

News from our Rounds

East

Josie Burrige



The never ending rain continues, and no matter how many times I recite 'Rain, rain go away, come back another day' it never seems to listen. As you are all aware the normal problems associated with the rainfall are in full swing, not only health issues but the water-logged fields are creating headaches all round. In the last few weeks we have also seen an increase in Displaced Abomasums (DAs). These are not necessarily weather linked but the weather may indirectly cause some issues. Important things to consider are 'Is the feed getting wet? Are the cows

favouring indoor feed faces over outdoor therefore reducing our available feed space?' In short is there anything going on that may be reducing the amount your cow is eating. Reduced feed intake is the big risk factor in developing a DA, especially when linked with other factors such as a difficult calving, twins, Ketosis and milk fever, to name a few. The high risk period for a LDA is the first 4 weeks post calving so keep an extra eye on this group for signs of a DA such as reduced appetite, a milk drop and depression.

Last month saw the East Vets social have an outing to the Dorset Brewing Company in Crossways. It included a tour of the brew house as well some rather tasty samples, a fab night was had by all and without naming any names the party didn't stop there for some of the harder folks who claimed that 'the night was still young'. I shall leave you to decide who it may have been.....

South

Tom Angel



I would like to start this article by thanking my colleagues and all our clients for being so welcoming as I have started out my veterinary career at Synergy! It's been a whirlwind of a six months meeting a lot of new faces. Many of you will have seen me out and about either accompanying a senior colleague or running back and forth to my van several times to collect equipment I've forgotten... For those of you that haven't met me, I'm (another) Tom, one of this year's interns filling the shoes of Beth and Bryan from last year and many of our other vets before them.



With lambing underway it's as important as always to be thinking parasites, particularly Nematodirus in your lambs out at pasture. Remember, Nematodirus infection comes from last seasons lambs and the parasites hatch on mass when cold weather is followed by a warmer period, so pasture management and weather watching are vital control measures! When it goes live, the SCOPS Nematodirus Forecast (last year it went up in April) is a great tool to keep an eye on the risk level in your area. Give us a call if you need any help or advice in this busy season.

North

Pete O'Malley



For those of you spring calving or lambing, rubber ringing will be falling onto your job lists soon. Rubber rings (or elastrator rings) are a great cost-effective method of castration however they are not without risks! The result of incorrect technique can be extremely damaging so it's worth reviewing your farms protocol.

The most common problem is the missed testicle where only one has been caught by the ring leaving the other fully intact (and functioning!). These require surgical castration by us which is an added cost and complication for you. Always check that both testicles are caught below the ring before removing the elastrator applicator. If this is not possible then do not apply the ring and speak to one of our vets. Old rings lose their stretch! A ring needs to be tight enough to successfully cut off the blood supply to the testicle in order to work. If old rings are used, not only can the animal remain potentially fertile but the testicle can become very swollen and painful. Safest approach is: "new year, new ring"



The same problems can be seen when rubber rings are inappropriately applied to animals over 1 week old. The scrotum is often too wide by this point for a ring to successfully work. This results in a swollen and very painful scrotum which, if left, could be life threatening. Regulations state that rubber rings **must only be used in animals under 1 week of age.**

Even when done correctly, rubber rings are **painful**. Giving local anaesthetic and metacam at the point of castration significantly reduces this pain which will improve the animals welfare and encourage normal behaviours such as suckling.



Emily Gascoigne finalist for Farm Educator of the Year at CEVA Welfare Awards

Synergy Vet Emily Gascoigne is a finalist for Farm Educator at this year's CEVA Welfare Awards. This award acknowledges the work of an Animal Health Advisor (SQP), university or other educational institute, that works hard to research and educate the importance and benefits of farm animal welfare in the UK or aboard.

We know you will join us in congratulating Emily on reaching finalist status!



March 2020

- **Globe Trotting!**
- **Optimising Animal Handling**
- **Dispensary Updates**
- **Spotlight on: Vet Tech Lucy Wilkins**
- **Events & Courses**
- **Regional News**

Globe Trotting!

A few weeks ago I was lucky enough to speak at a conference on bovine mastitis held in Florida. The whole experience was an interesting one, from preparing and delivering my talk (pretty terrifying), to attending some great talks and "networking" with mastitis professionals from all over the globe, including the odd one from Somerset!

One of the most interesting talks was a comparison of the dairy industries of 6 countries: US, Canada, Switzerland, Australia, Chile and China; given by specialists from each country. There were underlying similarities; all had seen a reduction in herd and cow numbers, but an increase in milk per cow and in total dairy production. However there were massive differences too, such as subsidies and other factors governing milk price, antibiotic use, milk quality and even what information was available for comparison.

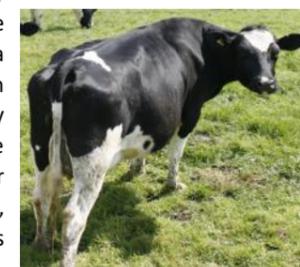
The industry in Australia is largely seasonal and pasture based, averaging 5,800l/cow with 35% of production going for export. It has focussed on being "clean and green" but has seen a contraction since 2002 due to drought and forage availability. Milk price is related to milk solids but is subject to the vagaries of international dairy markets.

The US dairy herd is much higher yielding at 10,500l/cow and although we think of the



5% large herds that produce 56% of the milk, actually two thirds of the herds have fewer than 100 cows. Milk quality is generally good.

Although antibiotic use is higher than the UK, and important antimicrobials have only needed a vet prescription since 2019 (!), antibiotic residue failures are relatively low at 0.01%. Some critically important antibiotics no longer allowed in the UK are used first line in mastitis cases; however tubes containing more than one antibiotic (common in the UK) are banned there!



By contrast the milk price in Canada (47p/l) is protected with quotas which does not allow

import of dairy products from the US. Smaller farms in the east still often use tie stalls, with farms in the west loose housed, averaging higher yields and better quality milk. 12% of dairies have robotic milking systems; antibiotic use is much higher than the UK but is coming under increased scrutiny and regulation.

Switzerland has a highly subsidised milk price from herds averaging 26 cows and high quality milk going into cheese production.

Antibiotic use is higher than the UK.

Chile was lacking consistent data although yields and quality have increased with cell counts averaging 230,000cells/ml and antibiotic failures 0.67%.



China is a big importer of dairy products as dairy consumption is rising at a rapid level not being met by domestic production; it also exports to Russia and Asia. Commercial dairies are encouraged with subsidies (38p/l) and grants. I was surprised to learn that cow numbers have actually decreased from 15 to 10 million but are predicted to stabilise. Milk yields are increasing from 4,800l/cow in 2010 to 7,400l/cow today and continue to rise. 75 farms have more than 10,000 cows, but there are also many "back yard" herds with lower yields and milk price. No data was presented on antibiotic consumption.

With such different approaches, it is hard to conceive of milk as a global commodity. We are apparently the 10th largest producer of cows' milk in the world, and value high welfare standards, environmental protection and low antibiotic use. Let's hope that we will be able to develop further in this direction in the years to come.

Rachel Hayton
Veterinary Surgeon



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-86666063529

CattleLameness ACADEMY 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"

Optimising Animal Handling

A recent arduous TB test has got me thinking again about how we handle our animals and I am going to focus on cattle in particular. The time to TB test an individual animal in a crush will not vary a lot between vets or animals if the access is good, the main thing that causes delays on farm is the time taken to get the next cow in the crush. Sometimes taking a step back to think about how we handle the animals might throw up some small changes that can make a big difference to the system and making the job safer and easier.

On average there are 6 deaths and 2,100 injuries per year caused by animals to workers in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries industries (HSE) and we all know that the injuries are likely to be under reported. So my question is what is the aim of animal handling.

- **Safety for people**
- **Safety for animals**
- **Efficiency of the operation**

There is not one system or set of equipment that gives good or bad handling but we can break down the aspects of handling into three categories and look at them individually.

The animals

- Are they quiet or fractious?
- Age and size, is there a mixture in the group?
- Are they used to being handled in this system? Cattle will be more hesitant in an unfamiliar environment.
- We all know that cows are herd animals and they want to be with each other, separating one at a time from a group is against their natural instinct. Can we bring a small group to a pen behind the crush?

The environment

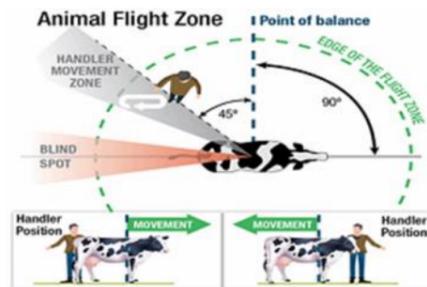
- Are the facilities in a good state of repair? Is there anything that can cause injury – sharp or broken metal or concrete. Is the crush capable of holding the animals you are putting in there safely, is the yoke and door secure when shut?
- How is the floor? Cattle need to be able to grip in order to feel safe, grooving concrete can be very successful but putting down grit or sand in the slippery areas will help cattle feel more relaxed and can be done immediately. Batons secured to the floor in the crush or race will also provide grip.
- Size of pen, cows need plenty of space in order to see where they are going and be able to move comfortably around the system.
- Are there pinch points in the system, do the cattle always get stuck in a corner or get halfway down the race and stop or back up?
- Lighting, cows will naturally go from an area of low light to an area with better light, they don't like shadows or bright lights shining directly at them.
- Boarding gates will help stop cattle becoming distracted by what they can see through the gate.



Above shows a bud box system, cattle are brought past the entrance to the race, the gate is closed behind them and they turn to go back where they came and exit down the race.

The People

- Some people are quiet and confident when handling animals, others will start shouting and making noise as soon as they get near the animals or when things start going wrong.
- Inexperienced handlers can be afraid/nervous of the animals and often react by becoming tense and shouting.
- It should not be necessary to hit an animal with a stick to make it go in a particular direction, a 'carrot' approach will be more stress free for the animal and people.
- Have your staff been given basic training in animal handling and shown how people behaviours may affect animal behaviours. Simply standing in a different position may be enough to help move cattle through the system. Below shows the animal flight zone and point of balance.

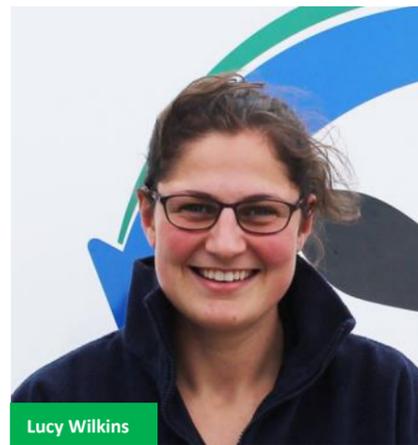


Every farm can think about how their animals, environment and people contribute to the performance of the handling system. Hopefully you can find some easy wins even in an imperfect system to make handling safer and less stressful for all involved.

Tom Cook
Veterinary Surgeon



Spotlight on: Vet Tech Lucy Wilkins



Lucy Wilkins

I have been a part of the Vet Tech Team since 2015. I started as a work experience student whilst studying for my degree in agriculture. After a year I was delighted to join the team on a part time basis.

The majority of the work I do at Synergy is mobility scoring, alongside assisting on a range of Vet Tech tasks. Aside from this, I work at home on the family dairy farm milking 150 cows.

My keen interest is in the livestock side of farming as cows have been a passion of

mine from a young age. Luckily for me my brother is into the machinery side of the farming business so I don't need to go near the tractors too often!

Over the years I have been very lucky to have been included in big farm business decisions at home. In the farming



Cows have been a passion of mine from a young age

industry, the subject of succession can be difficult but it is so important as the next generation are the future of the farm!

With this independence my family have given me it's lead me to change the breeding of our herd from 100% Holstein to now the beginning of a three way cross of Holstein X Swedish Red X Montbéliarde. The reason for this change is that our farm is located on the Somerset levels, with land made up of a majority of permanent pasture and SSSI. Therefore we felt we needed a hardier animal that will make better use of the farmland we have.

When I'm not scoring cows, milking cows, managing cows (yes my friends call me the crazy cow lady) I'm usually out socialising at the pub with friends, doing a little bit of gardening or I could be off on top of the Quantocks exploring new walks with my collie Flop.

Lucy Wilkins
Vet Tech



Synergy Events

For more information 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 (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**

DIY AI Course
28th—30th April 9am-4pm at **Evershot**

Practical Lambing Course 
29th April 10am-2pm at **Evershot**

Coming in May

Practical Calving Course
7th May 10.30am-2.30pm at **Evershot**

Coming in June

Sheep Faecal Worm Egg Count Course 
2nd June 10am-3pm at **Evershot**

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

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!

Meet the Team

Vikki Painter

Vikki has been a member of the Synergy Dispensary Team for the past 7 months. Her main role is taking and processing orders for clients and vets. Prior to this, Vikki was rearing calves at a local farm, and has many years experience of milking cows.

Outside of work Vikki plays cricket, skittles and enjoys the odd park run.



SEASONAL PROMOTIONS



SPOTINOR
2.5L £130.00
1L £65.00



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ENOVEX
2.5L £27.50



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First Grazer £16.85
Finisher £16.00

All prices EX VAT. For a full list of promotional items please contact Synergy dispensary on 01935 83682. Offer ends 31/05/20.