

# News from our Rounds

## East

### Claire Rudd

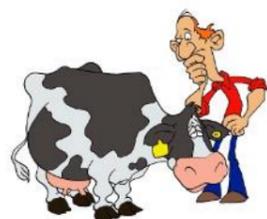


Team East has had a fully packed month with calving and lambing in full swing on many holdings. Aside from difficulties at parturition, in particular we have seen a large number of uterine prolapses. Uterine prolapse (post calving / lambing prolapses) are commonly associated with milk fevers – that is, calcium levels in the body are suboptimal leading to reduced muscle contractions and the uterus failing to shrink down correctly immediately after birth. Milk fevers in cattle are usually seen at the point of calving, while in sheep milk fever incidence peaks at 2 weeks either side of lambing – and we have seen a few cases this month.



With the prolonged wet weather we have had we can assume that the mineral levels in grass are extremely low. With some sunshine set to arrive over the next few weeks and the ground hopefully drying out enough for turnout, be aware of the risk of metabolic diseases in largely grass based systems. Staggers (magnesium deficiency) will be a big worry as the grass gets going.

Please speak to one of us for advice on preventing metabolic disease and remember to keep a small quantity of calcium and magnesium injectables in stock for those emergencies!



## South

### Alasdair Moffett



With the current human health climate it is my hope that UK agriculture is supported and promoted. With the potential for reduced ability to import food products and their reduced availability, could this represent an opportunity for UK agriculture to fulfil a greater percentage of the UK food market? And once things have settled down, could this increased market place be maintained once there is free availability for imported products? Could it be that with people unable to shop as they would normally that we see a rise in the door to door milk round again? The cynic could say they whilst all this may be true, the situation also represents a challenge to our export industry too.

On a separate note, we are used to driving to farm more often than not as individual vets and paraprofessionals. However, we are incredibly lucky to work for such a good team. If we encounter challenging situations we have the ability to call in a whole wealth of experience and knowledge. It is only by working as a team that we can provide the best service to you our clients. What I would urge farms to do is also to use the 'team approach' when it comes to animal health. Breed Advisers, nutritionists and consultants should all be working together to help you run your businesses, and ideally having face to face time on farm together with each other. Only by pulling everyone together and getting the combined input of all advisors in synchrony, will the farm be receiving the most from the input that they pay for.



## North

### Paula Hunt



Badgers and TB were in the news again in March, after the gov response to the Godfray review hinted at phasing out culling when it is deemed appropriate. It is as important as ever that we are using all tools available to us to control bTB, and its great news that the government is committing to cattle vaccination in the next five years.

It's been a wet and very mild winter. Some badgers may have been completely flooded out, whilst others will have had easy access to a plentiful supply of earthworms in the soft ground. I have seen plenty of latrine activity around my local footpaths. If we get a sudden cold spell they might seek out extra energy from maize pits or feed troughs so keep those areas well protected. If we see a return of really hot dry conditions this summer, earthworms will be difficult to dig and the badger's priorities will turn to accessing easy food and water, so tailor your biosecurity measures to your water troughs and mineral licks, and beware poached ground alongside watercourses where the bTB bacteria can survive for some time.

This may be a good time to consider your cattle handling facilities in the event of a heat wave! Heat stress in groups of animals is becoming a risk as summer temperatures rise, so provision of extra shade over areas where cattle are gathered may well be a worthwhile investment for the future. Plant trees for this and it'll be a winner for the environment too!

[www.tbhub.co.uk](http://www.tbhub.co.uk)  
[www.tbknowledgeexchange.co.uk](http://www.tbknowledgeexchange.co.uk)



April 2020

COVID-19 02/04/20



## Our response to COVID-19

We continue to provide veterinary services and medicines in order to support our clients in the vital role they play in the food production chain. This currently includes all regular Health and Fertility ("Routine") veterinary visits, Lameness (Vet Tech visits included), sick animal visits, TB testing and all emergency calls.

As we are all aware the C-19 situation evolves daily, but we have a contingency plan in place and a team ready to respond to changes and update plans as they occur. At the present time we have put together the following information to guide you but please contact the practice on 01935 83682 should you have any queries regarding this advice.

### For the protection of our staff:

- All external meetings and non-urgent internal meetings are cancelled.
- Visitors to practice sites are strictly limited to essential supplies and medicines collection.
- Clients will be able to collect medicines but contact must be limited and protocols adhered to. [Please check with our Dispensary Team re: sites for medicine collections.](#)
- Discussions with farmers will be in an outside space.
- Synergy delivery drivers will check they can attend client premises prior to delivering medicines.

### For the protection of our clients:

- All clients will be telephoned by our reception team or Vet Tech (VT) Co-ordinator prior to Vet / VT attendance to check there is no issue with their visit taking place. If we are aware of any issue whilst on farm human health will take priority.
- We will ensure that PPE is used on farm at all times and will maintain a social distance of 2 metres where practically feasible.
- Farm meetings/discussions will be held in an outside space.
- For emergency animals visiting the practice; all farmers must use hand gel provided, on entry and exit to the building and must only visit if not experiencing symptoms or not having been in contact with suspected infected individuals.

### General Protection:

- Limit exposure to groups of people
- No use of public transport
- Use handwashing protocols

For further advice use the government site:  
[www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus)

### There are no current plans to cancel TB Testing

Statutory TB testing will currently continue. A risk based approach to performing TB testing has been instructed by APHA. "TB testing should only continue if, in the OV's judgement, it can be done safely in accordance with current COVID-19 public health guidance." We will contact you if there are any issues with your test but please contact us if you or your staff are in self isolation or are at risk.  
For further information please visit: [www.tbhub.co.uk](http://www.tbhub.co.uk)

### Considering our clients

We do not underestimate the fact that farmers can also be vulnerable to the effects of isolation, especially at this very busy time of year and now exaggerated by these circumstances. There are a number of useful organisations who can offer support, please see the below links to some of those organisations:

- The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution: [www.rabi.org.uk](http://www.rabi.org.uk)
- The Farming Community Network: [www.fcn.org.uk](http://www.fcn.org.uk)
- Mind, the Mental Health Charity: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

## COVID-19—IMPORTANT UPDATES ON FRONT

## Colostrum Management in Beef Suckler Calves

Traditionally we have treated calf colostrum management as a Dairy cow and calf issue. Whilst it is certainly true that the average dairy cow has poorer quality colostrum than a suckler cow, research has shown that poor antibody absorption from colostrum is a common problem for suckler calves as well.



A study by AHDB Beef and Lamb and the University of Edinburgh blood sampled 1320 suckler calves from 92 farms across Scotland and England soon after birth to see how well they had absorbed antibodies from colostrum. In this study, 37% of calves were found to have either marginal or very low antibody levels. This means that they were at a significantly higher risk of infectious disease within the first few weeks of life.

The reasons why suckler calves may have not absorbed enough colostrum antibody are numerous, and include: -

- ◆ Mis-mothering in the first few hours of birth
- ◆ Udder and teat conformation issues
- ◆ An exhausted calf after a difficult birth struggling to get up and suckle quickly
- ◆ Dirty teats resulting in the calf ingesting bacteria
- ◆ Colostrum quality affected by cow nutrition
- ◆ Colostrum volume in the udder being suboptimal
- ◆ Artificial colostrum having to be used

There are some easy ways to establish whether colostrum management might be worth looking at in your herd. Firstly, how many calves do you have to treat for scours or pneumonia up to weaning? What are your mortality rates for calves in the first

few weeks of life and up to weaning? Most importantly have we blood sampled any calves to look at antibody levels recently? This is a cheap and easy way to establish whether colostrum issues are likely to be having an impact on your herd. The calves to blood sample are at least 24hrs old and less than a week of age. We would normally blood sample at least 6-10 calves to get a good picture of what is going on.

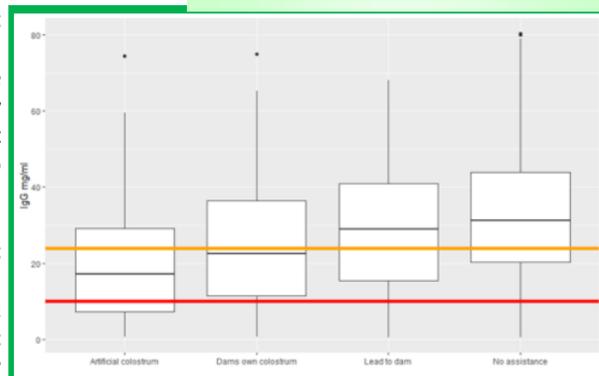
If we find that most of the calves have a good antibody level, we can be confident that there are currently no colostrum issues.

If there are a significant proportion of calves with low antibodies, we can look at patterns to see what might need further investigation.

- ◆ Are antibodies low across the board? This could be a result of poor colostrum quality and it might be worth us looking into cow nutrition.
- ◆ Are antibodies low for specific calves only, and if so are there any patterns e.g. difficult calvings?
- ◆ Are you having to use more artificial colostrum than you would like? Although powdered colostrum is a necessity in some cases, the AHDB study showed that suckler calves given artificial colostrum were more likely to have insufficient antibodies in their bloodstream. This may be because there is a huge variety of colostrum replacer products available of varying quality and none of them are as good as naturally produced, fresh colostrum.

## April 2020

- Colostrum Management in Beef Suckler Calves
- Dispensary Updates
- Mobile Handling System
- Mobility Matters by CLA
- Regional News



Blood antibody levels in suckler calves depending on how they were given colostrum. The orange line shows marginal levels and the red line failure of passive transfer. Calves that were born and suckled without assistance had the best uptake of antibodies from colostrum. Calves given artificial colostrum had the lowest antibody levels. From recent AHDB Beef and Lamb and University of Edinburgh study into suckler calves.

Once we have some data, we can look at where to target interventions specific to your herd. We might look at the risk factors for difficult calvings (e.g. sire choice, cow condition, staff training amongst others). We might look at protocols for new-born calf care after difficult calvings or discuss cow hygiene amongst other risk factors. As with any herd health issue, the first step in making informed interventions that will have positive, cost effective benefits is to obtain and analyse some simple performance data. Give us a call if you would like us to discuss your calves' performance or take some bloods from new-born calves.

Tom Shardlow  
Veterinary Surgeon



## Mobile Handling System

With Spring turn out hopefully on its way, cattle will be moved away from the close proximity of farm buildings and handling areas, resulting in increased time and effort to maintain animal welfare.



This can be aided greatly by the use of our Mobile Handling System which enables the equipment to be taken to the animals rather than having to bring the animals to the equipment.

The system at Synergy is a race with locking yoke, head scoop and squeeze crush with a second compartment for a waiting cow. Additional gates allow collecting areas to be formed and can be repositioned to create funnels for ease of loading the race.

It can be used to assist in TB testing, in worming and with the addition of a weighing plate, monitor the growth of cattle by weighing animals. The weigh plate is also capable of recording a cows ID and reporting via email directly to the farmer.

The portability and adaptability of the cattle handling equipment helps to save

time and effort, and is simple to install and maintain. It takes around 20 minutes to set up and another 20 minutes to pack away ready to be moved to the next location.

Having worked at Synergy for little more than 6 months this equipment is new to me but it is clear that it greatly aids any visits to farms where animals are in multiple locations. Availability of the Mobile Handling System will recommence fully once current restrictions have been relaxed.

Peter Hansford  
Vet Tech



## Mobility Matters

The Cattle Lameness Academy Team at Synergy Farm Health have been working on some educational videos, 'Mobility Matters', which cover all aspects surrounding lameness in dairy cows. Thank you to all our farmers that have taken part with the filming over the last six months. Its great to have the support of our clients with these videos and we hope that these freely available videos will be useful to all farm staff wanting to find more about lameness.

Our videos are gradually being released on our website: [www.cattlelamenessacademy.co.uk/mobility-matters/](http://www.cattlelamenessacademy.co.uk/mobility-matters/)

Follow us on social media to keep up to date with our new videos as they are released:

@cattlelamenessacademy  
@\_CLAcademy

Cattle Lameness ACADEMY

Supported by Care4Cattle  
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20 subscribers

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Uploads PLAY ALL SORT BY



How to apply a bandage by The Cattle Lameness... No views • 3 hours ago

Mobility Scoring by The Cattle Lameness Academy 75 views • 2 weeks ago

Knife Sharpening by The Cattle Lameness Academy 44 views • 2 weeks ago



Cow Comfort by The Cattle Lameness Academy 34 views • 2 weeks ago

Foot Anatomy by The Cattle Lameness Academy 202 views • 3 weeks ago

## Telephone Consultations

We are in the current circumstances providing telephone veterinary consultations, in place of a visit and clinical examination where not possible or practical, which are being charged for as per normal professional fee rate.

### \*\*\*SEASONAL PROMOTIONS\*\*\*



**SPOTINOR**  
2.5L £130.00  
1L £65.00



**ECTOFLY**  
2.5L £33.70  
5L £58.90



**ENOVEX PO**  
2.5L £27.50



**TAURADOR PO**  
(= Dectomax PO)  
2.5L £105  
5L £195

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

### VACCINE REMINDER: DON'T FORGET!

Now's the time to order your Huskvac Doses and Lepto/BVD/ IBR Boosters. Please contact Synergy Dispensary on 01935 83682.

### CEVA Welfare Awards POSTPONED

Synergy Vet Emily Gascoigne is a finalist for Farm Educator at this year's CEVA Welfare Awards. The Awards Ceremony has been postponed however Emily's nomination will carry through to the later postponed Ceremony date, which is likely to be in Autumn 2020.



### Meet the Team

#### Milly White

Milly White joined Synergy in June 2019 as an Approved TB Tester (ATT). Milly is from a family farming background in Dalwood, Devon where they farm Red Ruby Devon and South Devon cows and Poll Dorset, North Country Mules and Cheviot Cross sheep. After studying Agriculture at Kingston Maurward College, Milly then went on to live in New Zealand for two years working as a Veterinary Technician.

Outside of work Milly enjoys helping on the home farm, catching up with friends and going to young farmer events. She enjoys meeting and working with our farmers.

