly head and has had far more of an impact on animals in the practice than anyone could have imagined. We have been treating affected animals and trying to source vaccine which has become very scarce due to the huge demand in a very short space of time. At the time of writing this I hope to have vaccine in the next few days. We also have been welcoming a lot of new clients into the Farmgate fold due to Westmorland vets closing their farm animal department. It will be good to meet you all in the near future. All in all a we have had a hectic month. We have Westmorland show in September where we warmly welcome you onto our stand to have a brew and a chat.

Jim McKinstry

Blue Tongue Disease



I wasn't sure how to bring up the subject of Bluetongue in this newsletter... unfortunately some farmers have been hit hard with it around our Lancaster branch whereas some farmers may not even be aware it is an issue up here at all. We have confirmed several cases and we highly suspect those sheep with swollen heads, 'footiness' and drooling from the mouth is BTV-3. I am aware that in these situations, farmers can feel very isolated and out of control. For now, I wanted to reassure those particularly who have

lived through F&M (I won't spell it out... you all have enough to worry about!) of a few things:

- Bluetongue is notifiable because the lesions can look slightly similar to F&M - the APHA get involved just so we can rule that out.
- Sheep or cattle infected with Bluetongue will NOT be automatically culled like back in 2001 if positive for Bluetongue type 3.
- Bluetongue is **NOT** spread animal to animal (it is only through midges) so at the moment no one is being put 'under restrictions'. Stopping sheep and cattle movements will not stop the spread, so there is no need to 'lock anyone down' for want of a better phrase. If anyone has any ideas on how to suck midges out the sky, I am all ears!
- Of the cases we have seen, we have managed to get some to come right! So the idea that if they get it they will die, is not the case.

I have purposefully left this fairly short because if you're anything like me you probably only read the bullet points and looked at the pictures anyway. Keep an eye on our social media for updates and keep looking after each other. You'd be surprised how many of you are in the same boat, even if you think you are alone. And if you are feeling very down... venture one hour down the M6.... at least we have grass!

Sol Elliott

Included this month

- Blue Tongue Disease– Sol Elliott
- Preparing for rain– Liusaidh Troughton
- From Stores to Scores - Store lambs– Beth Thornton
- Beef 1% Club
- Back to Basics in Calf Rearing– Beth Thornton
- News and Diary Dates

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Enjoying the sun while preparing for the rain.

There is no doubt it will be a huge relief that the rain has finally arrived, however there are a few problems it may bring along with it, that we should consider:

1. **Worms**: worms across all species will have been struggling to hatch in the dry weather, but will have been building up ready to go when the rain arrives. The cheapest way to reduce the risk is to **avoid** high risk pastures for the most vulnerable stock. This means not grazing this years lambs and calves on pasture grazed earlier in the summer with young lambs/calves and their mums, as these will have the highest worm burden. Ideally, youngstock should be grazed on 'clean' pasture, such as silage aftermath, or land grazed by older stock which will be shedding fewer worm eggs. Adult cattle/ sheep in good condition can also be used to "clean up" pastures for each other when grazed in rotation. We also recommend increasing frequency of faecal egg counts to ensure we catch any rise in worm burden early and treat effectively, before it affects growth rates.



2. **Hypomagnesaemia (Grass Staggers)**: this is a lack of magnesium in the blood and is either caused by not consuming enough magnesium or getting rid of it too quickly. Lactating beef and dairy cattle are most at risk. We can often see a spike in cases of staggers after rain, as the sudden burst of lush, fast growing grass is high in potassium (which disrupts magnesium absorption) and low in magnesium. If the weather is really rough feed intakes will also be reduced, while still losing magnesium via milk. Avoid suddenly stopping roughage such as hay or straw after rain and grass comes, as this can help to slow digestion and increase magnesium absorbed from the diet. Avoid moving stock after rain, and keeping older lactating cows off lush wet pasture until it matures is also advisable. Cows require 60g of magnesium per day and can be supplemented in the water, hard feed, powder applied to the pasture as a "top dressing" and via licks.



3. **Scald and Foot rot**: long wet grass can cause a rise in scald and foot rot in sheep. There's a lot of conflicting opinions on the internet about trimming feet, foot bathing etc! So if you are unsure then give us a ring we are happy to discuss best options.

4. **Ticks and fly strike**: we have already seen a number of issues with both ticks and blowfly this year (I have already found 2 cases of tick borne fever in flocks with unexplained lamb losses) and just like worms, warm wet conditions are perfect for flies and ticks. Hopefully sheep are all clipped now so topical treatments should work well- but getting the right product for the job is key so do speak to us and we can make sure they're getting the right cover.

Liusaidh Troughton

From Stores to Scores— Dairy Grass to Lamb Cash

Many of our dairy clients will often buy in store lambs to keep the pastures tidy over winter. Similarly, some may take on 'wintering sheep' from fell farms.

Often the bought in stores are just bought and forgotten slightly over winter. A little bit of management and intervention can go a long way in getting these lambs finished faster!

An extra consideration this year is the risk of Bluetongue- please call us to discuss further if concerned. Vaccination at purchase should be considered.

Immediately after purchase:

- Put on hard standing and worm with Zolvix AND a clear injectable or drench.
- Assess risk for Fluke. Triclabendazole treatment is usually recommended. Muck testing is also available. Give us a call to discuss.
- Scab: Assess risk and consider testing. Consider an OP dip or long-acting moxidectin injection if risk high.

Continued.....

From Stores to Scores— Dairy Grass to Lamb Cash continued..



- Consider the use of a long-acting mineral bolus, such as Downland Essential lamb or an injection (Troy).
- Leave on hard standing for 24-48 hours.
- Turn out onto pasture that has most recently had sheep on.

Ongoing tasks:

Consider muck sampling for worms and fluke at 4-6 weekly periods (even a couple of times is better than nothing!) Give us a call to discuss strategic dosing if testing not an option.

Keep up with lame lambs. Lifting lame feet early is key- be lazy; avoid trimming and get the blue spray out!

Vitamin D: Rickets is common in fast growing lambs on lush pasture during winter, especially in darker faced breeds. A vitamin drench containing high levels of vitamin D (1 million iu) mid-winter and early spring should do the trick. We stock a suitable drench (Growvite) at the practice.

Beth Thornton

Upcoming Calf Meeting— Back to basics.

No boring PowerPoints — just practical, useful calf advice.

Join us for a hands-on calf meeting covering the basics of calf rearing. Consistency is the key to success. Areas covered will include but are not limited to:

- Mixing milk to the correct concentration.
- Supplementing poor-quality colostrum.
- Keeping calves warm and comfortable.
- Successful cleaning and disinfection.

The session will be practical-based, with plenty of opportunity to see, discuss and work through techniques and ideas.

When and where?

11am on Wednesday 23rd September. Very kindly hosted by Mark Conder at Sandbeds Farm, Gressingham. Lunch will be provided and kindly sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim the makers of the Bovalto vaccine range.

This is a Healthy Heifer Members Meeting but also open to anyone involved in calf rearing, you are more than welcome to join us. Please call the office or speak to one of the vet techs to book your place.

Beth Thornton



New for Beef Clients - Beef 1% Club

We have joined together with other members of our practice buying group (Farm Vet Network) to establish a Beef Discussion group aimed at suckler farmers and beef cattle rearers. The aim is to run approx 3 meetings per year and each vet practice will take turns to host. Our first meeting is on Monday 28th September at Nateby (near Garstang) and very kindly organised and hosted by Scope Farm Vets. See diary dates for details.

Rebekah Clayton & Beth Griffiths



An Interview with Liusaidh

Liusaidh (pronounced Lucy) joined us in 2025 and although Scottish of origin she is based in the West of our patch.

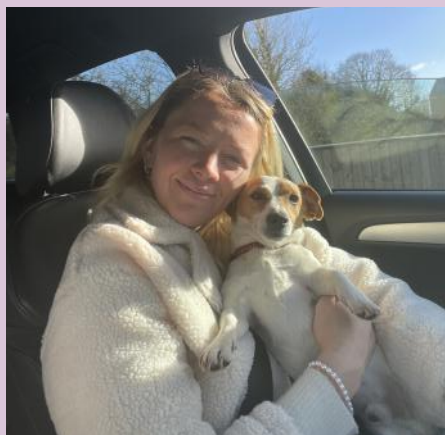
1) What was your first ever job? My first official job was when in 2008 when I started washing dishes in the hotel near home. Although if we ignore child labour laws, my first job was actually in 2002 when I kept my first timesheet (age 6) and was paid 50p an hour for "working" on the farm.

2) What do you enjoy most about working at Farm Gate Vets? I feel very fortunate to work with so many experienced and knowledgeable people, and I'm thrilled to have been made to feel part of the team so quickly- and as cringe as it sounds I really do think the team is the best thing about farmgate. Day to day my favourite job is probably a good twisted calf bed and my least favourite is probably a bad twisted calf bed!

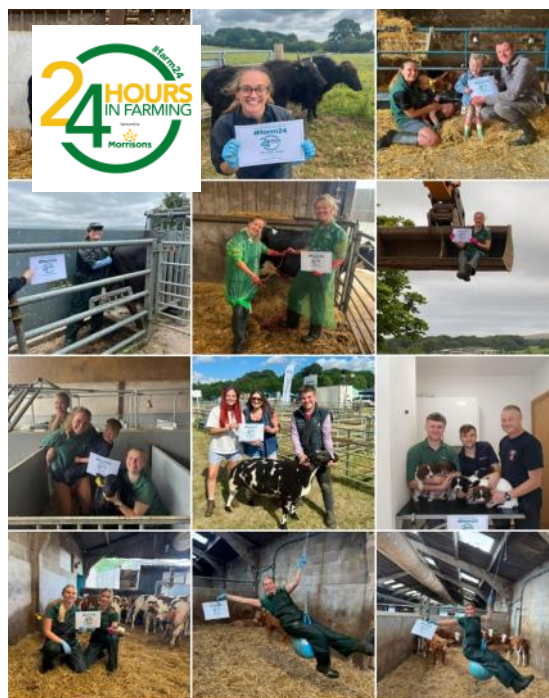
3) Where is your favourite holiday destination? I'm writing this on a plane to Hawaii for our honeymoon, but as we're not there yet I can't choose there, so I'll stick with a very similar, sunny island and say Arran- I love visiting home!

4) Who would you most like to have dinner with? hmm this is a tricky one but I think I'd most like to get all my pals in one place? That would be amazing, we are all so spread out so I don't see them that often, so I think that would be more fun than picking some crusty dead celebrity.

5) How do you relax after a hard days work? After work I love going to the gym and getting out for a walk with the light of my life- my miniature Jack Russel, Ally :)



#Farm24 Action The team were proud to back this campaign again to support the industry that feeds us. Here are some highlights!



Welcome We would like to extend a warm welcome to new clients who have joined us from Westmorland Farm Services. This monthly newsletter will be sent via e mail with electronic bills and in print with postal ones. Alternatively please pick up a copy at one of our branches.

Diary Dates



Westmorland County Show Wed 9th and Thurs 10th of September 2026

Please join us on our stand for refreshments, cake, ice cream, competitions and some good chat.

All Welcome!



Healthy Heifer Members Meeting— Back to Basics - Rearing Healthy Calves.

Wednesday 23rd September 2026, 11am—2pm Hosted on farm at Sandbeds Farm, Gressingham, LA2 8LY

by kind permission of Mark Conder and family. A practical meeting covering colostrum management, milk powder, tubing, hygiene, calf jackets, common calf diseases and how to treat. Please phone the office to book your place or e mail linda@farmgatevets.com



Beef 1% Club - Monday 28th September 2026, 6.30pm, Hosted by Scope Vets at Nateby Hall Farm, Nateby, Garstang,

by kind permission of Luke Gardner. For beef suckler and rearing clients, supper included, all welcome.

Please e mail - linda@farmgatevets.com or phone the practice to book your place.



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

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