



Newsletter March 2023



Welcome

February is the shortest month of the year and my word it has flown. The grass is getting a bit greener and sheep are starting to lamb. Milk yields are about average this year with few herds' milk production running the tanks over. Hopefully if this is nationwide the spring flush will be more of a trickle. We are not seeing many poorly cows at the moment. I would hope this is due to good preventative vet advice but with cull cow prices being where they are I think cows are getting culled before they become a problem. Hogg prices are back and with feed prices being high should I feed them or should I trust the grass is a question many farmers are asking. If you have a lot of lambs not finishing as quickly as you would like maybe we can help with checking for parasites and mineral levels. The animal health and welfare pathway has just opened and there is grant money there to help investigate things like this. Please ask one of the vets for more information about this.

Jim McKinstry

Farm Gate News



Jim and I are very pleased to announce that we have appointed four associates to the practice. Finbarr O'Sullivan-Greene, Hannah Tatham, Katherine Muller Jones and Sarah Harker are joining us to help with developing the practice further. Our Healthy Heifer Scheme for example, got off to a great start in '22 with many clients already seeing advantages to our vet tech routine visits. We are having regular meetings this year aiming to share best practice and improve calf health and productivity. In the sheep world, we've already started our series of very popular lambing courses and we aim to continue our success with the sheep club. Although a smaller part of our business, our small animal sector continues to grow so we're exploring new services in this area as well. We're reaching out to the vet schools to get the right students to see practice with us and improve recruitment in this time when vets (especially farm animal vets) in very short supply. So as you can see, we've lots of plans but if you think there is a service we could offer but at the moment we're not, please tell us and we'll see what we can do!

Mark Stott

Included this month

- **Farm Gate News**– Mark Stott
- **Phones**– Charlotte Chapman
- **Sheep Abortion**– Rebekah Carling
- **Magic of Colostrum and Mastitis Sampling in Cows and Sheep**– Sarah Harker
- **Dairy Cattle Meeting Summary**- Beth Thornton
- **News and Diary Dates**



Turn Out Vaccines

We are currently holding a decent stock of Letavoid, BVD and IBR vaccine and we are not aware of any pending problems!! However 2023 seems to be a year of surprises so please get your orders in!



Out of Hours Phones



Now March has hit we are really getting into the swing of the busy season! This is a good time to remind our clients that our out of hours service is redirected through the

Lancaster branch phones. What does this mean? Well, it means our vets cannot ring you back unless you leave a voicemail with your details!

The first on-call vet may already be on a visit or in an area with no signal. If you have not heard back from them within 10 minutes of dialling, make sure to redial and press option 3 for our second on-call vet so we can get someone in touch with you asap. Wishing you all a successful lambing and calving season.

Charlotte Chapman

Sheep Abortion

Abortions unfortunately are part of most lambing flocks and something that most of you will have experience of but some quick next steps might be helpful...

Separate out ewe from rest of lambing group.

This helps prevent further spread if something infectious such as EAE (enzootic abortion) and allows you to keep an eye on her to make sure an illness hasn't caused the abortion e.g. *Listeria*.

If she has got milk and you want to mother something on to her don't mother on a replacement in case it is EAE, as that transmits through milk.

Record it somewhere.

More than 2% of the flock aborting is likely to be due to something infectious so once you reach this figure definitely worth further investigations.

Diagnose the Cause

Sending off lamb and cleansing for a **post mortem** gives you the best chance of discovering cause of abortion. **Blood sample** from ewe tells us what she has



been exposed, which might be the cause of this abortion. If not already vaccinated for EAE and *Toxoplasma* take advantage of free testing to check whether these diseases are on your farm (lab test free and we normally hold a day where you can bring your sheep down to the surgery for sampling to also be free).

Rebekah Carling

Magic of Colostrum

The value of colostrum has long been appreciated but ongoing research shows that it's even more magical than we thought. Absorbed antibodies allow lambs and calves to fight infections in the first few weeks of life, but it also contains **hormones that have much longer term and potentially life-long benefits on growth, development and performance**. Mineral and vitamin levels are also much higher than in milk and high fat levels provides unrivalled nutrition. Some antibodies stay behind to line the gut and provide another layer of defence whilst whole white blood cells transfer into the calf or lamb to aid the developing immune system.



Mastitis Sampling in Cows and Sheep

Collection of samples from cases of mastitis is good practice and a valuable exercise in dairy cows. Over time, it builds a picture of the species of bacteria causing problems, allowing more targeted treatment and prevention options. It is something less commonly considered in **sheep**, but could still be of value. A vaccine against one of the major causes of sheep mastitis (*Vimco/Staph aureus*) has been available for several years in the UK. If you experience problems, it could be worth knowing if this is the bacteria predominating and if vaccination would be helpful. This vaccine is not a magic bullet, but it can reduce deaths and severity of clinical cases, and reduce the more subtle impact of subclinical cases.



Samples must be collected meticulously into a sterile pot and can be frozen to allow a batch to be submitted together. Sampling technique is critical if results are to be of value so please ask for guidance. The cost of testing is sometimes subsidised for both cattle and sheep. Please ask our advice if you feel this may be beneficial to your herd or flock.

Sarah Harker



Dairy Cow Lameness Meeting Report

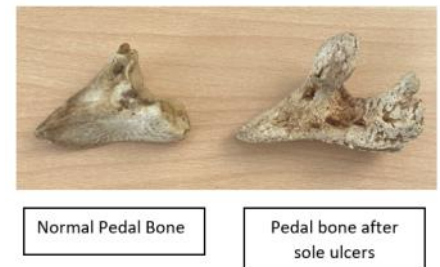
Last month we held a dairy client lameness meeting at North Farm, kindly hosted by J Bargh and Son. We were joined by James Wilson, a hoof health specialist and foot trimmer by trade from Cornwall who ran a session at the crush, alongside Finbarr and our Vet Techs looking at the disease process and mobility scoring. The meeting was centred on **EDPET**. This stands for **Early Detection and Prompt, Effective Treatment**.

Early Detection

Once a cow has a foot disease, whether it is sole ulcers, DD or white line, irreversible changes occur within the pedal bone (the bone in the hoof). This makes the cow predisposed to future lameness; in fact 80% of the risk of lameness come from a previous lameness event. You will NOT find every early lame cow without standing and watching your herd walk past as these are not the cows at the back limping. This is where mobility scoring both in house or ROMS accredited really adds to a herd's hoof care.

Mobility scoring can pick up those cattle that can be identified as lame on a certain leg but will easily keep up with the rest of the herd and walk at speed. Although most farmers know the lame cows in the herd these early score 2 cows are often not found without actively looking for them.

If we can detect lameness in the early stages when the cow may only have sole bruising or overgrowth and treat effectively with blocks and NSAIDS we reduce the risk of future lameness events and them being on the cull list.



Prompt and Effective Treatment



James Wilson using hoof testers.

James stressed that lame cows should be seen as an emergency, similar to mastitis and sick cows. Severely lame score 3 cows should be treated on the same day, moderately lame score 2 cows should be treated within 48 hours.

- Leaving adequate toe length of at least 8.5cm for Holstein cattle.
- Taking a 'less is more approach' and not over trimming. White, clean feet at the end of trimming may look nice, but this is a sure sign that over trimming has taken place. If a herd is more lame after trimming, they are probably being over trimmed.
- Use of hoof testers to apply pressure to the soles to check for a pain response rather than 'digging' looking for lesions.
- Effective treatment on the first presentation may help prevent permanent changes to the foot, for this reason it is important to block and give anti-inflammatories to heifers within the first days of lameness.
- A 3 day course of Ketoprofen (Ketofen) is the drug of choice as it is backed up with evidence. It should be used on **EVERY** lame cow.
- Re-checks in the foot crush should be common and take place weekly for severely lame cows and monthly for moderately lame cows.

A combined approach from the foot trimmer, vet and farmer is the most effective way to tackle lameness. If you are interested in exploring this further book a visit with one of us to see if the healthy foot program or mobility scoring would benefit you.

Beth Thornton

A Warm Welcome to Robyn



Here is an introduction from Robyn Speak who joined our reception team in November last year and will be working at both Lancaster and J36.

Originally from South Yorkshire, I moved to Cumbria around 5 years ago. Although I have limited experience of farming life my love of the outdoors and adventure drew me to this field. I am excited to learn more about the life and take on all the challenges that brings. In the meantime, I plan on spending as much of my time out of work continuing to explore the area as much as I can!

HALF TERM ART COMPETITION WINNERS!!

Category Age 0—7 years.

“When Gill comes to disbud our calves” by Annabelle Inman age 7.



Category Age 8—16 years. “When Rebekah comes to scan our cows” by Isabelle Ward age 8.



This was very difficult to judge, all entries were fabulous. We thought the detail in both of these was superb. Well done all.

Dates For Your Diary



Healthy Heifer Members on Farm Meeting—Calf Rehydration Wednesday 8th March 2023, 11am—1pm by kind permission of **Mr CF Halhead & Son, Newlands Farm, Bay Horse, Lancaster, LA2 9AA** with guest speaker John Henderson MRCVS from Forte Healthcare. Lunch included and kindly sponsored by Forte. To book your place please call the office or e mail linda@farmgatevets.com by Monday 6th March. If you are interested in our Healthy Heifer scheme please book in and come along to find out more.



Practical Lambing courses— £45 per head including VAT. To be held at our junction 36 practice, these courses provide a good mix of theory and hands on lambing techniques, sheep husbandry and disease prevention. Light refreshments provided.

Saturday 11th March 2023, 9.30pm- 12.30pm

To book please call Kendal or Lancaster on the numbers below, 12 spaces per course.

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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