

Newsletter

August 2024



Welcome

Summer is merrily tramping on and the silage pits and bale stacks are getting filled in the brief spells of dry weather. Silage quality in some of the multicut crops is really good and is taking a bit of balancing with straw as cows need fibre. This is not a problem with some of the older crops getting made. We are seeing more displaced stomachs in cows that are being fed young silages and in fatter cows. Kexxtone boluses at the time of writing have just been withdrawn from the market so please speak to us for advice on alternative management. For stock outside growth rates are not what they should be due to them eating wet grass which has been in short supply on some farms. Please check for worms and cocci by getting us to test some dung samples. Lambs are always short of B12 and cobalt at this time of year. Have a chat with us about supplementing them.

Jim McKinstry

EDPET

When tackling lameness on farms, whether it be beef, sheep or dairy, Early Detection and Prompt Effective Treatment (EDPET) is the best tool we have in our lameness toolkit to reduce the amount of lameness experienced on farms. Early detection requires picking up cases of lameness early, ideally through routine and frequent mobility scoring. Whilst our skilled vet techs are available to mobility score cows, observing sheep to identify lame ones remains the best option currently.

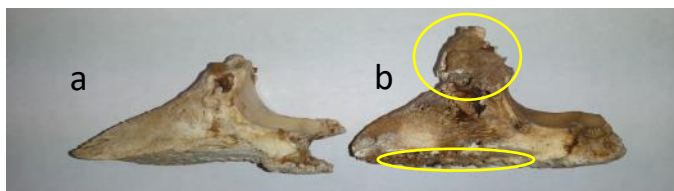
Prompt effective treatment means that once lameness is detected, the feet are lifted, examined and treated appropriately within 24hrs of lameness being identified. This treatment may vary according to what causes the lameness but getting on top of the disease early, before inflammation and infection sets in, is crucial to getting the best result, a sound animal.

If you wish to read more about lameness then AHDB has some fantastic resources available here:

<https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/lameness-in-dairy-cows>,

<https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/lameness-in-sheep>

Alternatively give the practice a ring and chat to one of our Mobility Mentors who are specially trained to work with farm businesses to tackle lameness on farms. Therefore think lameness, think EDPET! The following photo illustrates bony spurs (circled) which form on the foot in response to



inflammation associated with lameness (b), compared to a foot which does not show as much inflammatory related bony changes (a).

Beth Griffiths

Included this month

- **EDPET**– Beth Griffiths
- **M. Bovis** - Thom Leman
- **My Year on Placement**– Amy Townley
- **Teaser Tups** – Rebekah Carling
- **Dispensing Medicines**– Sarah Harker
- **News and Diary Dates**



FAECAL WORM EGG COUNTS

You wouldn't spray a field for dockings if there were no dockings, so don't worm sheep if there are no worms. We might be like a stuck record on this, but for good reason. We just need fresh samples from 10 sheep, kits available.



Mycoplasma Bovis

You may have heard about the bacteria *Mycoplasma bovis* when discussing issues in your cows and calves before. It is not a new issue but awareness around it is growing, especially with regards to its role in Bovine Respiratory Disease complex (BRD). As a disease complex there are multiple pathogens in play but there is a spotlight on *Mycoplasma bovis*, especially in cases that are non-responsive to first line treatments. *Mycoplasma bovis* can be the sole cause or be one of many of pathogens involved.

Mycoplasmas are a group of small bacteria distinguished by their lack of a cell wall (one of the reasons they are not easy to treat), their ability to produce a biofilm and change surface proteins enabling them to 'hide' from the immune system. Clinically BRD is a typical pneumonia with coughing, lethargy +/- discharge from the eyes and nose. Suspicion is higher if a one sided ear droop/head tilt is present sometimes with discharge from the ear. Less commonly arthritis can develop, presenting as swollen joints and severe lameness though this is rare.

Transmission is typically through direct contact between animals as the bacteria is shed through mucosal surfaces. Disease can also go from adult to youngstock through untreated milk. Treatment is typically an antibiotic in conjunction with an anti-inflammatory, a discussion with a vet about the situation on your farm will allow the most appropriate treatment plan for you. Diagnosis can be done through blood sampling where the lab tests for antibodies to the bacteria or via PCR on post-mortem samples.

There is a Zoetis scheme that is offering **free testing** to get a better idea of the prevalence of *Mycoplasma bovis* within herds. This requires 5 blood samples from calves over 4 months of age which will then be sent off to the lab and tested for serum antibody. Based on these results we can discuss treatment plans and tailor them to your farm and situation. If you are interested in undertaking some testing please speak to your routine vet or give us a ring. An *M.bovis* vaccine is available via special import which we have used on some farms.

Our next Healthy Heifer Club meeting will cover this subject in depth and will be held on Wednesday 21st August 2024. **Thom Leman**



My Year on Placement with the Vet Techs!

Back track to September 2023, I had just started my placement from Harper Adams as a vet tech and clearly had no idea what I was getting myself into joining Gill, Mary and Ruby. I soon came to realise it was not all fun and games when Gill had me running around chasing escaped calves on my first week. Getting to grips with the basics of weighing, vaccinating and disbudding calves left me coming home with a patchy blue spray tan and legs covered in bruises. Over the winter months came the flurry of TB tests where I soon found out there is no such thing as too many layers and that the British weather makes keeping paper-work dry a difficult task. After long, cold and wet days out on farms I appreciated the warm cosy office even though it meant breaking my back making up bags of off feed!

Gill, Mary and Ruby are great teachers, and I can now do faecal worm egg counts, get total protein results, disbud and vaccinate calves but most of all they have taught me that they are all better vet techs than drivers!

This year has been a great experience with lots of laughter thanks to the Farm Gate team, Ruby has shown me that calves are master wrestlers and will soon have you off your feet, Mary has introduced me to all the best lunch spots and Gill has definitely left her mark (those disbudding irons get very hot!). Thanks to all at Farm Gate for this opportunity, it is one I have thoroughly enjoyed and will never forget!

Amy Townley



Thank you for your hard work Amy and good luck with the rest of your studies.

Teaser Tups

For those of you that haven't been put off lambing by the horrific weather but do wish that it hadn't dragged on as long as it did, using a teaser tup might be the answer.

A teaser tup is a vasectomised ram ie he has a section of his reproductive tract removed and therefore is infertile, but still has all his hormones intact, so the ewes don't know any different. This means you can take advantage of 'the ram effect'.

The ram effect works by introducing a tup to ewes that have been kept out of sight, sound and smell of rams (and wethers) for at least a month, then once he is introduced the ewes are stimulated to come into heat. However, they normally have a silent heat that isn't fertile first, before going on to have one of two peaks of fertile heat later – either 18-20 days or 22-24 days after the teaser tup is introduced.

Using a teaser tup for the first 14 days before swapping him out for your working tup, will allow you to:

- Save your working tup for those two peaks of heat
- Enable you to bring your lambing forward by a couple of weeks

give you a more compact lambing period with the majority of your ewes being served within the first 10 days

Points to consider:

- Although he might not be fertile, your teaser is still in essence doing most of the work and so needs to be fit and healthy and sound!
- Ideally some sexual experience is helpful before being vasectomised but not too old as you want your investment to last as long as possible
- Some way of identifying who he is – I may have heard of one poor farmer who accidentally sold his teaser, and an uncastrated fat lamb had a jolly good time instead
- Need to get your ram to ewe ratios right – 1 teaser:50 ewes, 1 working ram:30-40 ewes
- There may be some residual sperm in the tract so ideally leave 3 weeks before using your teaser tup

A teaser tup can also have other uses, such as being an indication of early signs of heat in AI or embryo transfer programs, or as a sweeper once the tupping season is over to give you an indication of which ewes haven't held.

Give us a ring to discuss whether a teaser tup might work for you.



Rebekah Carling

Dispensing Medicines

Farmers and vets are under ever increasing scrutiny to demonstrate their responsible use of medicines to the public, buyers, export markets etc and we can only do this if we have the information to prove it. At the practice, we need to record what you are using, how much, in what species and for what disease condition and this needs to be agreed with a vet. This takes time and phoning ahead with your order (24 hours in an ideal world) minimises mistakes, allows us to record required information and check details with a vet without you needing to wait. Your patience and cooperation is appreciated as we ensure we all do the best job we can.



Sarah Harker

An Interview with Thom Leman

Thom joined us a newly qualified vet in August 2023 and works from our J36 branch. Many of you may have spoken to him on the phone or in the branch as Thom has been recently office bound recovering from a Rugby related broken collar bone. A sitting duck for the staff interview basically so here we go-

1) What was your first job?

I first worked on a dairy farm, milking then looking after the calves on the weekends and holidays. It's a big part of why I became a farm vet.

2) What do you enjoy about working at FGV?

Working in such an incredible area of the country while having a varied workload makes every day different and interesting.

3) Favourite holiday destination?

Val d'Isere in France, it's hard to choose but you cannot beat skiing.

4) Who would you most like dinner with a (a famous, real or fictional person)?

Rassie Erasmus, he is so divisive but you can't deny he is a serious rugby coach so it would be brilliant to pick his brains.

5) How do you relax after a hard days work?

When I can I train in whatever sport I can be it rugby, cricket or maybe tennis and golf now.



Cartmel Show Reminder



Hannah has her paints and a well trained heifer ready again for the public education tent at Cartmel Show on Wed 7th August. Please come along to admire her artwork and have refreshments with us on the Farm Gate Vets stand. We look forward to seeing you.

Well Done Alice

Alice Hayton recently joined our reception team, we shall introduce her in next months edition but in the meantime we wanted to congratulate her on winning the tup lamb class and the overall Gritstone Reserve Champion at the Great Yorkshire



Cartmel Show - Wednesday 7th August 2024—We are pleased to sponsor the cattle marquee again this year, please join us on our stand for refreshments and a chat.



Comparing Milk Powders and Controlling M.bovis in Herds. Wed 21st August 2024, on farm by kind permission of Messrs A & B Picktall, Bradley Farm, Hincaster, Kendal, LA7 7ND. Healthy Heifer members meeting where our vets will be discussing the pros and cons of various milk powders (please bring your milk powder label). Zoetis will be talking to us about the latest developments in M.bovis control. Any guests interested in joining our Healthy Heifer Scheme, please let us know, come along and see what it's all about. Please book by phoning the office or e mail linda@farmgatevets.com



www.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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