

News from our Rounds

East

Emily Gascoigne



I am writing this on the first dry day in November with some very soggy Dorset lambs at home.

The mild weather to date has meant some high worm egg count scores and multiple Haemonchus outbreaks in very fit ewes pre-lambing including at home. It is evident our worm season in the South West becoming longer.

I have just come back from a trip to the Lakes visiting flocks hampered by fluke, and our weather so far has been fluke perfect. We need to make sure we use fluke treatments sensibly so top tips are; (a) check your abattoir feedback- is fluke already appearing in lambs? i.e. do you actually need to treat? and (b) if you don't send fat lambs remember there is a blood test which can tell us if lambs have met fluke yet this year (see our Sheep Newsletter for more details). It's crucial to remember to use the right product at the right time (think Triclabendazole pre-Christmas and consider moving away from this in the New Year).

Some PD sessions from Beef Sucklers and Spring block calving are coming in with some good results- it can feel counterintuitive but even with a low beef price, retaining barren animals only adds to the winter feed bill, straw cost, handling time and false economy. Reduce passengers to reduce costs.

A reminder to give us a call with your flock scanning results when they come in and to start thinking now about getting your spring forage analysed to prevent last minute diet preparations.

Wishing you all a lovely Christmas and a prosperous 2020!

South

Jon Reader



Lots have been going on in the Southern region in the last month or so.

It was good to get to our annual British Cattle Veterinary Conference at the beginning of the month. It was just a shame we had to go all the way to Southport! However it is always nice to come away with some good practical snippets that you can implement straight away. My top three for this year included: (a) always consider giving the calf a dose of Metacam after a difficult calving - the calf will be bruised post calving too! Results have been impressive (b) the best disinfectant to use to ensure that digital dermatitis is not spread between cows (and farms) is a 1:100 solution of FAM30 (c) finally, we were shown some good footage of calves that had been disbudded with caustic paste. They were fine to start with, but showed delayed signs of pain if they were not also given local and Metacam.

By the time you read this, Mole Avon County Stores will have had their annual open evening. It is always great to see so many of you there. Our counter at Mole Avon has been up and running for over a year now and we thank Sheila, Jean and the South Vet Team for making it such a success. We look forward to seeing you



at Mole Avon, pop in and say hello!



North

Alastair Hayton



Well it's been a very wet autumn but it at least looks like all the maize was harvested. It has to be said

though that we have got lucky for a change, as having been "up north" visiting farms recently, it was clear that there had been a massive amount of rain up there as the ground is well and truly saturated.

Continuing the theme of water, this time under the bridge, we had a celebration of 10 years of Synergy a couple of weekends back with current and former members of staff attending. It was a lovely evening and great to see so many old faces coming back through the door - we have been incredibly lucky with the colleagues we have worked with and it's easy to forget quite how much has happened since we started Synergy.

Back to the farming world, there are no overt issues in terms of health and productivity from our farms which has to be good news. Clearly though, things once again are tough and market forces, combined with all the external scrutiny and pressure being brought to bear by the environmental and "welfare" campaign groups, are making life far from easy. These pressures are not just a UK concern, I have been working with a Dutch vet recently and the same pressures are very much there too, in fact more so, with the Dutch Government's focus on nitrogen apparently resulting in many Dutch farmers, particularly in the South of the country, looking to leave the industry. There is little at a local level that we can do in the face of all this, other than to continue to maximise the quality of your businesses and obviously we will continue to do our best to help you achieve that goal.



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



STOP PRESS!

We are delighted to announce that our MD Andrew Davies was awarded **Animal Health Advisor of the Year** in this year's Food & Farming Industry Awards on 6th December at the House of Commons (pictured left with Synergy Clients Tom Foot and Neil Grigg of The Open Air Dairy, who were Highly Commended in their Farm Innovation Category). We know you will join us in congratulating Andrew on this fantastic achievement.

December 2019

- The effects of Lameness on Performance
- Trip to the Netherlands
- Vet Tech Team Update
- Regional News
- Dispensary Updates

Synergy Christmas Opening Times:

Christmas Day (Wed 25th) - Emergencies only
Boxing Day (Thurs 26th) - Emergencies only
New Years Day — Emergencies only
Early office closing 24th & 31st December

In case of emergency ring 01935 83682
Our 24 hour Emergency service will continue to operate at all times when the office is closed



The Synergy team would like to wish all our clients a very...
Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

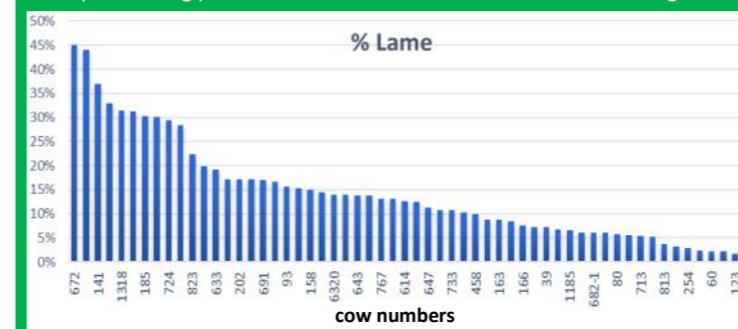
The effects of Lameness on Performance

Lameness is increasingly becoming a focus of the many agencies involved in monitoring standards in our industry. It is an obvious welfare consideration and it can also reflect poorly on our industry through external onlookers. It's not often it happens but occasionally I will have to stop to allow the milking herd to cross the road. I cringe when the severely lame animal hobbles across last for all to see. Zero lameness is a very difficult ambition to achieve, possibly impossible within our sector. We should however strive to

reduce levels to a minimum and some of our farms are achieving this. Current Red Tractor standards recommend a six monthly mobility score as well as timely treatment and recording of any

lame individuals. There should be information regarding both the trimming routine and treatment decisions. Some specific milk buyers are enforcing far higher standards (the details for each milk buyer are beyond this article). The higher standards involve independent quarterly mobility scores where appropriate actions need to be taken for the severely lame animals. Lameness at scores 2&3 should be <20% of the herd. Score 3 cows should have a written treatment plan and any cows scoring 3 a second time should be culled.

Graph showing performance of our benchmarked farms—average 14%.



reduce lameness. We know that the effects

of lameness on production and performance are detectable retrospectively up to a month prior to the observation and therefore even using the mobility scoring as a guide we are behind the disease process. We know that inflammation associated with lameness if prolonged will lead to the condition becoming chronic. We also know that the costs of an individual case of lameness is on average £300 (based on 2009 figures) so even with a lameness prevalence of 14% (Synergy average) this amounts to £4200 per 100 cow herd. This figure would be based on milk losses of 1-2 litres per day over her lactation, any treatments; increased calving to conception, time, changes in body condition and increased risk of culling (x1.5). I would suggest everyone has a critical look at levels of lameness in their herd and uses our benchmarked herds (graph opposite) to decide whether you need to have more input.

Gareth Foden
Veterinary Surgeon



HOUSING PROMOTIONS FOR CATTLE



BIMECTIN PLUS

500ml £70

Ivermectin/clorsulon injection
Ivomec Super equivalent



ENDOFLUKE

2.5Ltr £48 5Ltr £80
10% Triclabendazole drench



EPRIZERO

2.5Ltr £125 6Ltr £250
Eprinomectin Pour on



ENOVEX

2.5Ltr £27.50
Ivermectin Pour on

Other products are available to suit your needs. Please seek Veterinary/SQP advice from Synergy Farm Health.

Date of print: 01/12/2019. EOE.
All prices subject to VAT @ 20%

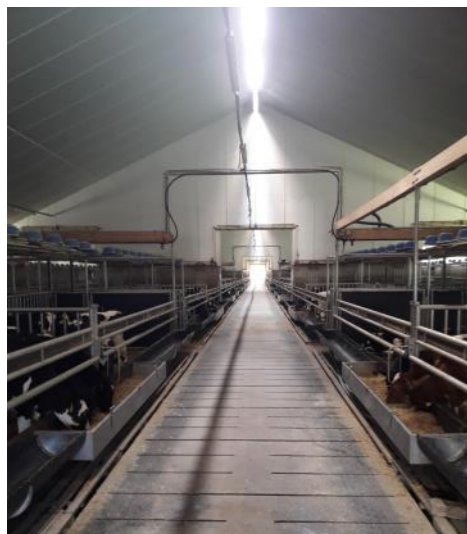
Trip to the Netherlands

Recently I visited the Netherlands with an aim of gaining a better understanding of their integrated beef chain. A lot of my work here in the UK is with farms that work with a similar setup, calves from the dairy sector being reared for either veal or 'young bull beef'.

This type of farming is well established in the Netherlands; there are currently ~730 specialised veal farms and 900 farms that deal purely with young bull beef. While some of these animals will have originated in the Netherlands, many will have been imported into the country. 806,687 calves were imported in 2018! The majority of these were from Germany (68%), followed by Belgium (15%), 'Eastern Europe' (8%), and then Ireland (6%).

I spent much of my time with one of the Dutch vet practices that deals solely with veal farmers and look after 25-30% of all veal units in the country.

When visiting farms, one of the most noticeable things was the investment in buildings and infrastructure. Buildings were completely closed and able to regulate



A modern veal calf building – a closed structure with automatic temperature and humidity control.

temperature and humidity. The entire beef chain from start to finish was almost entirely housed on heated slats and most setups had some form of automatic milk feeding. The result was that one farmer could look after up to 2000 calves at a time with most management occurring from a single room. There is no replacement for good stockmanship though and therefore several walks a day are required to examine all the animals. The first few days after a calf's arrival is by far the most labour-intensive point with a big push for them all to start drinking their milk from day 1. This was a crucial point that requires attention to detail and seemed to be what separated the best rearers from the rest. Something else noticeable was the absolute dedication to protocol. Hygiene and cleanliness were paramount which meant that all equipment was spotless. Every farmer seemed to be an expert on detergents and disinfectants with an ethos that their feed preparation area was a kitchen - it therefore needed to be maintained in a similar way. Many of the veal units I visited were specialising in white veal production as opposed to rosé veal which we would see more commonly in the UK. To produce white veal (with its typical colour and consistency), animals are being fed on a diet which mainly consists of typical calf milk replacer along with some roughage which legally needed to be made available to them throughout their lives. Decades ago, such an industry might have used infamous 'veal



A spotless 'calf kitchen'. Stringently maintained with cleaning protocols in place.

crates' to reduce movement but thankfully this was made illegal long ago and now movement is actively encouraged, with many farms even investing in environmental enrichment for their animals. The white colouration of the meat is a result of the milk-rich diet that is purposely deficient in iron. The roughage fed is also very low in iron. In order to maintain health and wellbeing, iron levels are routinely monitored with calves then being supplemented to requirement. Interestingly, units which reared white veal also invested in the equipment to make calf milk replacer from raw materials rather than purchase the more expensive finished product in bags. This involves the mixing of fresh whey, which is delivered every few days from a local cheesemaker, with minerals, fats and proteins that are stored in temperature-controlled bins on farm. This diet formulation was used for every milk feed and was once again computer controlled. It was clear from the beginning that this method of farming was very different from our own and that whilst there were some aspects that seemed unsuitable for a UK farming model and culture, there were certainly some things being done which were both relevant and transferrable. There was also a huge amount of compassion evident. My most memorable experience was helping a Dutch farmer unload more than 100 calves from Germany at 4 in the morning. The calves first needed to drink their electrolytes straight off the transport, and then a few hours later were all coaxed to have their first milk feed – a crucial job that needed a lot of patience! I learnt a huge amount during my visit and thank the veterinary practice DAP Thewi who helped make the visit so memorable and enjoyable, as well as the farmers who were all so welcoming.

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Ben Barber
Veterinary Surgeon



Meet the Team Alice Archer

Since joining the reception team in April 2018 Alice has become a valued member of the practice. She oversees the North Team diary as well as co-ordinates students on RVC rotation and EMS placements with us. She works very closely on some of our vet projects including our recent BVD stamp it out scheme. When not working hard, Alice likes to get creative and enjoys walking her dogs.



Vet Tech Team Update

The Vet Tech team continues to flourish and has recently added two new trimmers.



Natalie Harrow

Natalie Harrow comes from a dairy background, milking 700 cows in Somerset. She is an experienced ROMS registered mobility scorer and is passionate about helping our clients deal with lameness issues.



Peter Hansford

Peter Hansford also comes to us with plenty of dairy herd experience, having been working on a large farm in Dorset. He has recently joined the East side of our practice. As always, our new trimmers are currently spending some time shadowing the existing team so that they get to know our clients and farms before taking on their own routines.

We are very proud of the growth in our highly skilled and professional Vet Tech team. High demand for our services is a reflection of the hard work and dedication put in by the whole team, delivering a quality assured service whether it's foot trimming, freeze branding, mobility scoring, disbudding, PD scanning, genomic testing, blood sampling or carrying out AI. We have now added our new vaccination service to this list.

Vaccination Service

Synergy has just launched its Vet Tech Vaccination Service, designed to help clients plan, manage and administer cattle vaccines. Our principle deliverer of this service is Molly Rivers. Molly attended agricultural college and continues to gain valuable experience relief milking and rearing calves on a large Somerset dairy farm whilst being employed 3 days a week by Synergy, as well as running her own small Simmental suckler herd. She is already starting to build up regular clientele for the vaccination service.

There are a two main vaccination service types:

- The main target area is calf vaccinations (eg calf pneumonia vaccines and Ringvac), with Molly visiting farms on a weekly or fortnightly basis to bring and administer vaccines to your calves at the correct age, using your farm records to coordinate her visits to your own specified vaccine requirements. She will bring and administer the vaccines to the correct calves, often without the need for your assistance, FREE OF CHARGE. All you pay for is the vaccine cost! This can also tie in with existing 0-6 Youngstock

programmes and/or your general Herd Health Plans as set by your routine vet.

- Assistance with herd vaccinations – supplying you with an additional competent staff member who can ensure vaccine compliance. This service is charged at £30 per hour.

Why are Synergy offering this great value Calf Vaccination Service?

- ⇒ To encourage the use of calf pneumonia vaccines as preventive medicine – improving health and welfare and reducing antibiotic usage.
- ⇒ To improve vaccine compliance – delivery of your vaccine kept at the correct temperature and administered at the correct age and in the recommended way.
- ⇒ To help coordinate and carry out your calf vaccination programme – a task we know that some farmers find difficult due to the constant trickle-feed of calves reaching the

For further information please discuss the vaccination service with your routine vet or contact the office on 01935 83682.

Dave Frecknall
Vet Tech Manager



Synergy Client Mark Raymond wins South West Sheep Farmer of the Year



The South West Farmer Awards 2019 were held at the Somerset County Cricket Ground in Taunton on Thursday, November 7. The event was held in support of the Farming Community Network, with a raffle raising proceeds for the charity. Sheep Farmer of the Year was awarded to Synergy Client Mark Raymond from Yeovil. Mark's great work with the mixed flock and dedication to strict health criteria and pasture management impressed the judges, as did his excellent diversification through the tannery. We know you will join us in congratulating Mark on receiving this award.

Rich Wigram New Zealand Farming Scholarship

The Rich Wigram NZ Farming Scholarship (RWNZFS) has been set up in memory of Rich Wigram who tragically died in 2010 as the result of an accident on his farm in NZ at the age of 34. This charity is administered by his family and friends in both the UK and NZ. The charity was set up in 2012 to enable young people over 18yrs to experience dairy farming in New Zealand through a one year work placement. Their aim is to send out 2 candidates per year in June or early July. For further information or to donate please visit: www.richwigramnzscholarship.org.

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 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

Coming in March

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

Coming in January

CowSignals Workshop
9th Jan 9am-4pm at Evershot



Sheep Faecal Egg Counting Course
13th Jan 10am-3pm at Evershot



Practical Calving Course
15th Jan 10.30am-2.30pm at Evershot

2 Day Foot Trimming Course
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