



## New Axminster Office

Synergy Farm Health are delighted to announce an exciting new partnership with Mole Avon Country Stores, an agricultural supplier who are widely used by our clients and the wider farming community in the South West area of our practice.



From 5<sup>th</sup> November our South team of vets, led by Ed Powell-Jackson, will start working from our new office located behind the cashiers

within the Axminster Mole Avon store. Long standing Synergy support staff Sheila Snell and Jean Gibson will be front of house, working closely with our Evershot office to organise our team of vets, booking visits and dealing with client enquiries. This office will be open five days a week during office hours.

Medicines will be delivered here daily for collection and can be ordered in the usual fashion from our Dispensary.

- October 2018**
- New Axminster office
  - Bull reproductive technologies
  - Preventing mastitis in the parlour
  - Events
  - Meet the Team
  - Regional News
  - Offers

You will be assured a warm welcome, so please call in and say hello if you are in the store. Also watch out for joint Synergy and Mole Avon events in the coming months.



**Ed Powell-Jackson**  
Regional Vet Lead

## Bull Reproductive Technologies

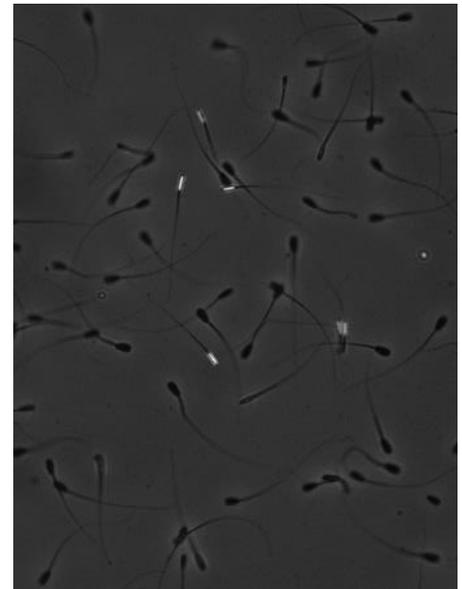
I had the pleasure of visiting a bull stud recently, firstly to get some experience at collecting bull semen by artificial vagina but also to get an idea of some of the opportunities available to farmers for semen collection and the generation of AI straws.

### Why have bull insurance when you can collect semen?

I would always recommend that a bull is insured for injury, fertility problems or even lightning strike (which I have seen once before) why not, if you have a bull of good pedigree, reliable performance and good temperament, collect his semen and store it? If you were to lose your bull you may receive

some of his monetary value back through insurance but you will have lost his genetics. During my visit to the stud, from the 6 bulls we collected, the number of AI straws produced by each bull after two collections was 140-490 straws. This would enable you to keep using his genetics for seasons to come if he proves to be a good one. **Poor quality semen may be rejected at quality control. To be used to make AI straws a minimum of 55% of the sperm need to be motile at an adequate concentration as illustrated here.**

If you have extra semen available you could sell it to your neighbour. Another interesting concept is the conservation of uncommon and



rare breeds, not just in the UK but globally, enhanced by collecting and storing the best genetics.

*Continued on page 2*

# Bull Reproductive Technologies ..continued

## What does it involve?

Not as much as you might think!

On farm collection and domestic (UK) licence

- Pre-requisites
- TB **FREE** including the 6 monthly test following a breakdown
- Suitably handleable bull, nose ring suggested.
- Handling facilities (This may be as simple as a tie tied between large bales).
- Apply for a UK licence from AHPA Carlisle including essential testing (£38).
- Your nominated vet (OV) will need to collect bloods for Brucellosis and EBL (included in fee above) and perform a TB test.
- Additional testing may be advisable such as BVD, Johnes and IBR.
- Bull isolation for the period until licence is approved which should be within 28 days.
- A successful licence will be valid for 3 months allowing collection during this period.
- Semen will be sent to a certified centre and straws will be made.
- For each successful straw you will be charged £1.50/straw.

There are variable costs for storage and delivery depending on quantity and duration.

For semen to qualify for the EU, bulls need to go to a certified stud

- The farm should never have suffered a TB breakdown.
- The approximate additional costs for this are £270 for qualifying tests + £70/week livery.
- The bulls are likely jumped 2-3

times/week and 2-3 jumps per session.

It is recommended that if you want >1000 straws that bulls are sent to a stud.

## Artificial Vagina (AV) collection experience

I think the largest concern for performing AV is safety and there must be competent handlers including someone to hold the bull with a nose ring and halter. The handler will then bring the bull to a teaser cow or steer which is tied up as shown below. Time taken for the bull to mount the teaser is variable but most were within 5 minutes. The sample was collected within the blink of an eye!



Below is the AV collection device which is warmed and lubricated and very non invasive. My feeling is that for bulls that are well handled such as show animals or those regularly being exposed to people we will have no problem in obtaining semen collection by AV.



An alternative to AV is electro ejaculation which would be more suitable for difficult bulls or a lack of suitable facilities. Electro ejaculation will generate semen that will require washing and therefore a

reduced numbers of straws (but this is better than nothing). One could also consider sending the bull to a stud which is better equipped and will train the bull for collection.

For those that do not have AI flasks Synergy have the facilities to store straws for our clients once they are processed. Our vet techs are available to serve your cows with your own stored semen should you wish.

If you are interested in this service now or in the future please contact Gareth at the practice for more information or to just register interest.

## How good is your bull?

We have a number of clients using Holstein stock bulls – these will no doubt be out of good cows and by high PLI bulls. Unfortunately this does not guarantee they *will* be good; we know that on parentage alone the reliability of passing on the favourable traits will be about 30% and we have seen some disasters with stock bulls and calving ease. If we test these animals' DNA (genomic testing) we can increase this reliability to 60-70% and get a range of interesting traits including genetic conditions, future inbreeding potential and even whether there is a polled gene in there! To do this at a reasonable cost we need to test them before they are 5 months old – for less than £100 you can get lots of useful information and use the bull/sell his semen with confidence – a genomically tested bull!

Photos with permission from UK sire services, Venton Stud available at; [uksireservices@uksireservices.com](mailto:uksireservices@uksireservices.com)

**Gareth Foden**  
Veterinary Surgeon



## BEEF SUCKLER NUTRITION

A discussion on suckler cow nutrition led by Dr. Alex Corbishley from Edinburgh University looking at practical aspects and its importance for calf health.

The Fox Inn at Ansty *Tues 6th November 7pm*

## “Prepping” cows to prevent mastitis in the Parlour—What is in your control?

With winter housing and wet weather (hopefully) upon us I wanted to review what you can control to limit mastitis before the cups have even gone on the cow. I spend a lot of time watching different routines in parlours and one thing is for certain, *good hygiene is highly correlated with less mastitis*. There are the basics that everyone should be doing such as wearing gloves and a clean parlour top or milking sleeves. Gloves can still get covered in dung and bacteria but are far more easily and thoroughly cleaned during milking than hands. Dirty sleeves are another risk with the back teats rubbing on your forearm area when you reach through to the front teats.

Prepping the cows before milking is massively important in mastitis control for three main reasons.

**1. Early detection of mastitis** stripping cows is part of the start of the oxytocin stimulation process and also removes the bacteria present in the fore milk. Mastitis identified early will respond better to treatment.

**2. Removing bacteria from the teat** –Use a proprietary “pre” dip/foam/spray with a quick bug kill time (<30 seconds) and detergent properties to remove organic matter.

### Why?

Removing bacteria from the skin/teat

end prior to milking and minimizing liners slips are your main weapons against environmental bacteria and preventing spread during milking. When the teat end is open during milking there will be movement of the milk up as well as down the teat end orifice. Reverse milk flow is worsened if cup slip is happening (air flowing in will shoot milk up the other three quarters). If bacteria are present in this milk then infections will begin when the bacteria enter the teat and proliferate after milking finishes and the teat end closes.

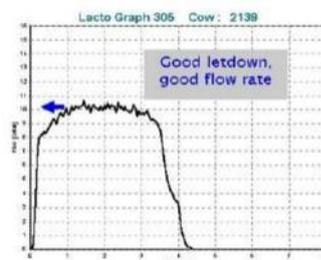
### Which method is best?

Method of teat cleaning	% of bacteria removed
Spray/dip + dry wipe	80-90%
Wet (medicated) wipes	40-50%
Dry paper towel wipe	10%

Remember “you can’t polish a turd”! If the environment is not hygienic no matter how much you try to clean the teats there will still be a large number of bacteria left on the teat. See below where the dirty cow after good teat prep only ends up with the same amount of bacteria on the teat that the clean cow had before disinfection.

Teat Prep	Before	After
Teats in CLEAN environment	10,000 bacteria	1,000 bacteria
Teats in DIRTY environment	100,000 bacteria	10,000 bacteria

**3. Cows well stimulated will drop their milk MORE QUICKLY and overall milking unit on time WILL BE QUICKER.** Less unit on time = less time overmilking and less damage to teat ends. Cows need 15-20 seconds of physical stimulation to adequately drive the oxytocin response. All cows will drop their milk eventually when the units are on but the added stimulation will drive an extra 10-20% increase in the oxytocin release which causes the more rapid and larger milk let down response. Every parlour is different and making the work flow for the number of cows in a line is critical. Splitting cows in a line and prepping 6-8 at a time usually achieves the target 60-90 second lag between beginning prep to putting the cups on.



If you are having problems with mastitis or want to discuss improving your parlour routine please speak to your vet and our Mastitis Control team can help you find some solutions.



Tom Clarke  
Regional Vet Lead



### Meet the Team— Richard Trickey

I Joined Synergy in June 2017 as Financial Controller. I have worked in Finance at various businesses locally, over the last 20 years. My primary responsibilities include the smooth running of our accounts team, dealing with client requests and the production of monthly, quarterly and annual accounts. I

have lived in the area since a young age but I do not have a farming background, although I am learning fast!

I am a keen sportsman, although my playing days are over, I enjoy watching my three grown up sons play rugby. The rest of my spare time is spent playing golf, walking my dog Bruce and looking forward to our annual family skiing holiday!

## Courses

**2 Day Foot Trimming**  
15th & 16th Oct  
at Lower Coombe

Coming in November

**Safe use of Veterinary Medicines**  
6th November

**MilkSure Part 1** 13th November

**Practical Calving** 14th November

# News from our Rounds

## East

### Pete Siviter



October already, where has the year gone? There's no doubt we're facing a challenging winter ahead, with feed likely to be in very short supply and good straw even harder to come by. Reducing wastage and soiling is going to be vital over the next few months, so now's the time to make sure those gutters and drains are clear. With the run of difficult weather we've experienced, it is even more important to make sure there has been adequate investment in housing – losses due to poor ventilation, especially in calf accommodation, are particularly likely to increase as bedding and feed become more expensive. Sensible investment now will have paid for itself by next spring.

It's a busy time in the Siviter household having just moved house, so Tash and I are completely obsessed with DIY and decorating at the moment (spare power tools and second-hand furniture gratefully received), but I'm looking forward to putting the paintbrushes away once a week and catching up with many of you in the skittle alleys of Dorset. I'm sure we'll stick to our usual game plan of early losses followed by a late return to glory!

## South

### Esme Moffett



It's that time of year when the haze of summer starts to fade and the autumn mists descend; it makes for some beautiful mornings, but lots of work. Having chatted to many of you at various events through the summer most people seemed in good spirits; even though there was no grass, there were very few jobs as stock was out and there was no grass to cut!

Now is the time of year to start prepping for the winter – getting vaccine into animals, in particular pneumonia vaccines for youngstock and IBR for older cattle, should be at the top of the list as we enter the biggest risk period. It's also not too late to review your youngstock housing as this is the biggest risk factor for disease – we can help advise you on alterations and how to best protect your animals.

Myself and Graeme started studying for a new qualification this month; the Diploma in Bovine Reproduction, the first week of lectures was full-on, but really informative. One of the best take home messages was how important a tight calving season is for beef suckler herds, both from a management and economic perspective. Ben is going to be rolling out his Beef Survey again soon, this is a great opportunity for you to engage with us about your herd and also other beef farmers in the area.

## North

### Alastair Hayton



It's great to start with some huge congratulations and these go to Ian and Max Davies from Higher Farm, Dowlish Wake, for following up their success with winning the dairy interbreed at the Royal Welsh Show, with winning the supreme dairy title at this year's UK Dairy Day. Next stop conquering Europe! (Not a Brexit reference!).

Who would have thought it, it remains incredibly dry. My pessimistic concerns that following the summer, that we were going to get flooded out, such that the much needed maize harvest would be extremely challenging didn't materialise, thank goodness, and it has allowed one and all to extend grazing though we've hardly been flooded with grass. It's been the same further north and the Cheshire farmers I would suggest are potentially struggling even more for forage. It's hard to see a huge amount of milk coming out of the UK with the amount of late September 3rd cut that is going to be fed.

On a local level, there has been a lot of coughing about recently, the cold mornings have started the pneumonia season off and we have seen, with the bit of rain, lungworm rearing its head at pasture. Please remember pneumonia, while difficult to control, is not inevitable and there are new tools to aid the fight becoming available. These are in the form of a very useful new diagnostic technique we can use on dead calves to detect the causal pathogen and a new vaccine available, against Histophilus (a common cause of pneumonia). Please chat to your vet about them when they are next on the farm.

Finally, on a philosophical note, I am heading up to Edinburgh with Rachel next month for a 25 year since graduation reunion next month, where we all meet up and tell each other that we haven't changed a bit, (alcohol can be extremely misleading....). The point is I can't believe how the time has flown, and with all the stresses and strains that work entails, I hope you get a chance to stop and enjoy the autumn; it is beautiful out there at the moment.

## Housing Offers

As we head into the autumn months, many of you will be considering the treatment choices at housing for your cattle.

**Virbamec Super Injection**

**500ml £90**

**Enovex Pour-on**

**2.5 L £35**

**Eprizero** (Zero milk withhold for use in milking cows)

**5L £291.38**

Please contact Synergy dispensary on 01935 83682 to discuss the products with our SQPs and to place your order

All products have a discount on quantity purchased

Prices correct 01/10/2018 Ex VAT

**OFFERS EXPIRE 31ST NOV 2018**