

News from our Rounds

East

Sam Cottam



Last year was rather eventful with the birth of my son a couple of months ago – for which I wish to thank all who sent cards, gifts and good wishes. Along with building a new house I think it is fair to say that 2019 will be memorable. Whilst house building is well underway (and hopefully almost completed by the time you read this) I'm sure 2020 will involve much landscaping. Repairs to the greenhouse are required so that the tomatoes and strawberry plants get an early start with high hopes of a bumper harvest later in the year.

This time of year is the 'calm before the storm' for many spring block calving herds with many cows dried off. Outwintering is becoming an increasingly popular method of managing dry cows with rape, kale, turnips and swede (and combinations thereof) being tried and tested for years in New Zealand especially. Whilst this system is not for everyone, where land permits it can be very efficient. These brassicas should be considered as wet concentrates rather than a forage per se and thus slow introduction and a source of structural fibre is essential. Brassicas are generally deficient in trace elements so it is pertinent that trace mineral requirements are delivered. Due to high levels of calcium and potassium these brassicas are unsuitable for the last 2-3 weeks of pregnancy where an analysed dry cow ration should be fed.

South

Ben Barber



As the days are now shorter our attention has shifted from the gut worms and flies that plague us during the summer to liver fluke that pose more of a threat in the wetter seasons. The symptoms of fluke vary hugely and can be quite dependent on the species they are affecting. Dairy cows might present with a reduction in milk yield, suckler cows would lose condition, and sheep might go as far as completely giving up the ghost!

Treatment can be easily achieved by administering a flukicide drench designed to combat flukes. Fluke will be at different stages though as they progress from the liver to the bile ducts and not all flukicides will treat all stages of fluke. Many farmers will treat fluke at housing with the incorrect product, leading to a large proportion of the fluke being missed. I'm glad to see that both the vets, SQPs and dispensary team are receiving more calls from farmers questioning what products they should be using and when it should be used to ensure the best outcome.

In all sectors we are becoming more aware of our responsibility for the correct and safe use of medicines. The increased uptake of courses we provide - be it Milksure or the Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines courses - can only be a good sign.



A liver 'spilling over' with fluke!

North

Tom Warboys



Winter brings with it plenty of challenges for farmers and their livestock.

The following are important for livestock:

1. Achieving appropriate target body condition for the stage in production cycle (if breeding)
2. Boosting the immune system with vaccines to improve health over the winter. Particularly important will be those against bovine pneumonia and scours (Bovigen Scour is given to the dam to improve colostrum) and also any annual boosters given this time of year (e.g. Blackleg for cattle or Heptavac-P in sheep)
3. Treating any conditions picked up over the summer e.g. worm or liver fluke burdens

Especially after last year's shortages, it is important to use forage stocks responsibly. Having forage analysed so that you can supplement it or ration it more accurately, is more cost effective. It will also put livestock in much better condition to survive the winter. Other diseases to look out for must include external parasites such as mites and lice (including sheep scab), chronic liver fluke and even lameness associated with poorly maintained shed floors. Looking after your housing plays by far the biggest part in keeping animals healthy and will include controlling stocking density and ensuring buildings have excellent ventilation.

All the best for the new year!



Experienced Farm Vet Keith Cutler joins Synergy



We are delighted to announce that Keith Cutler has joined Synergy Farm Health. Keith is a highly respected farm vet who has been in farm animal practice for over 25 years and brings to Synergy his varied professional interests which include both dairy and suckler herd management, fertility, lameness and infectious disease control in cattle.

Keith is a Diplomate of the European College of Bovine Health Management and a Director of CHCS (Cattle Health Certification Standards) who oversee all licensed cattle health schemes in the UK. Keith will have a varied role at Synergy, which will include some research projects and new developments, but he will still be continuing to work with farmers in the field, as well as passing on his wealth of experience and knowledge within the Synergy team.

January 2020

- Protect your herd from TB
- Clostridial Diseases – a brief overview
- What does a Vet Tech do in his spare time? Show Cattle!
- Regional News
- Dispensary Updates

Protect your herd from TB

Earlier in 2019, Dorset NFU invited me back to my old stomping ground to present a talk on TB and biosecurity, two topics that myself and other vets are well versed in but at times can be quite dry. To be honest I have noticed a few of you glazing over during such conversations! I didn't have much hope for a good turnout, so was pleasantly surprised to see 106 farmers packed in to the George Albert Hotel on a Wednesday evening.

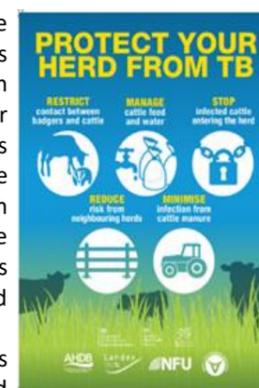


Boot dip. Biosecurity or Biohazard?

The term biosecurity encompasses a lot of areas and is much more than just boot dip (see photo for real life example!). The latest Government review carried out by Sir Charles Godfrey criticised the industry for not taking more responsibility for on farm measures and called for greater uptake of what he called 'no regret' biosecurity measures by farmers. When tackling any infectious disease, biosecurity measures are one of the many

tools in our kit but for some reason we don't always think of TB in this way. It is important to remember that it is an infectious disease just like BVD, IBR, or Lepto. The added complexity that comes with TB is the role that wildlife play in the spread of the disease. It is worth remembering that other diseases we see on our farms also have complex lifecycles often involving other hosts e.g. Dogs and Neospora or Sheep and Johnes.

For a disease to spread it requires interactions between infected and susceptible individuals. This is the rationale behind culling infected animals in our TB eradication strategy, whether that be a reactor cow or a badger in a cull zone. However this is not the only way to reduce direct and indirect cattle-cattle and badger-cattle interactions. The NFU and AHDB came up with a 5 Point Plan (see left) targeting the main on farm risk factors. These are simple measures including preventing wildlife access to feed and buildings and buying cattle from low risk herds. Luckily if you are in the SW, help is at hand in the form of the TB Advisory Service (TBAS). Government funding is available for farmers to undertake on farm visits with trained TB experts (currently myself, Paula Hunt, Pete Siviter



and also now Keith Cutler) who can help identify your farms risk factors and suggest proven preventative measures. These can support you in reducing your risk of having a TB breakdown or help you get clear. These are open to all farmers whether currently under restriction or clear of TB and I would encourage you all to take them up. To find out more you can phone the office or visit www.tbas.org.uk

My take home message is:

- TB is an infectious disease
- Cattle and badgers play an important role in its spread
- Biosecurity measures are effective at reducing cattle-cattle and cattle-badger interactions
- TB biosecurity measures will help prevent other infectious disease too



Josh Swain
Veterinary Surgeon

Synergy Farm Health now has a unit at Salisbury Livestock Market. On Tuesday Market days you will find one of Synergy's experienced Vets and Vet Techs in attendance. Call in and see us!



*** SUPPLY ISSUES ***



Unfortunately, there is currently a nationwide manufacturing problem with the milking cow tube **Tetra Delta**. As you will be aware identical or very similar medicines are produced by different pharmaceutical companies and you therefore may receive alternative products at this time. Please discuss with your vet or contact Synergy dispensary on **01935 83682** if you have further questions.

Clostridial Diseases – a brief overview

Few things are more demoralising than finding an animal dead for no apparent reason.

Clostridial diseases are one of the principal causes of sudden death in cattle and sheep. However, most of them are easily and cheaply preventable with the use of multivalent vaccines such as Bravoxin 10 and Heptavac/Ovivic P Plus.

Clostridial diseases are caused by anaerobic bacteria that are widespread in the environment; in soil, on pasture, in buildings and in animals. Most of the time the bacteria are dormant and may survive for many years as highly resistant spores. However particular triggers, such as changes in management or feeding, parasitic activity or trauma can cause the bacteria to be stimulated to multiply. This results in the release of toxins into the body which will rapidly lead to death. Even if these cases are spotted before death, intensive treatment unfortunately is rarely effective.

BACTERIA	DISEASE	STOCK AFFECTED	DISEASE ASSOCIATIONS	PREVENTION STRATEGY
Clostridium perfringens type D	Pulpy Kidney	Sheep, usually lambs from 4-6 weeks old	Associated with sudden diet changes	Vaccination of dams and store lambs
C. perfringens type B	Lamb Dysentery	Lambs	Associated with poor hygiene at lambing	Vaccination of dams and improved hygiene
C. perfringens type C	Struck	Sheep – lambs and young adults	Associated with liver fluke infection and diet changes	Vaccination
C. septicum	Braxy	Weaned lambs	Associated with the ingestion of frosted root crops or forage	Vaccination of store lambs
C. tetani	Tetanus	Cattle and sheep	Most frequently seen following a puncture wound or late castration with rings (>7 days old). Outbreaks have been seen following feeding of root crops heavily contaminated with soil.	Vaccination and correct castration technique
C. novyi	Black disease (infectious necrotic hepatitis)	Cattle and sheep	Typically associated with migration of immature liver flukes in late summer/early autumn	Fluke control plan and clostridial vaccination programme
C. chauvoei	Blackleg (can also cause black quarter and gangrenous metritis in sheep)	Cattle and sheep	Often associated with a move to new pasture, recent earthworks or trauma from mixing or bullying or skin wounds	Vaccination
C. septicum, novyi and perfringens	Malignant Oedema or bighead	Cattle and sheep	Often found following injection with dirty needles or rams fighting	Vaccination and use of clean injecting equipment
C. botulinum	Botulism	Cattle	Most cases follow poultry litter being spread on pasture. Clinical signs relate to loss of muscle tone.	Vaccine is available but it is not included in multivalent vaccines.
C. haemolyticum	Bacillary haemoglobinuria	Mostly cattle	Found following liver fluke damage, clinical signs include blood in the urine	Vaccination
C. sordelli	Abomasitis	Mostly sheep	Associated with intensive creep feeding of lambs or sudden diet changes	Vaccination

Please speak to your vet if you are seeing sudden deaths on your farm, are considering starting a clostridial vaccination programme or to discuss other factors such as liver fluke control. There are many other causes of sudden death and as vets we are aware that not all sudden deaths are, despite being a legal requirement, mentioned to us as for that particular animal it is beyond our scope for recovery! However we would love to have the opportunity to help you prevent more occurring in the future.

Clare Eames
Veterinary Surgeon



Synergy MD Andrew Davies awarded Animal Health Advisor of the Year in Food & Farming Industry Awards 2019

Andrew Davies, Managing Director of Synergy Farm Health, has been awarded Animal Health Advisor of the Year at the 2019 Food and Farming Industry Awards. Andrew is one of the six founding directors that formed Synergy Farm Health in 2009, having worked as a practicing farm vet since he graduated from the Royal Veterinary College. He has also gained the RCVS Certificate in Cattle Health and Production and Advanced Practitioner status. He has played an integral role in reducing the need for the use of antimicrobials in farm animals.

On receiving his award, Andrew said, "It's fantastic to be recognised for our work in farm animal health. The whole Synergy team constantly strive to provide high quality advice to farmers, sharing our knowledge and insight to ensure the highest standards of animal health and welfare, food quality and productivity."

The Animal Health Advisor of the Year Award was sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health (BIAH). Among others on the judging panel was Sioned Timothy, Ruminant Technical Manager at BIAH.

On selecting Andrew as the award winner, Mrs Timothy says, "Andrew's commitment to progressive, proactive veterinary care is evident in the approach he takes to working with producers to continually drive improvements in the health and performance of their stock and in the collaborative culture that is at the core of Synergy's approach to herd health. The high regard in which he is held by his colleagues and clients is also very clear."



What does a Vet Tech do in their spare time? Show cattle of course!

I became a professional cattle foot trimmer 8 years ago when I left herd management and took a position working for Synergy Farm Health.

When I'm not doing the day job, I spend much of my time with my herd of pedigree English Longhorn cattle. You could say I am obsessed with cows! I started the



herd around 6 years ago starting out with 4 maiden heifers which I purchased from a client, after falling in love with the breed having previously looked after a couple of pet Longhorns at the Goodwood Estate in West Sussex where I had been a herdsman several years earlier.

Now I have 10 breeding cows and all in 25/30 head of cattle at any one time with bulls, calves and stores. I finish a couple of animals each year for friends and family to enjoy the very high quality grass reared meat that the Longhorn breed is famous for, with its high level of fat marbling in the meat which makes it some of the very best.

Since having the cattle, I have been persuaded to venture into the show ring. I first entered the show ring back in 2015 at Dorset County Show which is my local show, only a few miles up the road at Dorchester. That year we were very surprised to be crowned Champion Longhorn with one of

the original Longhorns I purchased, now a cow with calf at foot. That was it, I was hooked!

From then on every year we have had a show team of Longhorns and travel to different shows such as Royal Bath and West, Gillingham & Shaftesbury, Frome Cheese Show, Royal Berkshire and Three Counties show. Three Counties regularly hosts the English Longhorns Annual Society Show which is a real test of the standard of my cattle as there can be 50 plus top quality Longhorns on show. We have yet to have real success in this setting but, in breeder terms, we are just starting out as most of the people who go to this show have well established herds and have been doing this for many years.

I spend many evenings in the barn after a busy day foot trimming, halter training, washing and clipping my cattle. I recommend it to anyone who has a real passion for cattle. Showing is a great way to meet likeminded people and a lot of new foot trimming clients as you can't have a show cow with overgrown feet! There's nothing quite like sitting in the cattle lines late at night in a fold up camping chair with a few good friends, drinking a nice single malt out of whatever plastic cup that comes to hand until the early hours!

Cattle showing is a great way to get young people involved with cattle as well. My nephew Callum aged 13 has also been a



great help over the past few years and has improved his cattle handling skills and knowledge. He lives in a built up area in Hampshire so not many cows around so really loves the chance to get stuck in when show season is here.

Last year we had a very successful year. We have only been to the three local shows - Gillingham & Shaftesbury, Melplash and Dorset County. The show team did very well with my 3 year old calved heifer and my yearling heifer winning their classes at all three shows. Then we went on to have two breed champions, three reserve breed champions and a reserve interbreed champion thrown in for good measure. So all in all a very good year!

I look forward to seeing lots of you in the coming year with your prize winning livestock at all the local country shows.

Dave Phillips
Vet Tech



Coming in January

2 Day Foot Trimming Course Cattle Lameness ACADEMY
20th-21st Jan 9.30am-4pm at **Lower Coombe**

DIY AI 3 Day Course
21st-23rd Jan 9.30am-4pm at **Evershot**

Lameness in Your Flock
22nd Jan 10am-2pm at **Evershot**

Lamb Post Mortem Course
28th Jan 9.30am-3pm at **Evershot**

ROMS Registered Mobility Scoring Course
30th Jan 10am-4pm at **Lower Coombe**

Coming in February

Milksure Course
3rd Feb 11am-1pm at **Evershot**

Practical Lambing Course
7th Feb 9.30am-3pm at **Evershot**

NEW **Setting up Your Smallholding**
19th Feb 10.30am-2.30pm at **Lower Coombe**

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines (general)
25th Feb 10am-2pm at **Evershot**

Synergy Events

For more information on Synergy Events, please get in touch with us:

call 01935 83682, email courses@synergyfarmhealth.com, visit our Facebook page or our website www.synergyfarmhealth.com.

Coming in March

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines (sheep)
5th March 10.30am-2.30pm at **Evershot**

Practical Lambing Course
9th March 9.30am-3pm at **Evershot**

Meet the Team

Jade Ellis

Jade joined Synergy as a health planning co-ordinator in April 2017, working on day to day health planning. After 6 months, Jade stepped in to assist within our dispensary and then went on to become our Pharmacy Manager in March 2018.

Jade previously spent 12 years within a local veterinary practice as a Veterinary Nurse. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her young family and enjoys everything outdoors - this stems from an upbringing on a dairy farm!

