

Newsletter August 2022



Welcome

What a warm few days we had last month. Warm weather is great if you have nothing to do but working in it is not easy. Animals need shade and lots of water to keep cool. Dairy cows can drink up to 120 litres in really hot weather. All in all we are having a good summer. The rain has known when to go and the sunny weather has helped the grass to grow well and there is some good silages in pits and bales this year. Compared to other areas of the country we are doing well. The show season is upon us and there is a list on the back page of where we will be this summer, please pop in and say hello and have a brew with us. There are some prizes to be won so come and see us to find out more and the best of luck.

Jim McKinstry

Sheep Club Road Trip

Last month our sheep club braved the hottest day on UK record, along with members of the New Lancashire Farm Network on a trip to Cannerheugh Farm on the side of the Pennines at Renwick, near Penrith. Our hosts Nic and Paul Renison gave us an excellent talk on how changing mindset from conventional farming has seen them develop the farm from a 1200 ewe "mono culture" to a diverse rotation including laying hens, 60 angus suckler cows, pigs and 160 Aberfield x Llyn ewes. Using no artificial fertilizer, spray or concentrate feed for over 6 years the soil health has improved remarkably along with planting of trees, broad hedges and fencing off water courses. Reducing inputs, selling produce direct (eggs, pork and beef) and scheme payments have improved the bottom line, and even more importantly the quality of family life for Nic and Paul. With the price of feed, fuel and fertilizer and the changes in single farm payment coming down the track I think all members came away with food for thought on how they can capitalize on their own land and systems going forward.



Included this month

- Sheep Club Road Trip – Linda Dawson
- Rat Bait Warning - Becky Dean
- Target the need for parasite treatment - Gill Lumb
- Cow Tracks and Sole Ulcers - Finbarr O Sullivan Greene
- Well that's your problem - Becky Dean
- Toxovax
- News
- Diary Dates



Time to think about protecting next years lamb crop, abortion vaccines available now, no supply issue yet but with previous history our advice is please do not delay and get the job done asap!



Rat Bait Warning

BBQs, cold beers and long evenings, summer has its pros, but also its cons; long days in sweaty tractor cabs, sheep clipping sunburn and breeding rats. So it's natural that vermin control comes to the top of the farm job list.

But, please remember, rat bait doesn't just kill vermin, it can make farm dogs (and other livestock) very ill and even kill them. Often the smell and flavour of the bait is designed to be tempting and tasty to



rats, and let's be honest we all know dogs that will happily scoff anything even if it only vaguely resembles food or only touched food briefly in the distant past!

The newer poisons used in rat bait can have a slightly delayed onset, with only subtle signs of illness initially and by the time symptoms are clear then the situation can be very serious indeed. Rat poison generally causes problems with blood clotting leading to uncontrolled bleeding, but signs can be varied and mild for several days, (such as starting off with joint pain, bladder symptoms or just lethargy) before rapidly progressing when the body becomes overwhelmed.

If you see the rat bait get eaten, if we are quick enough (within 2hrs), bringing the dog to the vet ASAP and making the dog sick can save the day, if the diagnosis is made after this 2hr window then we need to give antidote injections and tablets. However if we are several days down the line more intensive treatments maybe needed, in extreme circumstances involving blood transfusions, which even then might not be enough.

So in summary (summer-eh!) when using rat bait on farms, be very careful with placement and security of containers, check them regularly to make sure they aren't damaged or broken into, and if you have a scavenger dog ensure they cannot get access to the bait - OR the dead bodies of rats!

Becky Dean

Target the Need for Parasite Treatment

With the concern of resistance to anthelmintics mounting and the argument of overuse of them growing, here are a few ideas to remind our clients of the tools available to help -

- Use parasite forecasts on SCOPS and NADIS. E.g. <https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/>
- Make regular use of in-house worm egg counts for monitoring and post drench efficacy, as well as determining the need to treat.
- Find out which anthelmintics are still working effectively on your farm via a faecal egg count reduction test.
- Weigh animals, calibrate guns and dose correctly when there is a need to treat.
- When advised to treat, only buy what is needed for that treatment. Rotation of products is important and future advice may be that you don't need to use a product at all.
- Get abattoir feedback.

Don't forget, if we can measure it, we can manage it, and make improvements.



Gill Lumb SQP

Teaser Tup Time

Tightening lambing be it for catching early markets or ease of labour and treatments, is becoming more common and using a teaser is an effective way to do this. Ram vasectomies need to be done at least 6 weeks prior to tugging. For more information please call.



Cow Tracks and Sole Ulcers

Recently I attended a training course on cattle mobility scoring with other vets and farmers where the topic of sole ulcers and tracks came up. One of the farmers who had previously attended a foot trimming course in New Zealand recalled a story the trainer paired the thinnest sliver of sole horn from foot and challenged the burliest attendee to force a stone through it. Needless to say, he failed.

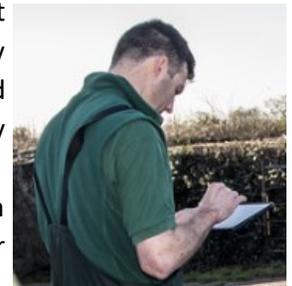
There are many theories as to why sole ulcers occur however most experts now think the underlying cause is an internal injury (where

the [pedal] bone inside the hoof becomes loose and squashes the sensitive tissue where horn growth starts) rather than a stone pressing from the outside. This makes sense as you often find an ulcer underneath sole horn when you trim a cow's foot.

The most interesting part of this for me is that the injury that causes an ulcer by stopping horn growth could take 6-8 weeks to get to the surface. Cows then become really lame as the corium is exposed to the air and becomes infected.

Mobility scoring is often only used as part of farm assurance as "lame" cows are easy to spot when managing day to day tasks. I am wondering however whether using mobility scoring a day or two before a foot trimming day could identify cows with "sole bruising" that could be treated before the animals go lame. This should result in savings in both time, welfare and monetary terms improving the mobility and therefore profitability of a herd.

If you are interested in exploring this please speak to one of us, feel free to call myself on 07833433697 to see if we could make mobility scoring work for you rather than just a tick box for an assessor. Having Vet techs available now makes this a good value option.



Finbarr O Sullivan Greene

Well, there's your problem!

While beef cows tend to have harder, hooves than dairy cows, and are less vulnerable to bruising and sole ulcers (Although not immune!) it is important to remember that lameness can be caused by more than just digital dermatitis or foul in the foot.

Picking up a lame foot and looking for any obvious causes of lameness, such as a large nail, can save unresolved pain, and repeated attempts to 'just give her a jab', and prevent an easily fixed problem snowballing into a crippled foot.

Where possible having an area such as a crush where a foot can safely be lifted, with good lighting and water or sawdust to clean off the hoof can often give at least some clues as to causes of lameness, even if you don't feel confident to start trimming yourself.

...Or make it easier for your vet to properly examine and trim up a problem hoof if you are out of your depth!



Becky Dean

Sheep Abortion Vaccine

Medicine supplies have been some what disrupted of late and sadly abortion vaccines do not have the best track record in this department! We recommend that you get your orders in as soon as possible stating the required date, for Toxovax especially. If your order is in the system it is more likely to be honoured should an issue arise.



Bye and good luck to Dave!



Last month we said goodbye to David Weir who is moving on to take up a role as a Small Animal Vet. He will be missed greatly in the Lancaster team, not least by Shirley, Dave's work mum who kept him on the straight and narrow and had him well trained on running errands! Good luck

Dave from all the clients and team and if the cats and dogs don't work out you know where we are!

Good luck to Vale of Lune Farmers Log Carrying Team!



We are super proud to support this top fundraising effort (for The Farming Community Network) from Vale YFC as they attempt to carry a 90kg log to the top of Helvellyn on the 7th of August 2022. To donate to this great cause,

please use this link - <https://gofund.me/a59f7aac>

Good luck Vale!!

Farm Gate's Youngest Recruit!

Welcome to the world baby Jacob John Gerrard, born on 8th July 2022, Congratulations to Charlotte and John from all the team. We won't be seeing Charlotte behind reception at Lancaster for a little while!



Photo of the month

How many vets does it take to fix a polystyrene calf leg? This one has Fin and Hannah beat!



Dates For Your Diary

Show season is upon us!! A warm welcome awaits you on our stand, come and see us at...



Ulverston & North Lonsdale Show Wednesday 27th July 2022 - come and see us on our joint stand with Tynedale!



Cartmel Show, Wednesday 3rd August 2022



Garstang Show, Saturday 6th August 2022



Westmorland County Show, Wed 7th and Thurs 8th September 2022.

Lancaster Office

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