



When it comes to beef, there is a fine line between profit and loss!

We recently held a joint AHDB Beef/Synergy meeting on beef nutrition, kindly hosted by Synergy clients Trevor and Debbie Stanbury of Stream Farm, Drayton. Nutrition consultant Pete Kelly spoke about nutrition of the beef animal and raised some very interesting points. He highlighted the importance of good quality silage for growing cattle. During the housing period, we are seeking to grow the frame of young cattle so that when it comes to finishing, there is plenty of frame to fill out with high quality beef at your target carcass grading. We want our growing cattle to be growing at around 1kg per day. By far the biggest inefficiency in growing and fattening systems is extending the length of time the animal is on farm and has to be fed. Extending the finishing period by as little as a few weeks may see all our margin disappear. Therefore it is imperative, from an economic point of view, to keep growth consistent and unchecked.

Growing cattle can eat 3% of their body weight and if silage is good quality, then they can achieve a growth rate of 1kg per day on grass silage alone. If, however, the silage is of poor quality, they will not achieve these growth rates and as much as 3kg per day of concentrates may need to be fed. Silage is expensive to make. When all costs are taken into account it is more than £30 per tonne in the clamp and even more expensive wrapped. This is what it will cost whether it is good or bad silage. As a rule of thumb, good silage is cut earlier in the year than poor silage. It has higher sugar content and is more digestible and palatable if it is cut early.



It is very difficult to get profitable performance out of growing cattle unless you are measuring things. It is important to know the quality of your silage so you can

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manage expectations and/or purchase concentrates to complement the silage if necessary to achieve growth targets. Through a partnership with SciTech (a commercial laboratory) we are able to perform silage analysis very cheaply and so can offer nutritional advice on the back of this accurate analysis. Weighing growing cattle regularly means that performance can be measured against expectation. By regularly measuring we can help you to further fine tune management practices and housing to provide optimum performance on farm.

The margins for the producer in the beef cattle industry are narrow. Fine tuning of performance that results in earlier finishing can be the difference between profit and loss!

Graeme McPherson



Views from the MD or “How we see the changing world!”

It is reassuring to see farm gate prices taking positive turns over the last six months. Whilst there is still some way to go and I am sure there are still ups and downs along the way the signs are hopefully promising. We obviously sit in a very interesting phase currently with all the uncertainty surrounding Brexit and the decision on Trade and the effect on market prices as well as the impact on recruitment etc. This impacts agriculture generally but all of our businesses are affected in different ways.

We tend to think of farmers as resilient creatures who always seem to have that “bounce back ability” and we as vets feel proud and comfortable to work alongside you whatever the weather! The Febru#dairy initiative was an example of where it is more important now than ever to be standing side by side in promoting all that is good about this industry and defend against the deplorable language used against us by the extremist anti farming movements.

As a profession the veterinary world is also rapidly evolving with more specialisation and technological advances as well as political challenges. The emergence of corporate or multinational companies into the industry is also now becoming more evident even in Farm practice.

Synergy Farm Health continues to be proud of its veterinary led independence allowing us to maintain a client focussed strategy. We continue to welcome new technology and advances in the veterinary field and apply them in delivering the kind of modern day herd and flock health services that you require. We are very proud of our team and continue to recruit and retain enthusiastic and knowledgeable vets and vet techs who are dedicated and committed to farm practice and looking after our clients and their animals to the best of their ability.

We also recognise the need to adapt and respond to the ever changing world and its demands and are not afraid to do that. On the Breeding side we are actively involved with accelerating the utilisation of Genomics into the female side of the cattle industry with our Clarifide test and veterinary advisory package. We have also invested in an Embryo transfer team not only involved in Bovines but also being successful in Camelids. The Vet Tech team continues to expand in numbers and also in the services offered. We were proud to receive national recognition at the recent Cream Awards in Birmingham. We are also deeply engaged in research and educational projects, and see these as important areas which influence and safeguard the future for us all.

We have recently upgraded our internal IT systems to ensure that we handle data and processes as efficiently as possible and hope that these changes have been relatively smooth and not inconvenienced you in any way. We feel that all these examples are important in ensuring our high standards of service are maintained. The down side as you may have guessed is that costs increase, therefore fees need to rise in order for us to continue to be sustainable and maintain our investment in the staff and technology to ensure high quality service delivery. We have managed to avoid any fee increases over the last three years but are now inevitably needing to apply inflationary increases to our professional fees from the beginning of this month.

We will continue through our scale and efficiency and commitment to you to deliver competitive and cost effective fees and medicines prices as well as continuing to invest in the team and facilities to deliver the highest standards of animal health care from a veterinary owned, progressive independent business. We continue to be proud and grateful to be trusted with your veterinary care.

Andrew Davies



Dairy Apprenticeship Programme

Synergy Farm Health are delighted to announce that, in conjunction with Bicton College, we will be launching a level 3 specialist dairy apprenticeship programme in September 2018. This highly practical programme will be delivered both on farm and at our premises at Lower Coombe near Crewkerne. It will cover all aspects of the health and welfare of dairy animals.

Please see the enclosed leaflet for further information



Cow Psychology

The cow is a marvellous animal that never fails to surprise me.

Since starting with Synergy six months ago my relationship with this animal has been rekindled and they will baffle me as much as the female of the species has always done!

It is a daily battle of wits (which may say a lot about my level of intelligence) to get a certain number of cows to be compliant in entering and exiting the crush in a smooth and efficient manner with little or no stress caused to both man or beast!



The older more

experienced cow can be particularly stubborn. She knows that a lengthy reluctance followed by a sudden urgency to get out could beat the reaction time of most formula one drivers let alone a fatigued foot trimmer.

I've been interested in animal behaviour since I studied it at college where we learnt about Anthropomorphism which is a fancy word for the attribution of human characteristics or behaviour to an animal.

For our Industry anthropomorphism has the potential to be harmful with the rise of animal activists and

veganism fuelled by the image of Mr and Mrs Badger and a whole host of animated talking animals.

For wild animals I believe anthropomorphism is largely negative but for domesticated animals it can improve welfare and in my experience drives good husbandry.

Reductions in lameness can quickly be made with consideration of cows feet as our own. We know we will not have any problems if we wash them periodically, rest them regularly and trim them occasionally!!



James Perrett

Congratulations to our Vet Tech Team who received national recognition at the recent Cream Awards in Birmingham.

For further information or quotes for any of our Vet Tech Services phone Dave Frecknall on 07500 626566 , contact our office 01935 83682 Or email dave.frecknall@synergyfarmhealth.com

Crewkerne Farmers' Skittle League

We are fast approaching the end of another enjoyable season and my 7th as secretary. The Shield competition was won by Nick Wakely and the runner up was Graham Darby. The top of the league is extremely tight. The current leader is Roy French although this may well change - it is vital all score cards are in prior to the captains' meeting on 29th March please. Alas the wooden spoon looks to be finding a home at Thorncombe club! I look forward to seeing you all at the Shrubbery on 12th April for our annual dinner and presentation.

Ed Powell-Jackson



Yarcombe Young Farmers Club listening carefully to Esme and Abi... excellent talk on calf rearing and a great turnout!

Fee Increase

We would like to make you aware that after three years of freezing our professional fees we are having to respond to increasing costs by applying an inflationary fee increase from the beginning of this month. We continue to strive to ensure medicines prices remain as competitive as possible. To evidence this please see the new Rotavirus vaccine offer below and the significant cost saving on this new product compared to previous. This is additional to the Spirovac (new Leptospira vaccine) price advertised last month.

Dispensary News

We will now be stocking **Bovigen Scour** as a replacement to Rotavec Corona. Please note this is an equivalent product, however a difference in the dose rate is present.

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Dose | Single 3ml dose IM |
| Timing of dose | 12-3 week period prior to calving |
| Bottle Sizes | 5 dose & 30 dose |

£6.90 per dose
30 dose pack
Ex VAT



Bovigen Scour is an effective tool for managing calf scours:

- ◆ Broad spectrum, protects against 3 major causes of calf diarrhoea
- ◆ Dual phase adjuvant, offers convenient, flexible and compatible vaccination timing
- ◆ Designed for use on beef and dairy farms

Spirovac
BOVINE LEPTOSPIROSIS VACCINE



£41.25 per
25 dose pack (50ml)

Available in the
Dispensary now

News from our Rounds

South

Esme Moffett



I returned to work after maternity leave at the beginning of January and it's good to be back. I was quite nervous about returning – what if I'd forgotten everything?! But within about 5 minutes of being back on farm, it was as if I'd never left!

Although it is still extremely soggy underfoot, and we have had a very unpleasant Arctic blast, there is definitely now a feeling of Spring in the air and new life on the horizon. Many people will be well under way with lambing and calving – I hope it is a good season for you all. Remember that those first few hours of life are the most crucial for any animal, so well worth paying a bit of attention too. It's not complicated, but can be time consuming. However, if you get it right now, then it should make everything else easier.

The 0-6 Youngstock Advisory service is going from strength to strength, we have had several clients sign up recently who will benefit from the ongoing monitoring and tailored advice that the service provides. We recently held a milk feeding workshop and plan to hold a summer meeting on Heifer Fertility, so keep your eyes out for information on that in the coming months.

East

Emily Gascoigne



Just back from my travels around Europe as part of my study. I have just found out that my sheep portfolio passed with huge relief and I am due to have some huge exams in September. Anything sheep or goat related is fair game if you want to grill me on farm!

I am now heading into a busy time of year- since Christmas I have been finalising sheep diets for flocks and am currently working up some barren investigations. Remember there is free testing available from two of the pharmaceutical companies to support workups- you should be at less than 5% of scanned ewes.

Fluke seems to have been a bit hit a miss with some of my highest risk herds and flocks seeming to get away with it. Whether Bovine or Ovine remember, your abattoir feedback is free monitoring!

Top tip for lambing and calving (#1)- powdered lubricant is veterinary fairy dust i.e. magic. Top tip (#2) it makes fabulous skating rinks so be careful where you dispose of it!

North

Alastair Hayton



I am writing this in between calls, which is unusual on a weekday morning. The reason being a time slot has opened up for me because the parlour, on the farm I was due to go for a routine, is frozen solid. A nightmare for the farmers and a story being repeated across the practice. This weather is not much fun, though it strikes me that this sort of weather was far more common when I was younger, so there are some plusses to our stock contributing to global warming!

We are running round dealing with the usual winter housing problems, pneumonia in particular, is very prevalent. As a result, please do check your feeding (see the last newsletter) and housing practices, as not all of it is inevitable and, especially in periods of weather like this, there are things we can do to alleviate the stress on the animals (and thereby yourselves also).

On the positive side we are now in March and the buds of spring can't be far away. We are running an on farm meeting on 'What makes great fertility' on the 27th March at Underhill Farm, Staple Fitzpaine with the kind permission of the Macey family. I am sure it will prove to be an excellent meeting and, if you want to see Somerset in all its spring glory, Underhill Farm will provide one the best vantage points I know to see it! Who knows, we may all be wearing shorts and t-shirts by then!!!



Cattle Lameness Academy Seminar

New ideas,
New approaches,
a new generation
28th March 2018
Tithe Barn, Haselbury Mill

EVENTS

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines for Commercial sheep flocks
20th March at Evershot

Practical Calving 22nd March
With Pete Siviter at Evershot

Visit our website for further details or email courses@synergyfarmhealth.com

Safe and effective Use of Veterinary Medicines
23rd March at Evershot

Coming in April

2 Day Foot Trimming 3rd & 4th April

DIY AI 24th—26th April