

# News from our Rounds

## East

### Tom Clarke



From a relentless five months of moisture to a test of grass drought resistance and housing heat stress control. We certainly have our challenges!

There was a flurry of LDAs in March/April, even before turn out. Ration stability with mature maize silage means there are some cracking yields about. The challenges at the moment will be managing the turnout of fresh and higher yielding cows and managing ketosis risks. The cows staying housed will need sheds that are as open and ventilated as possible with these hot days. The use of hanging angled fans is becoming popular and targeted in high density areas like collecting yards and can help alleviate some heat stress.



An unusual case recently was the case of the "hamster cow". A dairy cow presented losing weight with cheeks puffed out like the proverbial hamster. The swelling was in fact balled up feed and on examination of the back of the throat (using a gag) I could feel a large abscess obstructing the flow of food. I tried a course of antibiotics but after no improvement I lanced it from inside her mouth and out poured a couple of litres of pus. Since then she hasn't looked back and is more cow than hamster again!

## South

### Alasdair Moffett



Whilst Coronavirus dominates everything, we are also in the midst of agreeing the standards of food we will be willing to import under any new trade agreements post Brexit. From where it currently stands there is definite concern we will be accepting food of lower standards. Time will tell.

A further corona adaption has been the start of online cattle auctions; with a Limousin bull selling for £15,000 in Lanarkshire last week. Nobody would ever pay that much for a bull this far South!

On the more practical side – we have had a few calls to some very large triple blue/fertility plus calvings. Early intervention is always best, with caesarean



The beautiful patchwork fields of Spring as first cut silage makes it's way in from the fields.

prognosis worsening for every hour after the start of active calving. I have also visited two Green-field site dairies of late – it will be exciting to see how these projects progress.

## North

### Graeme McPherson



I am certain that no-one alive can remember a time such as this. It is so strange whenever going into a town or village to see people get off the pavement to give each other a wide berth to maintain 'social distancing'.

When the economy is forcibly locked down, only the industries that really matter continue. Food production is surely the most important industry there is. It is great to see the NHS applauded for their brave and committed efforts. But on Thursday evenings when my family venture out onto the front step to clap the NHS, we also clap for farmers who have carried on doing what they always do - producing food to a high standard in accordance with animal welfare standards that are among the highest in the world. I hope that its importance will receive greater recognition by society in future.

May also marked the month when our popular colleague, Josh Swain heads off on travels. He assures us that he will be back in 2021 and we all look forward to that.

You will have seen introductions to the newest member of our team in the North, Charlotte Debbaut, in last month's newsletter. Some will have had the opportunity to meet her now, she is a perfect fit for the North team, friendly, dedicated, competent, committed and caring. A very welcome addition!

COVID-19 02/06/20

## Our continued 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. Our current protocols continue to be in place.

- 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.

### TB Testing continues

Statutory TB testing will 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.

### YOUNGSTOCK TB TESTING EXEMPTION

Animals under 180 days (6 months) may be exempt from routine statutory TB tests if the test cannot be performed safely under social distancing rules. See [www.tbhub.co.uk](http://www.tbhub.co.uk) or contact us for further details.



## Your Wellbeing in Lockdown

Thoughts from Synergy's Wellbeing Champions

**There have been huge changes in daily life over the last few months.** We are very lucky compared to those stuck in their city flats, but even though we have been able to carry on going to work and getting a bit of fresh air we have still been affected – jobs like food shopping have been challenging or impossible at times, we've missed out on our usual social activities and a thousand other small things have become more awkward.

**R.A.B.I – the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution**  
0808 281 9490 or [info@rabi.org.uk](mailto:info@rabi.org.uk)



**The Farm Safety Foundation**  
Yellow Wellies  
01789 416065  
[Farm\\_Safety\\_Foundation@nfmutual.co.uk](mailto:Farm_Safety_Foundation@nfmutual.co.uk)



**Mind – 0300 123 3393 or**  
[info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)



This seems like a good time to raise the subject of wellbeing and mental health. 1 in 4 people in the UK suffer from a mental health problem each year, and in England 1 in 6 people report experiencing a common mental health problem, such as anxiety or depression, in any given week (NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care).

Take a moment to consider whether your state of mind has changed during lockdown. For many people the lack of contact with friends and family, uncertainty about the future and the feeling of isolation will have brought about a marked reduction in happiness or quality of life. This might present itself simply as a lack of motivation or changes in appetite and sleeping patterns, or in much more serious ways like thoughts of self harm and suicide. For many other people lockdown might feel like a calm oasis compared with the frantic activity of normal life; they might be secretly enjoying the fact that the pressure of meetings or social gatherings can be avoided and might actually be dreading the restrictions being lifted.

**If you or someone you live with are experiencing thoughts of self harm or suicide, or if you are finding that depression or anxiety is affecting your ability to perform normal daily tasks, there are a number of charities on hand to offer help and support:**

**FCN - The Farming Community Network**  
03000 111 999 or [help@fcn.org.uk](mailto:help@fcn.org.uk)



## June 2020

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- Cattle Vets call on government to give UK farmers greater protection in future trade deals
- Vet Tech Natalie walks her socks off for Mental Health Support in Farmers
- Developing an effective fly control plan
- Seasonal Promotions
- Regional News
- Our response to COVID-19

If you are suffering from less severe symptoms - finding that your average mood is reduced or that you are less optimistic than you have been before, then there are loads of things we can all do to help keep ourselves positive.

**Mind** have put together a top 6 relaxation tips to help get you started:

**Listen to music** – Your favourite tunes can help you switch off. Tracks with a slower tempo or designed with relaxation in mind might be a good choice.

**Try a breathing exercise** – Gently breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, keeping the pace slow and regular. Slowly tense and relax all muscles in your body, starting at your toes and working up to your head. Afterwards just take some time to be still and focus on how your body feels.

**Pause for thought** – Introduce small moments of relaxation into your day. Take a moment to stop and listen to the sounds you can hear. Mindfulness techniques like this can help you to feel calmer.

*Rise above the storm and you will see the sunshine*



© The Farm Safety Foundation.

**Try active relaxation** – Gentle exercise like Yoga, Tai chi or Pilates, or a stroll in the fresh air, can all give you time to unwind your body and mind. Exercise releases 'feel good' hormones, which can help reduce depression and anxiety.

**Where are you happiest?** – A field on a sunny day?, a beach? Imagine you are there. Think of the sounds and smells around you, and how they make you feel. This can bring back nice memories and help you unwind.

**Keep practicing** – Try not to worry if relaxing doesn't come easily. Set aside some time every day, or as often as you can to try relaxing. Find a quiet, warm space where you won't be interrupted, to help keep your mind focussed and free from distractions.

## New mental health initiative to support pandemic-hit farmers in Somerset

A new mental health initiative is being launched in Somerset to help anyone visiting farms to spot signs of potential problems and provide relevant support. The **Somerset Mental Health in Agriculture Group** will provide resources to help such visitors communicate with farmers about their mental health or point them in the right direction.



## Cattle Vets call on government to give UK farmers greater protection in future trade deals

The British Cattle Veterinary Association (to which all of Synergy's vet team belong) joined with several other leaders from the farm animal veterinary profession to write to the House of Lords calling for the upper chamber to reject the government's Agriculture Bill and return it to the House of Commons. This follows the defeat at the end of May of an amendment to the Bill, led by Tiverton and Honiton MP Neil Parish, which would have protected animal welfare and food standards for imports entering Britain in future trade deals.

The Presidents of the British Cattle Veterinary Association, the Goat Veterinary Society and the Sheep Veterinary Society called on members of the Food, Poverty, Health and Environment Committee in particular to lead the way in securing this once-in-a-generation opportunity to uphold animal welfare, safeguard food security, and act in the interest of British farming as well as the UK consumer.

The current imbalance of UK food supplies has left us unequipped for not only Coronavirus but also Brexit and future

climate change. It is hoped the recent increased interest in food security shines a spotlight for long enough to address these supply chain issues. On the plus side – food waste during lockdown has been reduced dramatically; in your average year the UK will waste 290,000 tonnes of milk alone.

All of us at Synergy Farm Health recognise the importance of these trade agreements in shaping the future direction and standards in British food production. We have a joint responsibility to ensure that the farming industry's voice is loudly heard. As recently detailed in Farmers Weekly by West Dorset MP Chris Loder, we must all take the opportunity to lobby Parliament to ensure this opportunity is not missed.

To sign the Food Standards Petition please visit:

[www.campaigns.nfuonline.com/page/56262/petition/1?](http://www.campaigns.nfuonline.com/page/56262/petition/1?en_chan=fb&locale=en-)

[en\\_chan=fb&locale=en-](http://www.campaigns.nfuonline.com/page/56262/petition/1?en_chan=fb&locale=en-)

**Ed Powell-Jackson**  
Veterinary Surgeon



### Farm Assurance in Covid-19

For those of you due a farm assurance inspection, you may be asked by your assessor to submit your health plan and antibiotic audits online. If you need your health plan in this format, please let us know. We are anticipating high demand so please can we request sufficient notice to allow us to process your request.

## Vet Tech Natalie walks her socks off for Mental Health Support in Farmers

Synergy's Vet Tech Natalie Harrow is walking her socks off with dog Benji to raise money for 'Mind your Head', a charity campaign headed up by Yellow Wellies (The Farm Safety Foundation). The campaign aims to support farmers to talk openly about their mental health and raise awareness.

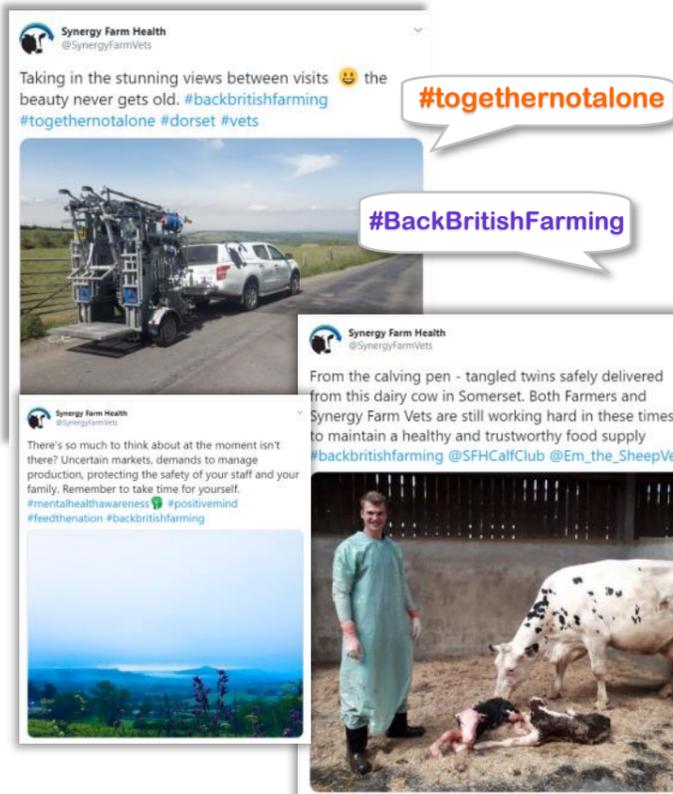
It goes without saying that the COVID-19 situation has brought stress and strain to businesses and livelihoods, therefore it's more important than ever to support our farmers. Poor mental health is sadly very common in the agricultural community.



Natalie has already smashed her target of 16,000 steps/100km but is soldiering on further!

If you'd like to sponsor Natalie please visit her Just Giving page:

[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/natalie-harrow](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/natalie-harrow)



### Meet the Team Aimee Davies

Aimee joined Synergy Farm Health as Dispensary Business Manager in September 2019. Aimee's primary role consists of overseeing product management, business analysis and stock control.

Aimee initially embarked upon a legal career having attained a Law Degree and completed the Legal Practice Course. She later moved industry and has spent the last 8 years working for a large food processing organisation looking after key customer accounts within the Commercial Team. In her spare time she enjoys spending time with her family and friends, going to the theatre and keeping fit.



## Developing an effective fly control plan

Flies are a costly nuisance to the UK's cattle and sheep population. In addition to the irritation caused, flies can also transmit a number of diseases, the most familiar being New Forest Eye and summer mastitis. Fly problems can occur any time between March and November, depending on weather conditions and geography, so it is important that farmers, in conjunction with their vet/animal health advisor, discuss their fly control plan WELL before this time.

Pupae can over-winter in a dung heap/soil and re-emerge as soon as temperatures rise above 7°C. Once conditions become favourable, female flies are prolific breeders capable of laying 3,000 eggs over a three-week period. If flies are not controlled on the farm early in the season, they can produce 15 generations in a single summer. Adult flies that you see on and around animals only represent 15% of the total population present on that farm, so it is important to act early to reduce the chance of the fly population booming. This is the commonest reason for failure of a fly control programme – you must start treatment early to keep on top of the problem.

As well as the direct irritation, tail swishing and stress caused by painful bites, there are significant productivity losses associated with flies such as reduced calf weight gain and a reduction in milk yields of up to 20 per cent. Feed consumption is often reduced in dairy

cattle as cows bunch together for protection; this will also much reduce lying times in housed animals. Cow cleanliness often deteriorates as more dung is flicked by the increased tail swishing. Furthermore biting flies are thought to be responsible for the transmission of summer mastitis in cattle. Summer mastitis, usually seen in calf heifers at grass, can lead to the loss of a quarter with response to any attempted treatment very poor – prevention is certainly crucial.

Flies can act as vectors transmitting bacteria on their feet including those which cause New Forest Eye. Symptoms are well known; this condition can cause severe eye damage and pain, as well as a knock-on, long-term effect on productivity. Time consuming treatments need to be applied.

### ! SHEEP FLY STRIKE - WARNING!

Adult female flies deposit eggs on soiled fleeces and eggs hatch into first stage larvae within 12 hours. These larvae feed on skin and faecal matter, becoming mature maggots in as little as 3 days. Maggots feed voraciously, causing skin and muscle damage. Secondary bacterial infections are common and may also cause death if left untreated.

When choosing an active ingredient to manage the prevention and control of a fly population, it is important to consider:

- \* How quickly does it have an effect?
- \* How long will it last?
- \* Is it easy to apply?
- \* Does it treat and/or prevent parasites of interest?
- \* Withdrawal periods

**Deltamethrin** (the active ingredient in Spotinor) is a synthetic pyrethroid with a wide safety margin when used in cattle and sheep. It can be used for the treatment and prevention of infestations by lice and flies on cattle; ticks, lice, keds and established blow-fly strike in sheep, and lice and ticks in lambs. Deltamethrin spot-on solutions are conveniently licensed for both cattle and sheep and are easy to use; with a simple 'one size fits all' dosing scheme for each species. In addition, they can be used to treat maggot infestations in sheep; when applied directly to maggots, paralysis and death of maggots is achieved immediately.



**SPOTINOR**  
2.5L £110  
1L £60

We have a range of preventative and treatment options available, please get in touch with our SQPs on 01935 83682.



**ECTOFLY**  
2.5L £33.70  
5L £58.90



**CLIK EXTRA**  
2.2L £105  
5L £190

### SEASONAL PROMOTIONS



**ENDOSPEC**  
2.5L £30  
10L £58.78



**ENOVEX PO**  
2.5L £27.50

All prices EX VAT. For a full list of promotional items please contact Synergy dispensary on 01935 83682. Offer ends 30/06/20.



**TAURADOR PO**  
(Dectomax PO alternative)  
2.5L £105  
5L £185

### DISPENSARY NEWS

#### ! SEASONAL ALERT - RISING EGG COUNT

With the recent rain, it is likely worm egg counts will rise and we have seen some evidence of Haemonchus. Submitting screening lamb samples for pooling is recommended. Our SQP team can help discuss your wormer choices, and our laboratory is able to process your pre-drench checks.

#### CHANGES TO ALAMYCIN LA 200

There will be a new formulation change and withdrawal period to Alamyacin LA. Please note that this change does not apply to any current Alamyacin LA you may have on farm, this applies to the new formula only.

Please follow the withdrawal period as detailed on the bottle of Alamyacin LA 200 that is used at the time of treatment.

#### ! MILKING COW ANTIBIOTIC TUBE SHORTAGE

We are currently facing a nationwide shortage of Lactating cow tubes. This may mean that alternative tubes need to be prescribed during this time. If you have any questions over which product to use please discuss with your vet.



**OLD WITHDRAWAL PERIOD**

Meat & offal:	Milk:
Cattle - 31 days	Cattle - 10 days
Sheep - 9 days	Sheep - 7 days
Pigs - 18 days	



**NEW WITHDRAWAL PERIOD**

Meat & offal:	Milk:
Cattle - 41 days	Cattle - 8 days
Sheep - 24 days	Sheep - 7 days
Pigs - 20 days	