



Sheep Lameness and Footvax

Sheep lameness remains one of the biggest challenges facing the sheep industry, dramatically impacting on both productivity and welfare. In the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture (RUMA) Report 2017, industry targets have been set to reduce antibiotic use in all sectors. The three key antibiotic hotspots that have been identified in the sheep sector include:

- ◆ routine use of whole flock treatments for newborn lambs to prevent disease
- ◆ routine use of antibiotics to prevent abortion
- ◆ lameness control

Specifically to lameness, a target has been set to reduce national flock lameness prevalence to less than 2% by 2021. On a flock level reducing antibiotic use has to be in-line with maintaining or improving disease levels and welfare. **“But you keep telling us to inject lame sheep with antibiotics rather than trim!”** I hear you all say? Absolutely, antibiotics are completely appropriate when treating sheep for scald, footrot or CODD, but the ultimate aim of any disease control plan is to reduce the number of new infections, so in the

long run we have fewer lame sheep to treat.

The AHDB lameness Five Point Plan is instrumental to achieving this; the five points being: **Cull, Avoid, Treat, Quarantine and Vaccinate.** The infectious causes of lameness are very contagious and need to be treated as so, therefore early identification, treatment and isolation of that one lame ewe will help prevent having ten lame ewes next week. When tackling lameness problems on farm, we use the five point plan as a template to identify areas to work on, taking a holistic approach to tackling the issue.



You'll notice the fifth point of the five point plan is **vaccinate** and we do have an effective vaccine licensed in the UK to prevent and reduce the clinical disease caused by footrot, **Footvax.** Vaccination should be treated as the icing on the cake and implemented in-line with the other four points to ensure it works well for you.

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However it can be an extremely useful tool to quickly reduce lameness prevalence in a flock and to prevent new infections at key risk periods in the calendar year. Footvax sales in the UK are being monitored by RUMA, who are looking for a 5% increase in sales within five years. Currently only around 250,000 ewes are being vaccinated with Footvax per year.

Have a chat with your vet or one of the sheep team about how to tackle lameness on your farm and whether vaccination is appropriate.

Free of charge sterimatic refills on all Footvax orders in March and April

FOOTVAX	20 dose	£26.27	Ex VAT
	50 dose	£58.81	
	250 dose	£246.63	

Charlotte Moulard
Veterinary Surgeon



*** BETAMOX LA- WITHOLD CHANGES ***



These changes will take effect as new stock arrives. Please refer to labelling.

Not for use in sheep producing milk for human consumption

	Milk	Meat & Offal
Cattle	84 hours	28 days
Pigs	N/A	19 days
Sheep	N/A	19 days

*** ADRENACINE-STOCK SHORTAGE ***

The current shortage is due to a manufacturing issue with shortage of raw ingredient.

We have sourced an alternative product on an import licence to cover the shortage. **Pronesthesis** is a POM-V product that will need to be refrigerated.



Mechanics of the Cow's Foot

Recently, you might have seen me wandering around carrying some boiled out cows' feet. The recipe is as follows: take a cow's foot, boil it for two days, by which time only the bone and hoof remain, bleach the remaining hoof and bone, then dry and spray varnish them. Easy. Just don't do it in your kitchen, without permission...!



The purpose is to make teaching materials. I make no secret of my passion for improving mobility and reducing lameness in cattle; these stoic beasts hide pain well, making lameness difficult to detect until it is severe. These teaching materials help us understand the complex and delicate architecture within the foot.

If you attended the recent "Mechanics of the Foot" meeting, you'll have also seen fresh specimens, viewed the cushioning structures and the suspensory apparatus, and seen first-hand how the forces are transferred through the cow's foot. All of these structures are designed to protect the critical tissues inside the foot. Disassembling post-mortem specimens allows us to visualise them, and trust me, seeing is believing.

We'll be running more sessions soon, so if this description has whetted your appetite (!!), ask your vet when the next Foot Mechanics meeting is occurring.

These foot structures become compromised even in the normal

cow around calving and in early lactation; for example the pedal bone drops within the hoof capsule, predisposing her to sole ulcers, a lesion which primarily occurs due to excessive pressure on a particular region of the base of the foot. Management factors also influence the forces through the foot, for example standing times (poor cow comfort) prolong the forces and increase the risk of sole ulcers, whilst points of social competition increase shearing forces and the risk of white line disease. Routine foot trimming optimises foot shape and balance to cope with forces on the foot. Understanding the anatomy within the foot and the disease process, combined with the knowledge of the lesions you see on your farm, can help us identify which control measures for lameness are likely to be most effective.

When a lesion is present on the outside of the foot – e.g. a sole ulcer, white line disease or toe necrosis, it is often only the "tip of the iceberg" of the damage inside the foot. Substantial inflammation is also present and over time this causes permanent changes to the pedal bone within the hoof. Large spikes of new bone growth occur, which continue to do further trauma within the foot, preventing it from healing. This will never "truly heal", so the cow will keep becoming lame.

Think of the chronically lame cow as a chronic high cell count cow – the damage done is permanent.

The costs of lameness are similarly profound, as lame cows:

- Produce less milk than they should
- Take longer to get in calf
- Are more likely to die on farm

- Are in pain and discomfort, and are demotivating to farm staff to work with
- Create reputational risk to the dairy industry

If lame cows stopped producing milk, the costs of lameness would be easier to demonstrate!

Severely lame cows should be considered a loss to the farm. At a time when consumer confidence, public perception and animal welfare are major influencers on our industry, the true cost of lameness has never been greater. The good news is that the foot anatomy does not become permanently damaged overnight. However, it does occur quickly, so catching lame cows early, for example through regular mobility scoring, and treating them effectively, is a vital part of lameness control.



I urge you, if you're not doing so already, to work with your foot trimmer and vet to help identify severely lame cows and make a plan for them. Once this is done, focus efforts on preventing lameness, and if cows do go lame, detect them and treat them as soon as possible. Managing lameness is not a one-person job and we're here to help. And if you want to see the foot anatomy described above, simply ask your Vet Tech about "Reuben's feet" ...!



Reuben Newsome
Veterinary Surgeon

Vet Tech News

As I write this I am full of optimism as spring is in the air after a mild week and England head to Cardiff on track for the grand slam in the Six Nations rugby tournament.

*Wales spoilt their party—
apologies James! - Andrew*

I have always loved to follow sport and the fine line between success and failure fascinates me. England won the rugby world cup in 2003 with the strategy of pushing for 1% gains on everything all the time. The ethos of coach Clive Woodward and Olympic cycling coach Dave Brailsford 'marginal gains' is now of common use in all professional sport.

I like to draw comparisons from sport and I don't think it matters if you are talking about increasing yields or winning the World Cup. If you ignore the small details you ignore the opportunity to make large strides.

This week I have had two days freeze branding and three days foot trimming. Over the past few weeks when foot trimming on farm I have noticed increased dermatitis, as is often the case this time of year.

Over the past couple of years the most noticeable reductions in lameness I have seen have been achieved by increasing footbath frequency and efficacy. In my opinion dermatitis is the biggest cause of lameness and one of the easiest to control.

AHDB (2019, www.ahdb.org.uk) suggests footbathing needs to be done consistently if it is to be effective. Footbathing regularly to control infectious lameness should be seen in the same way as teat spraying and prevention of mastitis; something that is part of the routine, and something which must be carried out regularly and effectively to maintain cow welfare.

Copper sulphate and formalin (at appropriate concentrations) are the most commonly used solutions. In order for a solution to be effective in a footbath it must be used at the correct concentration, and ideally cows' feet should be pre-washed. The solution should be at least 100mm deep to ensure good coverage.

Foot bathing is one of the small things that can be done on farm that can make a big difference to cow welfare. I am hoping that when you read this some of the marginal gains that the England rugby team have made will have resulted in triumph over the Welsh!!

*Was never going
to happen James!
- Andrew*

James Perrett
Vet Tech



Synergy Events

For more information please visit our website, Facebook page, or email courses@synergyfarmhealth.com

Coming in March

Cattle Lameness
ACADEMY

Mobility Scoring

11th March 10:30am-4pm, at Lower Coombe

Safe use of Veterinary Medicines (Sheep)

11th March 10.30am-2.30pm at Evershot

DIY AI Course

19th-21st March 9:30am-4pm at Evershot

Coming in April

2 Day Foot Trimming

15th-16th April 2019 at Lower Coombe

Cattle Lameness
ACADEMY

Successful Calf Housing and Nutrition

Wednesday 13th March 10.30am –2pm

An interactive workshop all about rearing healthy calves at Grange Farm, Pulham, Dorchester by kind permission of James Yeatman.

Lunch
included

Meet the Team Heidi Collis

Heidi is the Administration Manager at Synergy Farm Health as well as Personal Assistant to the Managing Director, Andrew Davies and the Practice Manager, Jo Masters. Heidi's workload is split between working closely with the Managing Director and senior management with secretarial duties as well as managing the general administration, TB and SureFarm Teams.

Heidi joined the Synergy team back in 2010 having previously worked for Southfield Veterinary Centre many moons ago. Prior to this Heidi's employment involved working for MAFF in various departments (ADAS, Milk & Dairies, Plant Health & Seed Inspectorate), the State Veterinary Service in disease control and surveillance, and APHA in the TB department.

Outside of work Heidi spends her spare time with her busy family and once or twice a week paddle boarding on the south coast.



News from our Rounds

East

Pete Siviter



Coughing seems to be the theme at the moment – across all species and ages but particularly housed black-and-white calves. It is a challenging time of year for pneumonia of course, with considerable fluctuations in temperature and humidity happening every day – suboptimal housing (especially if animals are tightly stocked) will certainly make disease hard to avoid. Remember to get us involved early if you are experiencing an outbreak – prompt treatment will reduce overall medicine costs, and we may be able to come up with some preventative solutions for the next batch.

We have also been very busy with LDAs over the last couple of months (with a record **eleven operations** on one day in February). Fresh cow diseases such as DAs, retained cleansings, milk fevers and ketosis are all linked together and affected by many different factors. A major component this year of course is the lack of forage and subsequent effect on rations, but don't forget that there are several other issues that can increase the risk: busy calving periods can lead to overstocking in the dry/calving groups, limited trough space will cause smaller animals to be out-competed, and inadequate straw-chopping may lead to sorting and poor rumen fill. If you are concerned about your transition or fresh cows, please speak to us about options for reducing the risk of these conditions.

South

Esme Moffett



I don't know about you, but I was glad to see the back of January, it felt so long and dark! February brought sunshine and longer days and more positivity. The practice was busy this month running BVD meetings across all regions, the ones in the south had excellent turn outs, thank you for your support. It's great to see so many people interested in this very important and costly disease.

Lambing season is now in full swing for many, hopefully it will be easier this year than last without the Beast from the East! Scab still seems to be fairly prevalent so be on the lookout for itchy sheep dropping wool and be careful about sharing facilities or equipment – this has been shown to be a common area of spread for some breakdowns.

We finished up February with a very well attended and interactive 0-6 Youngstock Service meeting on Weaning Management. This is a crucial time in calf rearing with lots of stressors on the calf and lots of potential for disease outbreaks. The key take home messages were; only wean calves when they are eating at least 1.5kg of concentrate (to ensure proper rumen function), monitor growth through the rearing phase and about 6 weeks after weaning to monitor how they have done over the weaning period, and finally avoid stressful events such as dehorning or vaccinating within 2 weeks of weaning.

North

Alastair Hayton



Though far too early to be certain, Spring does seem to have sprung for the time being (one client reporting to me that he has had to switch the fans on in his cubicle house as the temperature inside was 22°C!), and hopefully this warm weather will get the grass growing and allow the stock to be turned out, as there is many a silage clamp where the back wall is looming. On the animal health front, the month has seen a spate of LDAs with no clear rationale, as is often the case with these sudden outbreaks (there is something we don't understand yet!), but fortunately it may now be setting down again.

We hosted a very well attended BVD Stamp It Out meeting at Langport and there will be a follow up to this for many of the attendees. It would be nice to think that we can actually get our collective act together on this disease, we are as a nation (England that is) nowadays looking well and truly left behind in our attitude and collective resolve to controlling infectious disease and it would be great to be able to start bucking this perception.

Finally, a new funding round is coming available shortly from the Government so please speak to us if you are thinking of applying for animal health related kit, we may well be able to help in your deliberations (follow the link to see the Farmers weekly article: <https://www.fwi.co.uk/business/payments-schemes/30m-grant-scheme-for-new-kit-to-reopen-in-2019>)



Safe, Secure and Responsible Management of Medicines- Red Tractor Assurance

Synergy Farm Health will arrange disposal of all medicines when returned within Pharmaceutical/ Sharps bins.



22 Litre Pharmaceutical Bin <i>(Disposal of Bottles/Used prescription medicines/syringes)</i>	£31.27
60 Litre Pharmaceutical Bin <i>(Disposal of Bottles/Used prescription medicines/syringes)</i>	£49.38
1 Litre Sharps Bin	£4.34
6/7 Litre Sharps Bin	£11.64

Prices correct 27/02/2019 Ex VAT