



## Welcome



Spring is on its way - honest! Well at least nature thinks so - birds are nesting, bees are buzzing, hedgehogs are on the move and I've even seen a slow worm knocking about in the garden (see photo). With the new season, we have the new look newsletter. There are more pictures and the writing is bigger so even I can read it without my glasses. What remains is the quality of advice and opinion that our experienced vets write every month.

Mark Stott

### Included this month

- **Nematodirus control in Lambs**—Sarah Harker
- **Worming Cattle at Grass**, to worm or not to worm, this is the question - Jim McKinstry
- **Vaccine Storage**—not just a summer problem—Linda Dawson
- **What's new in Ketosis** - Finbarr O Sullivan Greene
- **Welcome Rebekah**
- **Diary Dates**

## Nematodirus control in Lambs

Hopefully many of you are getting through lambing with a good, healthy crop on the ground. We need these lambs to keep going forwards, but **Nematodirus** can stop this happening. It causes scour in lambs from 6 to 12 weeks old, with outcomes ranging from sudden deaths to ill-thrift in recovered individuals. Nematodirus is species specific so is only picked up by and spread to other lambs. **Nematodirus eggs hatch in spring when daily temperatures average above 10°C**, having over-wintered on pasture contaminated by last seasons' lambs.

The online SCOPS Nematodirus Forecast takes temperature data from around the country and predicts when this hatch will occur in each region. It is definitely worth a look to help you decide when to treat. If the peak of the hatch occurs before lambs are old enough to be grazing much e.g. April and they only lambed in March, disease incidence can be low. Conversely if the hatch is late e.g. June as a result of a cooler spring, many lambs are older and already developing the age-related immunity that starts at about 12 weeks old. However, if a **rapid hatch coincides with a large susceptible lamb population** on the ground, disease can be sudden and severe. Age-related immunity should be strong by 6 months old, so we see less disease in older lambs.

Continued..



White drench such as Tramazole 2.5% (in stock) recommended in most cases for Nematodirus treatment.



## SCOPS Nematodirus Forecast



The forecast predicts the hatch date based on temperature data from weather stations. Keep checking at <https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/>

## Nematodirus continued..

However, in recent years, there have been outbreaks in later summer and autumn as Nematodirus appears to divert from its classical presentation. It's not really known why this is happening, may be changing climate patterns, but something to watch out for.

Worm egg counts are of less value in predicting outbreaks of Nematodirus and determining timing of treatment as damage is done before larvae become egg-laying adults. They do remain of value later in the season when we are largely dealing with other species of worms. Pasture history also gives us an indication of Nematodirus risk. Pasture that did not have lambs on the previous spring/early summer should be low risk, as should new seeds or meadow ground that was cropped last year. Eggs survive for up to 2 years on permanent pasture that has carried a spring lamb crop so is the highest risk.

**White wormers** remain appropriate for treatment of Nematodirus, saving the newer groups for later in the season when they are most needed. The 'long-acting' clear wormers are not long-acting against Nematodirus, and in some cases, have lower efficacy so are best avoided.



*“ Deciding when to treat Nematodirus is like shooting a fox running past a gate, too soon and you miss it, too late and the damage is done” Sarah Harker*

### Top tips from Jim

- We need to learn lessons from the sheep industry.
- Avoid blanket worming cattle to reduce wormer resistance and allow animal immunity to build.



## To worm or not to worm, that is the question.

With turnout fast approaching we get asked questions about what worming products to use on **replacement heifers and youngstock** at turnout. Traditionally season long products have been used to give total protection for the season but a lot of this is down to convenience, so stock do not have to be handled through the summer.

If we look at the sheep sector, we have been trying to decrease the amount of wormers used in lambs as we have seen **worm resistance** to all worming products. By testing animals to see if there are worms there before we treat (faecal egg counting) has decreased the amount of worming products used. This slows the formation of resistance and saves time and money for the farmer!!!

The cattle sector has been slow to adopt this approach. We are happy jabbing or pouring on products to blanket treat the animals with out us even knowing what the worm challenge (if any) is.. We are so worried that they may get worms that we are not allowing the animals to gain any immunity. We keep getting reports from the lab about cattle worms that are resistant to clear wormers (ivermectins). This is very worrying as clear worming products are the main group of wormers we use in cattle. Before we get into a resistance mess like the sheep sector maybe we need to learn about the mistakes they have made.

The best way to protect cattle against lungworm is to vaccinate youngstock before turnout with HUSKVAC. This will give lifetime immunity as long as they keep getting exposed to lungworm.

**Sampling cattle** before you worm them to see if there are worms to treat is what we need to be doing. We are doing this a lot in sheep and a lot of times we do not need to worm lambs as it is the fresh grass that is making them scour.

If we can change our ways, we can avoid the worms we need to control being resistant to our treatments. You will also save money by not using as many wormers, so everyone is a winner.

## What's new in Ketosis

Traditionally ketosis was perceived as a problem of high yielding dairy herds, however, a recent study on Irish grazing cattle has shown that ketosis also affects about **30% of animals in low yield herds**. This means that all herds have high risk cows not just the Holstein herds. Just looking at **poor fertility** as one of the many knock on effects of ketosis, cows with ketosis lose time and tend to become fat problem cows, but on a herd level they cause increased pressure on infrastructure by skewing calving patterns.



For more info on why this happens check out my short video on the Farmgate social medial platforms. For low-input low-output herds the impact of ketosis is even larger as when cows slip outside the calving pattern they are culled.

For more info on ketosis- check out <https://www.farmanimalhealth.co.uk/dairy/kick-ketosis>

### How do I reduce the risk of Ketosis?

Regardless of system two strategies should be applied on all dairy farms.

- Identify high risk cows and have a plan to reduce the impact in these animals
- Identify risk areas at a herd level to reduce the overall number of high risk cows. (The best herds can get this down to as low as 10% but 20-30% is more typical).

One management strategy I recommend for animals under my care is using Kexxtone boluses in high risk "SOFT" cows (Sick, Old, Fat, Twins). **Kexxtone** reduces the risk of Ketosis by 75% if given 3-4 weeks pre calving. If you are a Kexxtone user you should regularly review your Kexxtone use with your routine vet, as although the boluses have been shown to deliver a 7:1 return by reducing disease in at risk cows, there will always be a greater return by preventing the problem in the first place.

One note of caution, the active ingredient in Kexxtone is **toxic to dogs, horses and guinea fowl**. It is not uncommon for cows to regurgitate a bolus (normally empty and should be less than 2%). It is important to dispose of these correctly so that a farm can benefit from the product while reducing any risk to other animals.

### What next?

This spring consider reviewing the following questions with your routine vet?

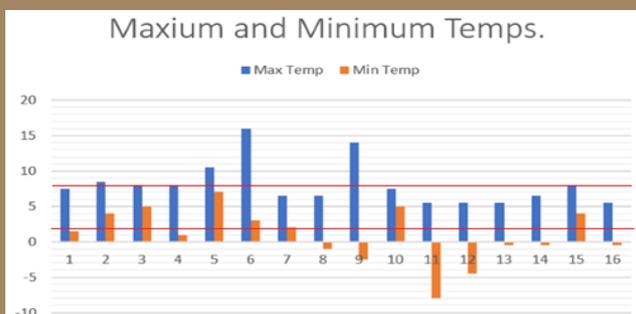
What is the impact of ketosis on my herd?

Do I have a system for managing high risk cows?

What are the risk factors on my farm and can I do something to reduce them?



## Vaccine Storage—Not just a summer a problem!



For optimal storage, temperatures should sit between the 2 red lines.

the practice by using temperature data loggers kindly supplied by MSD. Fridges involved were a mixture of indoor and outdoor, results showed that only **44% stayed within the 2-8°C range** or borderline, with some fridges reaching **lows of -8°C**, and **highs of 16°C**. Keeping in mind that this was over a spell of cold weather, most of the outdoor fridges (80%) fell to below freezing. In contrast some indoor fridges (36%) were often over 8°, possibly with frequent door opening at brew time etc.. Thank you to those farms who took part, an individual report will follow for each of you.

It is well known that vaccines need to be kept cold (between 2-8°C) and temperatures outside these ranges either destroy the vaccine completely or reduce its potency. Over the past couple of months we have recorded the performance fridges on several farms across

## Ketosis Main Points

- Not just a high yielding herd issue with 30% of cows in low yielding herds affected.
- Remember **SOFT cows, Sick, Old, Fat, Twins**
- Find out more about Ketosis at our next Zoom meeting (see diary dates).

## Growing Lambs

Lambs can be protected from clostridia and Pasteurella disease as early as 3 weeks of age with Heptavac P or Ovivac P. They required two injections 4-6 weeks apart. Please ask for prices.



## 56% of farm fridges

Did not maintain the required 2-8°C  
**Vaccine Storage Tips**

- Check fridge performance, consider keeping vaccine in an alternative indoor fridge in extreme weather.
- Order vaccine as needed to avoid on farm storage.

## Rebekah Carling



## Warm Welcome to Rebekah

Rebekah joined our Lancaster branch in March. Originally from Fleetwood and with family in the North Lancashire area she's decided it's time to come back home having previously worked in Wales and most recently the Northumberland/Scottish Borders east coast. Her work so far has mainly involved beef and sheep and so she is looking forward to getting stuck into dairy (although still hoping that she sees enough beef cows to keep her reflexes sharp!). Outside of work Rebekah spends her time knitting, trying to keep up with all the babies her friends seem to keep having and as a committed Christian is looking forward to getting involved with a local church. She has a one-eyed cat called Stanley and hopes to add a rescue dog to the household at some point.

## Dates For Your Diary

**Ketosis, at what point do your wheels fall off? - 7.30pm on Zoom, Thurs 6th May 2021** - please join us online for this informative session on ketosis, how to identify at risk cows, where the Kexxtone bolus fits and recognising your own system pressures. To register and receive a complimentary cake parcel, please e mail [linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto:linda@farmgatevets.com) or phone the practice.



**Red Tractor Beef and Lamb update**—From November 2021, at least one person on the farm must have attended an approved veterinary medicines course since 2016. This has been standard for dairy farmers for sometime now. With this in mind we intend to run several courses over the spring/ summer, initially online but hopefully face to face later in the year. To book this first online course please e mail [linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto:linda@farmgatevets.com) or phone the practice.

### “Understanding Veterinary Medicines”

**Thursday 13th May**

**1pm—2.30pm on Zoom**

Cost £30.00 plus VAT and includes certificate and course



### Just for fun!!

Can you guess which one of our staff members this cheerful little cherub is???

Answer revealed in the next newsletter!

Our “**Best use of an empty lick bucket**” social media competition last month was won by Helen Ellwood with this innovative lamb warmer. The bottom tub is full of hot water making a warm bed for the lambs in the top tub. We had some other great entries with nest boxes, hen feeders, dining furniture, an Xmas tree holder and wash buckets to name a few.



#### Lancaster Office

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Open 8:30am-5pm

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9am—12noon Saturdays

CLOSED Sundays

#### J36 Kendal Office

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Open 8:30am-5pm

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