



Newsletter December 2024



Welcome

I probably say it every year, but is it me or are the years getting shorter? I'm still waiting for summer but it's December already! After the mild autumn, winter seems to be here now with the accompanying calf pneumonia and scours, e coli mastitis and late but not least fluke is starting to appear on various farms. We do have our problems but at least this year the crap weather has buffered us from blue tongue disease and mostly from Schmallenberg which have affected many farms further east and south of us. So lets be thankful for some small mercies.

That time is soon approaching so look out on social media for our annual Christmas song and video which is still in production as I write this. From all at Farm Gate Vets, we wish you all a Merry Xmas and Happy New Year.

Mark Stott

Schmallenberg and other Lambing Disasters in 2024



In a recent meeting at J36, vets from nearby practices were invited to join us for an evening of talks on various topics. I spoke about Schmallenberg and the effects it had on farms further south. Many of you came in asking about Schmallenberg over lambing time last year and I saw firsthand the impact it had on farms where I grew up. A reminder that it is a virus spread by midges (like Bluetongue) and causes deformities in lambs; mainly fused joints and twisted limbs.

There was a large outbreak last season, so it is expected that cases will be lower this 2024/25 lambing time as many sheep will have built a good immunity to the virus if previously infected.

The University of Nottingham studied the impact of the disease on UK farms through a farmer survey. Farmers who had confirmed Schmallenberg on their farms were less likely to sheep farm next year compared with those that weren't affected. They were also more likely to vaccinate for the virus, although a vaccine isn't currently available here. The study also showed that lamb mortality across the board (regardless of whether they were infected with Schmallenberg or not) was very high this year. I'm sure many of you can relate to seeing increased issues with orf, mastitis and lots of stiff lambs – you weren't alone! The poor weather has played a big part in lamb losses and illness this year.



The joys of lambing time in 2024

As they say, if you don't laugh, you'll cry – so look out on the upcoming Christmas video titled 'Wading in some boggy wet land' for some tips on how to get across acres of mud!

Sol Elliott

Included this month

- Schmallenberg Virus-Sol Elliott
- What and When, Treating Fluke-Jim McKinstry
- A New Vaccine for Crypto-Sarah Harker
- Those Flaming Udders-Beth Griffiths
- Christmas Crossword – Beth Thornton
- News and Diary Dates

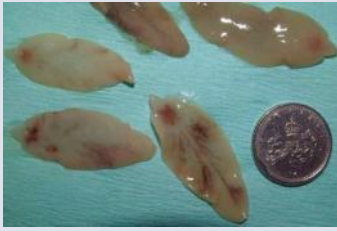


REMINDER FOR DAIRY CLIENTS

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.



When and What?—Treating Fluke



We get asked about fluke by cattle and sheep farmers all the time. Surprise surprise there are no easy answers. Well, there is, keep them on concrete and you will not have a problem!!!!

We are starting to see some acute fluke in lambs and sheep. We are also doing some blood sampling and finding fluke exposure in lambs. We are recommending TRICLABENDAZOLE now as the fluke are too young for any of the other flukicides.

What about triclabendazole resistance I hear you cry. Yes, that could be a problem but not all fluke will be triclabendazole resistant and it is better to kill some of the young triclabendazole fluke than kill no young fluke with the drugs that kill juveniles and adults.

We will be recommending RAFOXANIDE or CLOSANTEL in January for the older fluke and these will kill any triclabendazole resistant fluke as well.

Testing for fluke is not easy. There is a new animal side test that has just come onto the market which can help pick up exposure to fluke. It must be done in lambs or calves as they will not have had any previous exposure to fluke and will give us a more meaningful idea of fluke exposure on your farm. Please ask us about this test if you are interested.

If you are worried about triclabendazole resistance, we can do some testing to see if you have it in your fluke population. It is not straight forward (what is???) but we can do it under the animal health and welfare pathway so it is worth talking to one of us as the funding is there to do it and it would be great to know what level of resistance you have on your farm for future treatment advice.

Cattle advice is easier as hopefully most are housed and when they are off pasture, they are not getting infected. Usually, we recommend treating for fluke after cattle have been housed for at least 6 weeks depending on the drug being used. Milk cows can only be fluked at dry off due to the milk with hold of the

products. If you are housing cattle and you are worried about acute fluke infection, please have a word with us and we can advise the best treatment.

Table 1. Flukicide active compounds available in the UK and the efficacy of their kill rate

Active ingredient	Kill rate (%) for fluke aged 1–12+ weeks												Optimum time of year to use
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12+	
Albendazole											50–70	80–99	Spring/summer
Oxyclozanide											50–70	80–99	Spring/summer
Clorsulon			30		43		53					99	Late autumn, spring/summer
Closantel			23–73	91			91–95					97–100	Late autumn
Triclabendazole	90–99								99–99.9				Autumn

The above table is from AHDB - Liver Fluke Control in Grazing Livestock

Jim McKinstry

New Vaccine in the Battle Against Crypto

When a 'new' product hits the market, it's often not new at all, but clever marketing and rebranding of something we have had for a while. However, a cryptosporidiosis vaccine for cattle is now available, after over 20 years of research, and it genuinely is something we have never had before.

Cryptosporidiosis affects dairy and beef calves from 1 to 2 weeks of age, causing scour, dehydration and reduced growth rates at best and at worst death, especially if in combination with pathogens such as rotavirus, coronavirus or BVD. Calves can develop disease from as few as 50 cryptosporidia oocysts but shed millions once scouring. These oocysts are very persistent in the environment so challenge to subsequent calves soon becomes overwhelming.

New Crypto Vaccine cont..

The vaccine, as with that for rotavirus and coronavirus, relies on vaccination of the dam in late pregnancy and it is the colostrum that then provides protection to the calf. Colostrum ingested within the first 24 hours is absorbed into the blood stream and provides systemic immunity vital to survival. However, the change from colostrum to milk in the dam happens over several days and this transition milk still contains high levels of antibodies. These are not absorbed into the blood stream but are protective at the level of the gut lining against scour pathogens. If antibody levels have been enhanced with vaccine, this provides the protection required by the calf.



In suckler calves where the calf sucks the cow, this happens naturally but in dairy calves, we need to mimic this to maximise the benefit of the vaccines. Not only should colostrum intake in the first 24 hours be optimal, but colostrum or transition milk from vaccinated cows should be included in the milk feed for up to 7 days. It is increasingly being recognised that extended feeding of colostrum or transition milk brings health, growth and nutritional benefits way beyond those of maximising the value of scour vaccines.

Vaccines are not magic, but a cryptosporidiosis vaccine provides a valuable tool to greatly reduce scour and reduce the need for other preventative treatments after birth. Coupled with a review of colostrum management and environmental risk factors and hygiene, the challenge from cryptosporidiosis will be greatly reduced. Such an approach will have broader benefits in improving calf resilience and reducing many other disease challenges too.

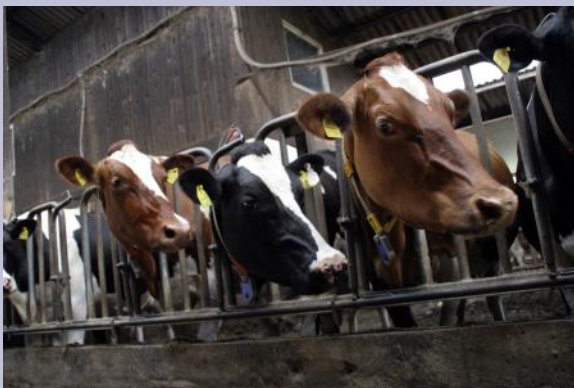
Please speak to us if you have problems with scour in your calves. We can test samples at the practice to see if cryptosporidiosis is part of the problem, and include the vaccine in an overall plan to improve calf health.

Sarah Harker

VAN Renewals

Vet Attestation Numbers (Van numbers) came into force over 12 months ago so renewals are now due. Text reminders will be sent out a month before your VAN expires. Please phone in good time to organise your renewal.

Those Flaming Udders



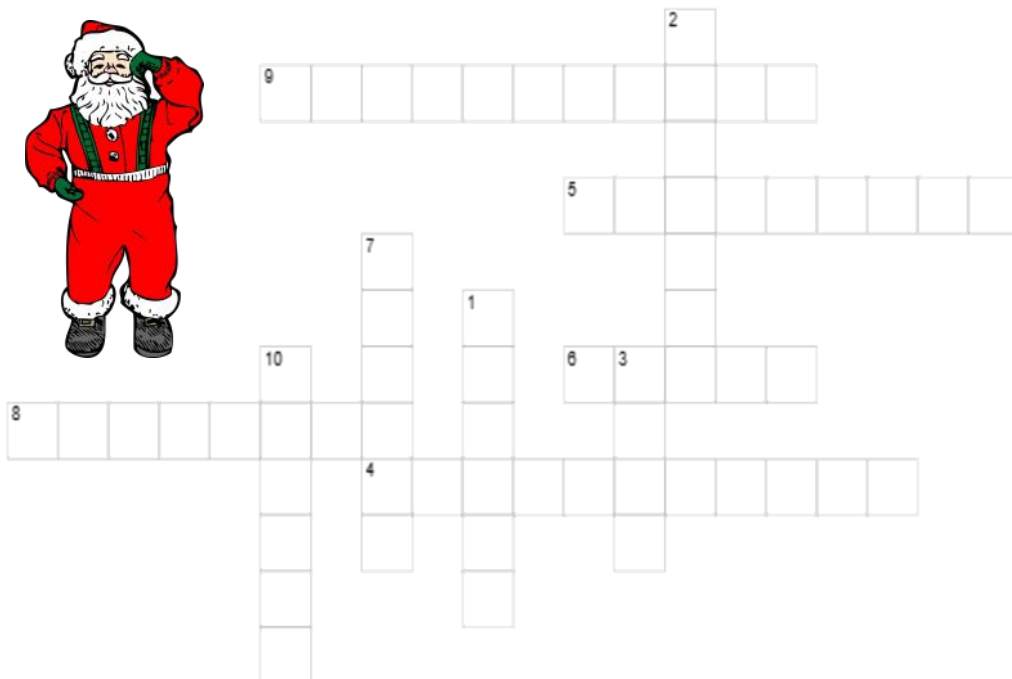
Both the season and wet weather is resulting in an increase in environmental mastitis cases. As the name suggests, environmental mastitis is caused by bacteria picked up by the cow in their surroundings. The most common of these bugs; E. Coli and Strep. uberis are usually found in faeces and on the skin, respectively. Reducing the exposure of cows to these bugs reduces the likelihood of infection and the number of cases of environmental mastitis on farm. Keeping bedding clean and dry is key. Bugs associated with environmental mastitis can thrive and multiply in contaminated organic bedding, such as straw and sawdust. Whilst these bugs struggle to multiply in sand, if contaminated with organic matter (like

faeces) it can still pose a risk. High traffic areas in housing, particularly around feed and water troughs have the potential to splash/contaminate the udder with faeces, therefore frequent scraping/removal of manure from this area can never be a bad thing. Careful flaming of udders with a cool flame to remove hair is one method of keeping udders free from manure and debris, which can harbour environmental pathogens.

There is a seasonal pattern to environmental mastitis's with challenges often seen in winter housing months or in hot/humid summer conditions. These infections can occur during lactation, during the dry period, or around calving, with dry cow infections often not showing until after calving. If you milk record, have a chat to us about QuarterPRO—<https://ahdb.org.uk/quarterpro> which is a useful tool to provide targeted mastitis pattern analysis for your farm.

Beth Griffiths

Beth's Christmas Crossword



Name

Farm

Across

- 9) Number of birds gifted in total in the 'Twelve days of Christmas' (11)
- 5) Breed of the dog named 'Santa's Little Helper' in the Simpsons (9)
- 6) Person who Smithy proposed to in the latest Gavin and Stacey Christmas special (5)
- 8) Hemisphere in which you would find penguins (8)
- 4) Anagram for this tasty Christmas treat: ARIBENDGREG (11)

Down

- 1) Reindeer named after the German word for Thunder (6).
- 2) Author of The Grinch who stole Christmas (7).
- 3) Part(s) of a Donkey that are especially large to keep them cool (4).
- 7) The fruit centrepiece of a traditional Christingle (6).
- 10) Material that covers reindeer antlers (6).

Please drop in or send a photo of your completed crossword to linda@farmgatevets.com by Christmas Eve for a chance to WIN CHOCOLATE



Farm Gate Vets are pleased to support this event. Please join us for this festive gathering.

FR Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

Registered Charity No 208858

RABI[®]
helping farming people

Kendal Christmas Carol Service

Monday 2nd December
7pm onward
£5 adults / £1 children
NWA, Junction 36, Crooklands,
Milnthorpe LA7 7FP

Live music, carols, refreshments and lots of festive cheer.

NFU **nwa AUCTIONS**

We would like to wish all our clients a very Happy Christmas and all the very best for 2025.

Thank you whole heartedly for your continued support.

Merry Christmas

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