Newsletter November 2025

Welcome

The leaves are falling, and the cattle are getting laid in. We have plenty of advice how to make housing a bit easier and how to minimise any problems. What a great summer and autumn it has been so far. I did not know it had been an exceptional year for acorn growth until we have started seeing a lot of acorn poisoning in sheep. The good grass has been causing a rise in Pasteurella deaths in lambs that have been moved onto dairy farms for wintering. The extended grazing has also cause lungworm to cause problems in youngstock as the summer worm products have run out.

Jim McKinstry

Long Bone Deformity—A new condition?

The odd deformed calf in a suckler herd is not that uncommon. Sometimes put down to just one of those things or more recently Schallenberg virus. Imagine if you had several calves born with short, deformed legs and no one knew why. Over thirty years ago, while working in Dumfries, I was faced with a couple of farms with dwarf calves. Some born dead others alive but not able to get up and yet others on their stubby limbs but as they grew, the legs could no longer support them. The condition seemed to be a new issue and no one had any answers.

Since then, this problem has continued to grumble on in Scotland but I can't remember seeing one down here. A theory has developed that the dams of these calves are deficient in Manganese (Mn) in mid pregnancy. It appears that something in high quality, wet pit grass silage interferes with Mn absorption which leads to growth problems in the calves.

Photo Credit SRUC

I'm not suggesting everyone panics about this condition but if you did see calves looking anything like this in spring, it might be worth a chat with one of our team to look at ways to prevent it happening again next year.

Mark Stott

Included this month

New Bolus for fresh cows available. Not a replacement for Kexxtone but an aid for over fit cows that are at high risk of problems. See Jim's article..

Top Tips for Managing Calf Pneumonia

Pneumonia will be no stranger to those of you in the business of rearing calves, especially with winter coming.
Like with all diseases, whether your calf gets pneumonia or not is simply the balance of how many bugs your calf is exposed to and whether they can fight them off if they do come into contact with them.
Pneumonia bugs require moisture to survive. Therefore, reducing environmental load focuses on removing as much moisture as possible from the shed. Admittedly, some of these things require structural changes and so require a bit of planning, time and money, but some changes, like sweeping away standing water, can be done now.

Reducing environmental load

- Sweeping away any standing water
- Fixing any leaky drinkers
- Good ventilation e.g. Yorkshire boarding, fan and tube systems
- Sloped floors towards a drain – at least 1:20 gradient

The calf's environment not only impacts on environmental load but will also influence how their immune system works, e.g. a cold calf not taking in enough calories will have a far less effective immune system than a calf not under any pressure.

<u>Calf Resilience</u>

Good colostrum transfer (from the 5Qs) so they can benefit from dam's antibodies

- Quality - dry cow diet
- Quickly – within 2 hours optimum
- Quantity – 10% of calf's bodyweight
- SQueaky clean – hygiene of delivery system
- Quantify – we can test a calf's blood to determine how well colostral antibodies have transferred

Temperature of calf

- Ability to nest in straw – shouldn't be able to see a calf's back legs
- Out of direct drafts
- Energy requirements – calves need an extra 50g of milk replacer or 0.33L of whole milk/day for each 5°C drop below 15°C (calves <3weeks old) or 10°C (calves >3 weeks old)
- Calf jackets when temp below 15°C for calves under 3 weeks old and when below 5°C for calves over 3 weeks old

Specific pathogen immunity – the correct vaccine for your specific farm

- What bugs do you have on your farm? Blood sample 5 calves >4months old that have had pneumonia at least 3 weeks ago
- Fast cover required? Intranasal
- More pathogen cover and >3months cover required? Injectable

Please do get in touch to discuss the above. You can't change the weather, but you can influence how it impacts your calves.

Rebekah Clayton

Fluke and Worming Cattle at Housing

As we come into autumn and cattle start to come in there are three groups of parasite to bear in mind; gutworms, lungworms and fluke. Once cattle reach their third grazing season they tend to have developed a good level of immunity and should not require worming. If you have an unthrifty group you can either speak to a vet or drop a faecal sample in for a worm egg count.
Cattle coming in from their first or second grazing season may require worming to treat both gutworms and lungworms. There are several ways to do this with some treatments also covering ectoparasites so please speak to a vet if you want any advice. With regards to fluke you want to delay treatment by at least 7 weeks at which point you can use a Closantel based product or wait 10-12 weeks and use an Oxyclazanide/Closuron based product which will be effective on adult fluke.

As always with dosing we cannot stress the importance of using the correct dose with accurate animal weights ideally off a scales combined with correctly calibrated dosing equipment.

Thom Leman

Beef Feet at Turn In

The weather these last couple of weeks is turning autumnal and cattle are starting to be housed. Concrete and hard standing, whilst incredibly useful, can put a lot of pressure on feet, especially if cow's claws are starting to overgrow. Overgrown claws alter how the weight of the animal is distributed through the hoof. This can form pressure points leading to lameness and damage to the claw horn, resulting in disease (sole ulcers, white line disease and sole bruising). A routine preventative foot trim can redistribute this pressure back to the correct part of the feet and reduce the risk of developing painful feet lesions, which if left untreated can track into joints, becoming much more difficult to treat.

Housing can sometimes also lead to greater "infection pressure" with more cows in a smaller area compared to when grazing. This greater infection pressure leads to an increase in infectious foot diseases such as foul in the foot and digital dermatitis. Both require some degree of trauma to the skin (wet bedding, sharper bedding material, broken concrete etc) to occur to allow entry of the bugs into the foot.

To get the best outcome, limit production losses and reduce the risk of chronic damage occurring within the foot, treating these animals within 24-48hrs of detecting the lameness or disease will be key. Unless the cause of the lameness is very apparent (a swollen shoulder or knee for example) then ideally, feet are lifted and examined for both infectious and non-infectious causes of the lameness. If foul or digital dermatitis is found, then appropriate antibiotic and anti-inflammatory treatment can be applied. If non-infectious lesions such as a sole ulcer or a cracked claw horn is found then trimming away that loose horn and taking the weight off that claw by putting on a wooden block, plus giving an anti-inflammatory will treat that cow effectively. Unless there is a secondary infection, antibiotics will not treat non-infectious foot lesions.

A "first aid for feet" course, specifically designed to provide people with the skills to identify and provide first aid treatment for lame cows is currently in the works and further details will be provided…watch this space!

Beth Griffiths

Fresh Cows

Since Kexxtone has been taken off the market, we have had a gap on our shelves for a product to help newly calved cows that could be a problem. These are the cows with twins, a bit thin, older cows, fatter cows or ones you just know will take a bit of TLC in the first couple of weeks of their lactation. There are less of these cows on farm as they are usually sold as cull cow prices are good.

We have sourced a Choline and methionine bolus called **CHOLIVITE** to help these cows. The biggest problem they have is not eating enough and this means that the body burns fat to plug the energy gap. The problem is that this fat when it is moving around the body clogs the liver like dirty diesel clogs a fuel filter. Choline and methionine help to get rid of the fat in the liver and allows the liver to work more efficiently. Research has shown that treated cows treated with CHOLVITE boluses on average give 5.1 litres more milk at their first milk recording compared to untreated cows. So they are making a difference.

These boluses are not a cure all wonder product. You still need to look after your dry cows well and try not to get them too fat. They need at least 3 feet of feed space and a good diet in the last 3 weeks of pregnancy to prepare them for lactation. We see these boluses as an aid to good transition cow management. You should give 2 boluses to at risk cows at calving. You should also give 2 boluses to cows that are struggling in early lactation or cows that have been diagnosed with slow fever.

Please have a word with one of us if you have any questions.

Jim McKinstry

Warm Welcome to Maisy Turner

In September we welcomed Maisy to our expanding Vet Tech/ Reception teams, some of you will have met her already.

Hi everyone, I'm Maisy! If you've heard an unfamiliar voice on the phone, that's me! I'm originally from Leyland but after living in Cornwall for a few years and then graduating from Myerscough with a BSc (Hons) in Animal Science and Conservation, I moved up to near Garstang (arguably the better end of Lancashire)- quite handy really as I now live across the road from the farm I milk on! When I'm not vet teching or on reception, you'll most likely find me exploring the countryside or having a boogie at a country concert. Looking forward to getting to know everyone o'er this side o' North!

YFC Talks

Sol and Beth G has a great night talking to Crook YFC last month, their quiz was made all the more fun by launching sweets into the audience. It is always a pleasure to talk to our local Young Farmers Clubs, thank you for having us. We are always happy to support this fantastic organisation.

Whatsapp Ordering Number 07442 862092

Please include-

- Name and Farm Name -
- Collection from Lancaster, J36, Sedbergh or Tynedale
- Medicine requested and quantity
- Reason for use - e.g. lame cows.

Courses

Please register your interest for -

- **First Aid for Feet (Cattle foot Trimming).**
- **Red Tractor Understanding Veterinary Meds**
- **MilkSure**
- **2026 Lambing Courses (starting Jan)**

Please e mail linda@farmgatevets.com or phone the office.

Diary Dates

farmgate vets sheep club

zoetis

Sheep Club Member Meeting Tuesday 18th November 2025, 7pm at J36

-Sheep Worrying and Rural Crime with The Rural Task Force, Lancashire Police.

-Orf Control in Flocks with Zoetis

WORKING with RURAL COMMUNITIES

Supper included, to book your place phone the practice or e mail **linda@farmgatevets.com**

2025 Charity Christmas Quiz—SAVE THE DATE. In aid of St John's Hospice

Tuesday 16th December 2025, 7pm at Kirkby Lonsdale Rugby Club - look out for more info!

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**
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