



# Newsletter July 2024



## Welcome

I always find it impossible not to mention the weather in an introduction to our newsletter. There must be very few other businesses outside of agriculture that is so totally reliant on the predictably unpredictable weather. June has been hard work. Grass growth has slowed so our grazing dairy farms have had hungry, wet and cold cows. Our housed dairy farms have been struggling to get their silage cut in the small windows of the mulitcut systems. Lambs have been cold and not growing much. At least the sheep have been warm as a lot had not been clipped! I tell myself it is better than working in an office or dealing with the general public!

**Jim McKinstry**

## Medicine News

As I am sure some of you are aware, we are having a few supply problems with some of our medicines. We usually try to get another alternative medicine when one goes out of stock, but there are some that we are struggling to get an alternative for.

Ubrostar Red is a short acting antibiotic dry cow therapy. There is no direct alternative for it. Please ask a vet what will be the best alternative for you.

Betamox RTU is out of stock for the next month. We have Clamoxyl RTU which is the same antibiotic as Betamox. Clamoxyl has a 60-hour milk withhold and a 54 day meat withhold compared to Betamox's 24-hour milk and 18 days meat with hold.

Cepralock teat sealants and Levacur sheep drench are being discontinued. We have Orbeseal instead of Cepralock and Chanaverm instead of Levacur.

We are seeing more supply issues and discontinued products as suppliers review their product lines and prioritise the manufacture of some products over other less profitable products. One positive we can take out of it is that it is always good to have a chat about the products you are using with a vet to make sure they are still the correct medicine for the condition.

As there are different medicines being dispensed, it can be difficult for reception staff to deal with queries over what you need when you pop in to one of the offices. If you could give us a call with your drug order (preferably 24 hours in advance), we can make sure we have the product you need with out you having to wait for a vet to be called to sort out what you need. We have had a few frustrated farmers having to wait. We want to make sure you are getting

the correct medicine so calling ahead will hopefully save time in the long run.

**Jim McKinstry**



## Included this month

- **Medicine News –**  
Jim McKinstry
- **Herbal Leys—**  
Rebekah Carling
- **Worm Egg Counts-**  
Mary Brownsord
- **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.



## Herbal Leys



Hopefully all who came to our Sheep Club meeting in June on Herbal Leys found it informative, but for those who couldn't make it or for a quick recap, here is a brief rundown.

In order to qualify for a SFI the Herbal Ley must include a grass element, typically 60% with legumes at 30% and herbs at 10%; compared to a traditional 90:10 of grass to legumes.

Most of the grass that makes up our pastures are Rye grass, whereas ideally you would want a mixture of different types of grasses. Timothy grass was mentioned by both Emily of Forrit and James of AgScope as being helpful to be included as it lasts longer in the season.

### Pros:

- Production benefits in both breeding ewes and lambs due to an increase in nutritive value and ability to choose what to eat. For example, early spring seem to prefer chicory and plantain whereas in the late spring prefer red clover
- Higher levels of some minerals: calcium, magnesium, sodium, phosphorus, zinc, copper and cobalt
- Some herbs e.g. chicory have an anthelmintic (anti-worm) effect.
- High legume content means no need for fertiliser.
- The increased biodiversity increases the earthworm population bringing with them good soil health due to their insane ability to move soil around.



### Cons:

- The old mantra of 'Fail to prepare, then prepare to fail' was never more true and this comes at a cost. Soil pH must be above 5.6, but ideally >5.8; you don't want to be sowing any later than August and don't drill too deep
  - Rest period is essential – otherwise sheep just preferentially eat all the herbs to the point there will be none left; fine for rotational grazing systems, not for set stocked pastures
  - Summer active so winter grazing needs to be limited, requiring the need for alternative winter forage (does mean it grows like stink in summer and the excess makes good silage)
  - Doesn't last forever. On average you'll get about 2 years out of them and you can't just resow the herbs, as they get outcompeted; you'd need to kill everything off and start the whole process again. In order to get any sort of herb survival and persistence you need to make sure they get chance to establish their extensive root system by not going in too hard or too fast that first grazing. Don't start until they have 6 fully developed leaves (about 30cm tall) and stop when they reach about 7-8cm, allowing them to regrow to 15-25cm (about 3-6weeks) before grazing again.



Yes the above sounds a lot of hard work and certainly the SFI payout is unlikely to be substantial by the time you've paid for all the groundwork (literally) but for those of you who are already rotational grazing, the increased production benefits and earthworm counts are not to be sniffed at.

**Rebekah Carling**



## A Report from the SRUC



**“I’ll just send this off to \*the lab\*”, “I’m not sure what samples they want - I’ll just ring \*the lab\*”, “HOW MUCH to send it to \*the lab\*???”**

This month a few of us and vets from neighbouring practices headed up for what felt like a school trip to meet the folk behind the infamous lab. We visited the site where all your aborted lambs, bulk milk samples, BVD bloods, muck samples and much more, get mysteriously shipped off and in return we receive wonderful reports full of information to feed back to you all.

We started by gaining good tips on how to get the most out of on farm post-mortems, which samples to take and how to store and transport them. We looked at common bugs under the microscope, including campylobacter which we discussed has been a major problem for farmers this lambing

season (so to those who have struggled with it, you are not alone!).

We discussed Q fever as a cause of stillborn calves, particularly seen in heifers. We reminded ourselves of the potential for this bacteria to infect humans that come into contact with infected cattle. There has been more research going into the significance of Q fever in the UK and some of you may have been involved in a recent study being carried out at the University of Liverpool. As always, if you are finding increased numbers of abortions or stillbirths in your herd, give us a call.

A common frustration for farmers (and new vets!) is trying to figure out what parasites to treat at what time of year and the answer we frequently get is “it depends”. We had conversations about coccidiosis, Nematodirus, Haemonchus, as well as fluke. We discussed that sky high cocci counts in our FWECs are not always caused by a species of cocci that will cause harm in sheep, whereas those that affect cattle are almost always significant. We discussed that as of now, we have passed the Nematodirus high risk period, but we will see what the weather brings in the next few weeks as to whether we will have another spike. Useful resources include the SCOPS Nematodirus forecast (<https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/>) - you can locate a station nearest your holding and see whether the risk for Nematodirus is increasing or decreasing.

A very wet spring with patches of warm weather over 10°C is likely to mean we will see fluke issues slightly earlier than we did last year. As ever, speak to us about managing these parasites when we are next on farm.

**Sol Elliott**

## Mary Talks Faecal Worm Egg Counts

Unsure on what to treat your stock with this time of year? Testing muck samples takes the guess work out of treatment. Faecal egg counts give an indication of the worm burden an animal is carrying and help determine whether they need worming or not-therefore helping to reduce the risk of anthelmintic resistance. The aim is to give your stock enough exposure to worms, in order to build an immunity, without encouraging resistance. Worming strategically saves time and money, here are some tips to think about before worming:

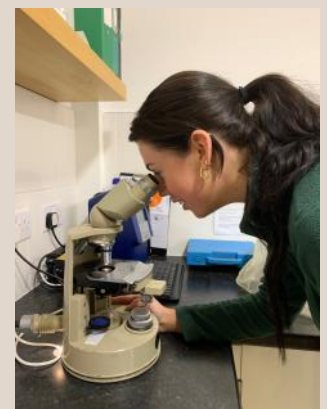
**1. Check if you need to worm.** Our free sample kits that you can pick up from the practice include 10 pots that you can collect your faecal samples in- the fresher the better! A quick egg count can be done at the practice by either a vet or one of the vet techs.

**2. Are you using the right product?** Some worms can be resistant to some products and not others- this can be dependant on the species and their life cycle stages.

**3. Dose the correct amount.** You should always dose for the heaviest animal. Dosing for the average weight in the group will mean the heavier animals have been underdosed- this can be a risk for developing wormer resistance.

**4. Check and calibrate your equipment.** Check your guns work before using them as repeated use can eventually cause inaccurate dosing. To see if its the correct dose I would put a dose into a syringe to see if its giving the right amount.

**5. Check if your treatment has worked!** Bring in another sample. Post treatment samples should show a 95% reduction in faecal egg numbers. Re-sampling is dependent on what product you have used to treat the animals but the vets and vet techs here at Farmgate will inform you when to do so.



**Mary Brownsord**

## An Interview with Claire

Sedbergh clients will recognise Claire Capstick, who has been working as a vet nurse for us, for just over 12 months. Here we find out a little bit more about her....

**1. What was your first ever job?** I worked in a stable yard, with ex racehorses, completing general yard jobs like, turning out, mucking out, and feeding. It was a great first job, with really lovely bosses.

**2. What do you enjoy most about working at Farm Gate Vets?** I really enjoy working in Sedbergh. Having lived in Sedbergh for a few years and my husband coming from a farm in Howgill. It is lovely to personally know a lot of the farm clients that come in to the surgery, and the small animal clients. No two days are ever the same, and I really get to utilise my clinical nursing skills. It also helps that the girls I get to work with are as barmy as I am!



Sarah had a good day supporting the **Westmorland County Show Farm Open Days** at the end of June. Schools from across Cumbria and Lancashire were invited to attend to explore the link between farming and food.

### Reminder about the Health & Welfare Pathway

For those who applied for the Health and Welfare pathway funding over 10 months ago, please remember to apply again. The rules have changed so you can actually claim for the same species again. So if for example you claimed £522 for beef cattle 10 months ago you can claim again for beef cattle. Amounts for sheep are £436 and for Dairy £372. The application link is here -

<https://apply-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-review.defra.gov.uk/apply/>

### 3. Where is your favourite holiday destination?

I don't even have a passport, holidays abroad don't appeal to



me. We did have a great family holiday to St Andrews a few years ago. The beaches are beautiful.

**4. Who would you most like to have dinner with? (a famous real or fictional person).** I would love to have dinner with just my husband in peace and quiet, that someone else has cooked!!

We have two young sons, so meal time is frequently like feeding time at the zoo!

**5. How do relax after a hard days work?** Getting out with the collies and doing some training with them in the fields. Well, when they listen anyway!!

**Open Farm Sunday** was on the 9th of June this year and we thoroughly enjoyed supporting the Fishwick Family with their event. This is Finbarr and Martin talking to a captivated audience about the magical cycle of grass, muck, soil and worms!



**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, venue TBC.** 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. Please look out for further information. Any guests interested in joining our Healthy Heifer Scheme, please let us know, come along and see what it's all about.



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