

News from our Rounds

East

Pete Siviter



I'm sure I'm not the only one looking forward to the spring. We have had an extremely long and difficult few months of wet weather, and this has been particularly apparent in the number of pneumonia cases we have been seeing in calves. I've visited a few calf sheds that would have functioned adequately in a normal winter but just don't have sufficient ventilation to cope with relentless rain.



Remember that pneumonia requires prompt treatment if there is to be a successful outcome, and if a large proportion of animals are affected then whole-group medication may be indicated.

Great to catch up with many of you in between hands when we're out skittling – coming to the end of the season now and it's all getting a bit tense. I keep thinking I've found my form only to get brought back down to earth by a hopeless night. Words of wisdom gratefully received!

South

Beth Reilly



I'm writing this article at the start of 2020 and its time we start looking ahead at the future of the industry. The last decade was the warmest and wettest on record since records began. So, what does this mean in terms of parasites? We've been seeing unusually high worm egg counts all autumn and winter. Increasing worm burdens, as well as increasing levels of resistance to wormers in sheep is worrying for sheep vets! This isn't just important for sheep and cows, but also important for goats and alpacas who never develop immunity to internal parasites.

CattleLameness ACADEMY We have lots of exciting

things planned for 2020 including the Third Cattle Lameness Academy (CLA) Seminar which is being held on Wednesday 25th March. The aim of this seminar will be to discuss the future of lameness in the dairy industry and has well renown speakers. This year is also the first time that we are running a CLA Workshop the day before the seminar which should be really useful for foot trimmers and farmers who do a lot of trimming.

Don't forget to book your place on one of our training courses all clients will have received a 10% discount voucher with your January Invoice.

North

Gareth Foden



Scours and pneumonia have been the common issues of late, at least the rain has decreased which may help reduce the humidity. It has however got a bit colder which will stress calves by taking them out of their thermal neutral zone, any temperatures <15°C will require calves to expend energy to keep warm. This will compromise growth and immunity, increasing the chances of pneumonia and scours. Help them out by considering sheds for ventilation, draughts, warm dry beds or why not get them a coat? Seeing cases of pneumonia is too late and prevention will stop you potentially wasting money on antibiotics.

There is an increasing pressure to safeguard welfare in cattle and lameness is often one of the most obvious to the public. I spend some of my time looking through lists of cows that our vet tech/foot trimmers refer to vets. These cows are ones which are complicated, difficult to treat or non healing. If you get one of these you may get a phone call from myself to see if we can make a plan for treatment.

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!



CowSignals® – Happy Cows, Happy Farmers

Dairy farmers might have heard of a Dutch originated concept called CowSignals®, which often forms the focus of animal health and welfare discussions. Last year, for the first time, a French dairy established a "CowSignals®-assured" label for their products as a direct reaction to consumers' increasing awareness of the health and welfare of production animals. To some extent, most of the UK's farm assurance schemes have implemented CowSignals® elements in one way or another.

What actually is the concept of CowSignals®? What does it do? What is it for?

COW SIGNALS® TRAINING COMPANY



A starting point is to understand that cows send out useful information every moment of the day. You just need to know how to read these signals, and act accordingly! The focus is on the cows general demands regarding housing, feeding and care.

The basic idea is very simple: the closer a farm meets its cows' natural demands and enables them to express their natural behaviour, the better the animals' health and welfare and therefore performance will be. Less work, higher income and increased work satisfaction will result!

Most of the time, the causes of poorly performing cows are related to cow management. More or less every modern dairy farm uses genetics from the very best sires worldwide via artificial insemination. Herd performance, with its direct impacts on farmer's incomes should be much better than UK herd performance indicators on average actually are. What is often not considered are weaknesses in cow comfort, heavily influenced by housing (air, light, rest and space) and care (feed and water). In comparison to feed quality, which is generally rather well calculated, balanced and monitored on almost all farms, little attention seems to be paid to water quality and cow comfort; both areas equally important for the best possible health and welfare and therefore performance.

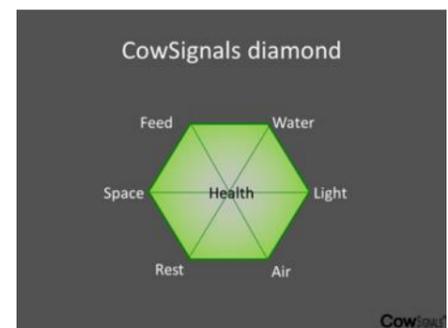
At Synergy Farm Health we are proud to be able to offer genuine CowSignals® training courses for farmers and staff to educate dairy workers in this increasingly important field. The purpose of these group sessions is to equip each attendee with the tools and knowledge to understand the behavioural signals sent out by cows and to take actions according to their natural demands. The use of standardised checklists plays a vital part in the assessment of individual farm situations. Wherever risk factors are identified, low or no cost solutions are tried to improve herd performance together with all the other positive consequences mentioned earlier.

February 2020

- CowSignals® – Happy Cows, Happy Farmers
- The importance of a diagnosis
- Improving Foot Trimming Lists
- Events & Courses
- Regional News
- Dispensary Updates

The training is instructive and practical. The advice given is to the point and based on scientific knowledge.

I am absolutely convinced that animal behaviour concepts like CowSignals® will become an even more integral part of any form of farm assurance in the future. The dairy industry faces many challenges at the moment. Assuring the consumer of the best health and welfare standards for cows is one of them. Better performances,



incomes and lifestyles are the hard earned and well-deserved rewards.

If you are interested in attending one of our one day CowSignals® training courses, please contact the practice.

Andre Northey
Veterinary Surgeon
CowSignals® Master Trainer



CLA Seminar 2020
25th March 2020 9.30am-4pm
Dillington House, Ilminster,
Somerset, TA19 9DT

CLA Workshop
24th March 2020
11am-4pm
Synergy Office, Lower
Coombe, TA18 8RL

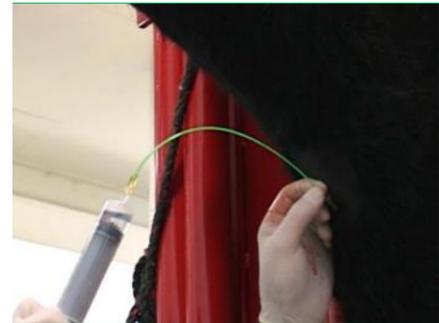
CattleLameness ACADEMY The Cattle Lameness Academy (CLA) warmly invites you to attend the third Cattle Lameness Academy seminar. This is open to all vets, foot trimmers, farmers, researchers and anyone working within the agricultural industry with an interest in lameness.

To book tickets: www.eventbrite.com/e/cattle-lameness-academy-seminar-2020-tickets-8666063529

Aaron LaVoy
"Practical demonstration of how to deal with a corkscrew claw"
Jamie Sullivan
"The Team Approach to Controlling Lameness"
Beth Reilly & Reuben Newsome
"Research Update on foot trimming"

The importance of a diagnosis

With wet and mild winters the new norm, the pneumonia season can feel as though it is never ending. Bovine Respiratory Disease (BRD) has a huge impact on calf health and your farm's productivity, with each case of pneumonia costing you @ £40. In fact, research shows that repeat cases of pneumonia cause a significant delay to age at first calving and can significantly impact milk yield later in life.



A 'lung wash' is useful for getting a diagnosis

As always there is no quick fix. Reducing pneumonia requires a combined approach involving changes to general husbandry, ventilation, **colostrum** management, nutrition, BVD control and where suitable, vaccines. A diagnosis is key. Just like mastitis, there are multiple bugs involved and identifying which ones are on your farm can change how we tackle the problem. A vet visit might seem like an added expense but with a 50ml bottle of

Draxxin costing more than £150, getting the vet out early in the outbreak can work out cheaper in the long run.

On farm vaccine use:

- ⇒ An MSD study (involving SFH clients) found that none of the on farm fridges worked **100%** of the time
- ⇒ Only **48%** of farmers gave the 2nd dose of a primary course correctly
- ⇒ **14%** were vaccinating animals outside of the recommended age range
- ⇒ **30%** were administering vaccines by the wrong route

You will all be aware that the livestock sector is under a lot of pressure to reduce antimicrobial usage and although the industry has made great strides already, with antibiotic sales falling by 53% in just 4 years, there is still more work to do. The low uptake of vaccines, particularly in young stock has been highlighted as a key area for improvement.

At over £10 per calf, vaccines are a significant investment. It is therefore

surprising that several studies (see above) have found that on farm they are often



Molly Rivers

abused and misused. For this reason, with the help of our trained vet tech Molly Rivers, we have developed a dedicated vaccination service designed to make vaccinating stress free, with every aspect taken care off by our trained techs. As part of Synergy's commitment to improving calf health and reducing antibiotic use we have decided to provide this service at no additional cost for calves and at £30/hour for older cattle.

Speak to your vet if you would like to find out more about our vaccination service and the benefits of vaccines on your livestock's health.

Josh Swain
Veterinary Surgeon



Improving Foot Trimming Lists

I spent a lot of time over the Christmas period thinking about how I could improve efficiency while on farm foot trimming, and one area where I think we could work together and really make a difference is with trimming lists. Selecting the right cows for any given trimming visit sounds simple enough, and often is but it's surprising how many cows can slip through the net one way or another. Its not unusual to see the same cow multiple times, because she's flagged up on a mobility score or is identified by staff as lame. Quite often though a quick

At the other end of the spectrum are cows that require a recheck due to ongoing treatment that sometimes get overlooked; maybe she has since been dried off and removed from the milking herd or simply just walking well and going under the radar. Either way, she may well still require a block to be removed or a further inspection to avoid complications down the line.



Management ID	Animal ID	15/11/19	01/08/19	19/02/19
Chronic				
0712	0712	1	1	1
New Lambs				
0882	0882	1	1	1
0883	0883	1	1	1
0885	0885	1	1	1
0134	0134	1	1	1
2000	2000	1	1	1
0716	0716	1	1	1
2947	2947	1	1	1
0427	0427	1	1	1
0627	0627	1	1	1
0632	0632	1	1	1
3048	3048	1	1	1
Recovered				
0890	0890	1	1	1
0839	0839	1	1	1
2672	2672	1	1	1
2306	2306	1	1	1
0336	0336	1	1	1
0175	0175	1	1	1
Revised Lambs				
0365	0365	1	1	1
0607	0607	1	1	1
0589	0589	1	1	1
Revised Sound				
1900	1900	1	1	1
2714	2714	1	1	1
0910	0910	1	1	1

There are quite a few factors that the herdsman needs to think about to determine a trimming list at any given time. These include: mobility score data, cows about to be dried off and then routine trims, plus any rechecks and observations from staff. So, it's easy to see how a few cows can miss the recheck date or go past its routine date, or a cow gets put in for a check because she's a score 2 again! All this while trying to deal with the other 1001 jobs at hand on a daily basis! Maybe it's not so simple after all! Of course, the problem with all this is that it can be very an inefficient use of time. Foot trimming visits are set to certain number of cows or time, due to on farm time constraints etc. So, the issue is that time spent looking at a cow multiple times unnecessarily is time that could be better spent trimming a cow to keep her sound and prevent lameness.

look on our foot trimming software will show us that her feet have been checked multiple times and are sound, that her problem lies elsewhere, possibly a leg issue or maybe in her back for example. In these cases a discussion with the vet might be a better course of action.

Ultimately every cow has a "target" date for when she should see the foot trimmer and we need to be hitting that target as often and accurately as possible to maximise the foot trimmer's time and efficiency on farm and ensure optimum foot health for the cows.

I am about to start a process that generates trimming lists on behalf of some of my foot trimming clients a couple of days prior to my visit. This list will be generated using our Vetinpress software that we already use for recording our foot trimming and mobility score data. We will input the various bespoke requirements for each farm i.e. score 2/3 cows, 80 day trims, rechecks etc. The system will then generate your bespoke list, which will then be emailed to the herdsman, who will then simply add on any dry off trims and observations to the list. Then as each cow is inspected, information is fed back into the program regarding each animal and any actions carried out. If any further follow up is required, the list is automatically updated. This will ensure no cows are pulled out for trimming unless required, saving time and minimising disruption to the cows.

If you think this additional service could be of benefit to you, then please have a chat with your routine foot trimmer or vet who will be pleased to help.

Andrew Cooke
Vet Tech



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.



It is with sadness that we pass on the news that **Ray Lancaster** passed away at the beginning of January. Those of you who were clients of Wilkins and Partners (latterly Kingfisher), will fondly remember Ray who spent most of his career working out of Crewkerne looking after the local farms. Ray retired in 1998 and had continued living in Crewkerne.

Calf housing survey

As part of her PhD, Sophie Mahendran (RCVS Specialist in Cattle Health & Production) is collecting information on how dairy farmers are currently housing their dairy heifer calves. Participation is entirely voluntary and takes 10 minutes. If you'd like to participate please visit: <https://rvc.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/uk-calf-housing-survey>.

Challenge Sheep Discussion Meeting 10th February 7pm-9.30pm At Salisbury Market

Reducing the impact of the wet weather
on this year's lamb crop

There will be hot food provided. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to **01935 83682** Emily.gascoigne@synergyfarmhealth.com



All welcome!

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 February

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

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

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

FULLY BOOKED

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

Milksure Course
25th Feb 10.30am-12.30pm at Mole Avon, Axminster

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

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines (general)
12th March 10am-2pm at Mole Avon, Axminster

Coming in April

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines (general)
7th April 10am-2pm at Evershot

Two Day Foot Trimming Course
14th—15th April 10.30am-5pm at Lower Coombe

Meet the Team

Emma Platt

Emma is a member of the Synergy Admin Team and works three days a week, with her workload consisting of the administration for all the Farmer Training Courses, as well as dealing with TB enquiries and registering submissions and sending results for Sure Farm Ltd. Emma also deals with Brucellosis/Anthrax investigations, uniform and stationery orders. On the days Emma is not working at Synergy, she helps out at both a hunt yard and eventing yard and in her spare time can be found riding the countryside on her horse or walking her dog.

