



# Newsletter

## March 2024

### Welcome

Spring is hopefully on the way. There are some sheep and lambs squelching in the fields but lambing time thankfully is just getting going. The wet weather has been hard on any stock that is outside and the slurry stores are starting to brim. Only a year ago it was lovely and dry and this year it is anything but. With turnout coming we need to be planning wormer and vaccination strategies for the young stock. With this in mind we have an interesting meeting about worming cattle this month. Let us hope that the rain does stop and the grass will start to grow. It will not be long until the till spreaders will be out and "green fever" will be starting again.

**Jim McKinstry**

### Included this month

- **Copper Poisoning in Continental Breeds-** Sol Elliott
- **Biological Fly Control-** Hannah Tatham
- **Poet Vet Tech!**- Mary Brownsord
- **TB Control & the Role of Badger Vaccination** - Sarah Harker
- **News and Diary Dates**

### Copper Poisoning in Continental Breeds

When talking about copper poisoning our thoughts immediately turn to our Texels and Suffolks. However, as some continental breeds become more popular, particularly the Dutch Spotted, it is important to remember these too are susceptible to copper poisoning. These copper sensitive breeds are very good at accumulating copper in the body and storing it, even if only exposed to low levels for a period of time. Chronic copper toxicity may lead to sudden death as stress from



lambing, weather changes, concurrent disease, diet change, transport or shearing cause the release of high amounts of copper into the blood leading to anaemia. Signs of copper poisoning include blood in urine, neurological signs, and they may appear pale around the eye (similar to when affected by worms) or yellow. While ewe/lamb nuts sold might not have copper added in, it is important to note that many of the ingredients will likely have some level of copper. Feeds which include distillery by-products,



Photo credit Nadis

tend to be higher in copper from the copper-based equipment used in distilleries.

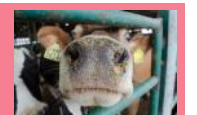
Forage and water are unlikely to be high sources of copper. As always, avoid giving any supplementation such as boluses containing copper to any white-faced breeds. If you have any questions regarding mineral supplementation, have a chat with your vet to make a plan that would work for your flock.

**Sol Elliott**



### Turnout Vaccines

Please think about your turnout vaccine needs, we have good stocks of Lepto, BVD, IBR with no expected issues with Huskvac.



## Biological Fly Control

As we all know flies are a nuisance to livestock in the summer and can cause significant production losses - studies have shown that fly worry can cause growth losses of up to 0.3kg a day and 0.5 litres a day milk loss mainly due to reduced feed intake. They can also transmit diseases like new forest eye and summer mastitis.

Once you are seeing flies around animals and in buildings their population is already large, and they are very hard to control at this point, so starting early in the season (usually around April) is the key to control.

We are excited to introduce another tool in our fly control kit this year – biological fly control. You may have heard about this concept already but basically it involves using parasitic insects that target the nuisance flies to reduce their numbers without causing bother to your animals. It involves



Parasitic Wasps target fly larvae.

coming up with a personalised plan to target fly breeding areas on your farm and will be implemented by our vet tech team, with the products being delivered and placed on site every 2 weeks throughout the summer. If you are interested in learning more than please contact us to discuss.

Hannah Tatham



Baited Fly Traps can be placed around the farm and on cow tracks.



## Poet Vet Tech!

Several Clients have asked us recently, “what is this vet tech service that you are offering?” So we asked Mary to describe a typical day, and then this happened ....

*I start the day with a biscuit and a brew,  
as I look through the diary of the visits to do  
I grab all my equipment and go out to sort  
the crush  
and to everyone’s surprise it’s usually in a  
rush*

*As I drive to my visit I’ll probably get a ring  
from Shirly making sure I’ve got everything  
The first farms a client on our Healthy Heifer  
Scheme*

*where we vaccinate, castrate and bleed for  
total protein  
Onto the next farm where there is plenty to  
do*

*I thought I’d be disbudding Holsteins but  
there’s a massive Charolais too!  
The A team have arrived and boy was I glad  
with Ruby’s “ram on attitude” no one could  
be sad*

*Gill was on hand she’d escaped from doing TB  
We counted up the calves, there was 33!  
We lassoed, we wrestled someone did end up  
on the floor*

*I said I’d not say who but Gill’s no longer sore  
The calves are done, they are all looking ace  
we pack up and leave with blue spray all over  
our face*

*Back to the office with paperwork to hand  
We sit down with a brew and gill says “oh  
this is grand”*

Mary Brownsord –Vet Tech / Poet



The Team—Gill, Ram on Ruby and Mary

## Controlling Lungworm and is Wormer Resistance an issue in Cattle?

Wednesday 13th March 2024, 12pm at Bentham Golf Club, Robin Lane, High Bentham, LA2 7AG

Our speaker Colin Mason is a Vet from the SRUC disease surveillance centre in Dumfries, we will discuss actual levels of wormer resistance and why vaccinating for parasites (e.g. lungworm) and targeted treatments may be beneficial. Hot lunch included and kindly supported by MSD.



Please call your vet practice to book your place by Wed 6th March 2024



## TB Control and the Role of Badger Vaccination

A joint farmer meeting with Westmorland Vets was held last month, reinforcing some broader issues around TB control and more specifically, a potential place for badger vaccination.

Dr Lindsay Heasman, an independent animal health consultant, detailed the current UK TB situation and her main take-home messages included:

- The skin test has its limitations. It has a sensitivity of 80% which means 1 in 5 infected animals may test negative, even if the skin test is performed accurately. This has implications for pre-movement testing as infected animals can be moved without realising. In addition to recent individual testing information, enquires should be made about recent herd and local incidence.
- Cattle movements spread TB across the country and to new areas. Local badgers become infected from the cows, and help to maintain the disease in the area. On-farm measures to limit contact between badgers and cattle are necessary to limit spread from cattle to badgers as well as from badgers back to cattle.
- The skin test may not be very sensitive but it is 99.9% specific, meaning that a positive is a positive. When these animals are slaughtered, if no visible lesions are found and the bacteria cannot be isolated, it doesn't mean it wasn't TB, it just means it was a very early case. This means we are taking these cattle out of herds before it has become contagious and hopefully before it has spread.

Nick Pile, a farm vet from Sussex then spoke about a pilot scheme to vaccinate badgers in his local area. Training was provided to farm staff with the aim of trapping and vaccinating badgers on their own farms once annually for 4 years.



Although difficult to know how many badgers receive the vaccine, it is known that vaccinating more than 1/3 of adults reduces new infections in cubs by 79%. Badger vaccination is in its infancy but Nick showed that it can be implemented practically in real-world situations and we should be open to its use as a tool in the fight against TB.

TB and in particular badger culling and vaccination continues to be a political hot potato, with policy decisions influenced by factors other than animal health, but farmers need to understand their responsibilities in its control and be open to some of the more novel tools at our disposal.

Sarah Harker



Running from Feb 1st 2023 to the end of June, Flock Check is a

subsidised scheme from MSD where 6 empty or aborted ewes can be blood tested for **Toxoplasmosis and Enzootic Abortion**. Lab testing is covered by the scheme so you will only pay for a visit and sampling costs. Bringing sheep to the practice wouldn't incur a visit cost.

### Scabigard Update-

As mentioned last month, Zoetis have unexpectedly hit another supply problem leaving a stock shortage for the 2024 lambing season. At the moment we have stock and should be ok, but it's worth ordering in good time.

2024 Lambing List out now, please pick up a copy.



## Well done Becca



All the hard work and revision paid off last month for Rebecca Mason (Becca) who passed her AMTRA exams to become a qualified SQP (prescriber of POM-VPS medicines) for farm and companion animal. Congratulations from all the team!

### Art Competition - Springtime on the Farm

Art Gallery 8-16 years, Well done to all our artists.



## Congratulations on your retirement Carol

Last month we marked the end of an era as our Practice Manager Carol retired after 11 years of service. Carol joined Farm Gate soon after it was formed when Baldrand and Highgate vets merged. She has worked tirelessly to keep the ship running as the business has expanded over that time. Thank you Carol for all your support, we wish you well and all the very best for an adventurous and enjoyable retirement!



### Age 0-7 years entries



## Dates For Your Diary



### Lambing Courses 2024

Practical Lambing Course— Saturday 9th March 2024 - 9.30am—12.30pm—Last Date, only a few spaces remain.

£45 including VAT. To book a course please call the office on the numbers below.



Controlling Lungworm and is Wormer resistance an Issue in Cattle? 12pm, Wed 13th March 2024 at Bentham Golf Club, Robin Lane, High Bentham, LA2 7AG. Our speaker Colin Mason is a Vet from the SRUC disease surveillance centre in Dumfries. To book your place please e mail [linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto:linda@farmgatevets.com) or phone the practice before Wed 6th March 2024. Hot lunch included and kindly supported by MSD. All welcome.

### 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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