

News from our Rounds

East

Mark Burnell



Just as I was trying to get into the routine of part-time work the whole world shuts down and nearly everyone (sorry farmers) also has Monday off! So far we have been incredibly lucky in our part of the world although with a friend who has been on a ventilator in Dorchester (recovered now) and a niece working in ICU it reminds me how scary it can be. Without getting too political, I'm not sure we vets would have controlled a disease outbreak quite this way....but essentially it's been a 'great' reminder of what happens when you overstock – we all know it but we still try and get away with it!



Some of you may have seen my very

amateur 'Business-Like Breeding' videos on Facebook. I've just checked and did you know there are 1,541 available Holstein bulls for you to choose from? I find investigating whether all that wonderful bull genetics you are buying is actually being expressed on farm fascinating. But how many farms are looking at female genetics? This is where the value of genomics comes in; the potential for increased performance and efficiency by correct selection of replacements is huge and the benefits compound year on year.

I have been really enjoying meeting some of our clients that have recently joined the practice and spent a lovely morning on a farm that used to be clients of my first practice 35 years ago – one of us should be saying 'welcome back'!

South

Beth Reilly



With the warm weather we are having interspersed with sudden showers the risk of Nematodirus is likely to become high again.

Haemonchus will not be far behind and we have already seen some high worm egg counts in adult ewes. June marked the first lungworm case in sheep, normally a 'silent' disease, however this flock had severe coughing and some cases of pneumonia. The weather this year has certainly upset our usual yearly worm cycle. It is best to take the approach that any worm is possible now and to keep routinely screening your flock with regular worm egg counts. Goats and alpacas are also highly susceptible to these parasites so routine monitoring for them as well is advisable.

Don't forget that in this hot weather both the vets (under all the waterproof clothing!) and farm animals get heat stressed. It is sensible to double check that all water troughs are working properly and that animals can access shade. Pigs need to be able to access mud wallows to keep cool as they are unable to sweat to cool their bodies like humans. Keep an eye out for blue green algae growth in troughs and pond areas as it can cause some tragic consequences (e.g. abortion or death) if animals drink water containing the algae toxins.



Blue green algal blooms

North

Graeme McPherson



A dry period, with associated fall in grazing quality and quantity, followed by decent rainfall will cause rapid grass growth and change in grass quality. Just the conditions we have recently experienced! Talk of a drought has gone (for now)! A rapid increase in grass availability and protein content are the kind of conditions that can cause 'Fog Fever'. Otherwise known as Acute Bovine Pulmonary Emphysema and Oedema, it is caused by an extreme immune reaction in the lungs to the amino acid Tryptophan and its metabolites. These come from the increased protein levels in the lush grass.

It typically affects adult cattle. Some animals have a mild episode that may go unnoticed. However, some get severe pneumonia symptoms, but usually with no cough. Affected animals will have increased breathing rate, extended necks and in very severe cases may open mouth breathe. They typically have no temperature and unfortunately, in severe cases, the lung damage is extensive and permanent. Though we usually see it in an occasional animal, it can occur in outbreaks. If animals are going to change from relatively poor quality forage, to high quality grazing, then it may be advisable to provide limited access to the high quality forage for a week to allow adaptation, or offer hay for the first week or so.

In these conditions of rapidly changing forage quality, another condition that you may see in young-stock is Cerebrocortical Necrosis (CCN). This is another condition caused by a rapidly changing diet leading to an overgrowth of bacteria that break down vitamin B1 – a vitamin essential for glucose metabolism in the brain. CCN causes neurological signs such as altered gait, blindness and eventually fitting. This, unlike fog fever, can be effectively treated if it is identified early. So if you have grazing youngstock and notice staggy gaits or apparent blindness, give Synergy a call ASAP.



Synergy wears pants to show support for Orchid Cancer Charity in #mattsfight #knowyournuts Campaign

On 26th June we joined Dorset YFC, and their chairman/Synergy client **Matt Frampton** of Burstock Grange, Broadwindsor, in their fundraising for **Orchid**, a charity dedicated to raising awareness of testicular cancer. Matt is currently battling this terrible disease and his campaign has attracted considerable attention on social media by encouraging folk to show off their wacky underwear all in aid of this very good cause! Synergy staff willingly joined in to increase awareness of this disease and **raised £1,000!**

To find out more or to donate please visit: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/mattsfightquiz>



July 2020

- Synergy wears pants to show support for Orchid Cancer Charity in #mattsfight #knowyournuts Campaign
- Now is the time to prepare for Autumn-born calves
- Gradual but welcome return to normality for Vet Tech Services
- Redwater on the increase
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Now is the time to prepare for Autumn-born calves

It won't be long before a significant number of Synergy dairy and suckler herds start gearing up to begin an intense period of calving.

The two overarching questions to ask before calving starts this autumn are:-

- ◆ **What went well last year and why did it go well?**
- ◆ **What went less well and how can we improve?**

A useful exercise at this time of year is to revisit the figures from last year to answer these questions. We can then create an action plan for this year's block to optimise calf health and performance.



What happened last year?

In a perfect world we would do everything perfectly. However, this is impossible and so we need to make some decisions as to where to prioritise our time and investment. Having good performance data is critical for this exercise.

Some basic data that is worth analysing from last year's block includes: -

- ◆ **What proportion of cows had an assisted calving?**
- ◆ **What was the stillbirth rate?**
- ◆ **How many calves were blood sampled for colostral antibody levels and what were the results?**
- ◆ **What was the disease incidence for common issues like scours, respiratory disease and navel/joint ill?**
- ◆ **What was the mortality rate in the first 4 weeks, 8 weeks and 6 months of life?**
- ◆ **How many calves were weighed and what were their growth rates?**

The first change that you might identify is the need to collect more data this year

compared with last year to allow proper analysis and prioritisation.

Answering the questions above saves a lot of time when deciding where to focus to improve performance. For example, if calf bloods for colostral antibody were consistently good we can generally say don't change anything with respect to colostrum management and let's see if there are any other risk factors that are playing a role in disease incidence.

Similarly, if scour and respiratory disease rates are very low then prioritising hygiene and ventilation changes on your farm is probably not a good use of resources.

However, if for example the stillbirth rate and the assisted calving rate was higher than we would like this could lead on to discussions about bull and heifer selection, cow body condition and staff training amongst many other things.

If you would like us to help you analyse previous performance and come up with targeted and achievable interventions to improve then give us a call. It could save you money and increase profitability in the long run!

Tom Shardlow
Veterinary Surgeon



GENOMIC TESTING YOUR HEIFERS

makes financial sense! Make the most of the current **3 on 2 test price offer of £25-83 (or £24-50 if 50 tests or more) and get the unique Dairy Wellness Profit Index included in Clarifide results.**

Talk to your regular vet about the benefits, be at the forefront of breeding replacements!



Gradual but welcome return to normality for Vet Tech Services

I think we can all agree that the last few months can only be described as a whirl wind, and a challenge for each and every one of us in one form or another. I am now so relieved that we are slowly starting to head back to normality albeit 2 meters apart!

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank to all of our clients for their patience and understanding whilst we have been limited with our full range of vet tech services, due to government regulations that were put in place for public safety. I must also say a massive thank you to the vet tech team who have worked tirelessly during these challenging times.

With normality slowly starting to return I am pleased to say that we are now starting to book in some of our services that were temporarily suspended during the early stages of the lock down. The following

services are available but subject to social distancing measures: **Freeze Branding, Mobility scoring, Genomic sampling, weighing sessions, disbuds and our Vaccination service.** Our vet tech team have been issued with protective PPE so if you are a high-risk individual or have a family member that is, please do inform us. With this in mind please do let us know if you or anyone on your holding is experiencing symptoms of COVID 19 so that we can keep everyone safe.

Over the last couple of weeks our mobile handling system has been in for a revamp! It is now back on the road. For those of you that were not aware we offer this service, it is a brilliant piece of kit that can be set up in yard or field, whether hard standing or muddy! It comes with a vet tech to assist you with tasks such as Tb testing, freeze branding, bolusing and vaccinating. Our digital weigh plate fits within the front or

back section of the crush, enabling animals to be weighed as they are coming through alongside another job, saving you time and hassle.



I look forward to catching up with you all in the near future!

Rhi Purbrick
Vet Tech Co-ordinator



#synergytweets!

Follow us on Social Media:

@SynergyFarmVets @SynergyFarmHealth



#backbritishfarming Synergy Drawing Competition!

To support #backbritishfarming Synergy are running their own competition to show our appreciation for our indispensable farmers. We are looking for some lovely farming drawings by your kiddies! The more colourful the better! Please share them within the comments of our social media post, along with your child's name and age. The lucky winner will win a Synergy goodie pack. Their picture will also be displayed in our Evershot reception, will be our cover photo on social media and will stage an appearance in our Newsletters. *We can't wait to see your lovely pictures!*



Redwater on the increase

Recent hot weather has seen an increase in tick activity and the practice has seen a number of cases of Redwater, one of the infections carried by ticks. With some farms running short of grass, cattle may have been foraging and shading from the heat in the margins of fields where ticks like to hang out in brushy/longer grass.



There are endemic Redwater regions on the south coast and up into parts of the Levels but disease can travel to areas on the edge of these regions as ticks move on wild animals such as deer. Most farms in an endemic area have learned to adapt to the disease by using home bred replacements only and exposing young animals to the infection to gain immunity. Farms on the margins of Redwater areas should be on the lookout for signs of the disease. Symptoms of the disease include the classic dark red urine (a product of the blood breaking down), weakness and increased respiratory rate as

they struggle with anaemia, but signs may be subtle such as being slow to come up to feed or hanging at the back of a group and can be missed in areas not on the lookout.

Avoidance

Preventing access to higher risk areas (tree lines, rough hedgerows etc) with electric fencing may be possible but often is impractical.

Reducing challenge

Using permethrin based fly products can help reduce the tick challenge although nothing is licenced in cattle. Speak to your vet for advice.

Treatment

The only treatment is Imizol (involving a lengthy withdrawal period), so a prompt and accurate diagnosis is vital. If caught early and treated, animals will recover on their own but in some circumstances a blood transfusion can improve the chances of survival. Although it sounds dramatic it is a relatively straight forward procedure that

our vets can carry out. The need to do a transfusion or not can be determined by a simple blood test and the sooner the decision is made, the better the prognosis.

Prevention

Imizol can be given at a higher preventative dose to give protection for up to a month, but the long withdrawal means this may not be practical in cases in dairy cows or animals close to finishing.

We have been involved with an imported vaccine from France that has been helping a number of farms control the disease. It requires two doses and must be given before exposure to Redwater, requiring careful planning the year before and assessment of the likely challenge. Unfortunately due to current restrictions we do not know when this will be available

Tom Warboys
Veterinary Surgeon



Sheep Seasonal Promotions

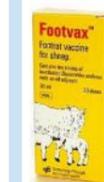


For those who may be looking for a flexible product (short withdrawal period and shorter coverage period) **Ectofly** may be worth considering. With a meat withdrawal of 8 days, activity against flies (preventative and treatment), lice and ticks it is broad spectrum. It is also licensed for milk producing sheep (milk withdrawal 5 days). Remember to use the correct applicator and speak to our SQPs to check you have the right equipment. Remember, it only acts where the products lands so correct application is important.



ECTOFLY
2.5L £33.70
5L £58.90

Post weaning is a good time of year to action lameness. With ewes and lambs now separate and culls removed, isolation of lame sheep to stop the spread and prompt treatment becomes much easier. It is a good time to implement **Footvax** vaccination. Remember our target is that <2% of ewes should be lame in a flock. Speak to one of our sheep team or SQPs to develop a personalised plan for your flock.



FOOTVAX
20 doses £28.50 50 doses £59
250 doses £230

DID YOU KNOW?

Vets Emily Gascoigne, Charlotte Debbaut and SQP Mikey Yard are now **Sheep Lameness Reduction Advisors**, certified by MSD Animal Health. Get in touch today to see how they can advise on a plan for your flock.



SPOTINOR
2.5L £110 1L £60

All prices EX VAT. For a full list of promotional items please contact Synergy Dispensary on 01935 83682.

We welcome Mike Kerby, Rachel Light and Vicki Coxon to the Synergy Team!



Well respected cattle vet **Mike Kerby** has been in practice for over 30 years working in Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire, and joined Synergy to continue his career within an independent practice. His vast experience in dairy herd health with interests in nutrition, reproduction and bovine surgery make him the ideal choice for those looking for an experienced clinician as part of their veterinary team.



Vicki Coxon is our new Operations Manager involved with the team overseeing the logistics of running the practice. Vicki studied Agriculture at Seale Hayne College and has had a variety of roles including as an NFU Adviser, and with a farm consultancy, before joining a veterinary practice in 2008 where she has spent the last few years as their farm office manager. She is a qualified SQP.



Well known in the area and with experience in both the agricultural and veterinary sectors, **Rachel Light** will provide support to both our vets and farming clients which will include delivery of medicines to your farm once she is free of contractual restrictions from her previous employer.

AN UPDATE ON THE MILKING COW ANTIBIOTIC TUBE SHORTAGE

There is currently a nationwide shortage of lactating cow tubes due to a manufacturing problem with one of the leading products (**Tetra Delta**) and the discontinuation of another product (**Ubro Yellow**). This has had a knock on effect to other lactating cow tubes on the market leading to inconsistencies of stock supply.



We are currently able to source **Ubrolexin, Mastiplan, Albiotic** and **Orbenin LA**. We are expecting the return of **Combiclav LC** mid- late July.

Unfortunately **Tetra Delta** is likely to be unavailable until 2021, so we are currently looking into an equivalent import product, **Gamaret**. We are likely to see stock of this in the next few weeks.

If you have any questions regarding this please speak to your Vet or contact Synergy Dispensary on 01935 83682.