

News from our Rounds

Central Emily Gascoigne



When weaning lambs recently it struck me that their "whole lives" have existed in a time of some degree of lockdown and what a strange year it continues to be. High beef prices and poor grass growth in some areas are inspiring "trimming of the fat" for suckler herds, with some taking time to take stock of persistent offenders (assistance at calving, low udders, poor attitude, poor mothering traits) and cash them in.

It has been a challenging season for Cobalt in lambs and it has reared its head early in some flocks needing action pre-weaning. Assessing growth rates now is going to reduce impact on latter seasons performance. 200g per day is roughly 3kg a fortnight so even if you do have individual lamb recording, the average of a mob should really be shifting that amount over that interval. If not, why not?

July was the month I became a "nearly wed" not a "newly wed" with a postponed wedding till next year. Being entirely philosophical it meant I could fit in some extra sheep jobs at home, squeeze in a few extra health plans and eat cake without the worry of that dress fitting. A note from a friend summed up how perhaps what we all might need to keep in mind at these times, "Good times are ahead!". Keep safe and smiling.

East Mike Kerby



Many things in life come full circleI am now the new vet again...and this time it is 35 and 28 years since starting my two previous jobs!

Some diseases have come along since I graduated in 1985 – Leptospirosis, Digital dermatitis, BSE, Bluetongue – but there are still a lot of conditions troubling us year after year and, as judged by my first few weeks at Synergy, Left Displacement of the Abomasum (LDA) and New Forest Eye (NFE) are particularly prevalent at the moment.

NFE is caused by a bacterium *Moraxella bovis* which is quite infectious and can survive in the conjunctival sacs of the eye for months. The infection gets a hold after superficial damage to the surface of the eyeball, typically caused by flies, thistles, gorse etc. So prevention and control centres upon regular fly control, avoiding fly habitats and strimming/topping. As with most conditions, early treatment yields the best recovery outcomes so look out for discharge from the corners of the eyes and rapid blinking/semi-closure of the eyelids EVERY DAY or else there will be cloudiness, ulceration and possible rupture.

And, now in August, when it rains and a flush of grass comes, there will be Lungworm outbreaks.....



Synergy Directors Andrew Davies & Jon Reader awarded well-deserved Fellowships of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (FRCVS)



In addition to Mark Burnell, we now have two more Synergy vets who have been awarded **Fellowship of the RCVS**.

Andrew Davies has been awarded his **Fellowship for Meritorious Contributions to the Profession**, and Jon Reader his **Fellowship for Meritorious Contributions to Clinical Practice**.



This prestigious recognition is awarded to veterinary surgeons whose activities demonstrate excellence across the entire veterinary landscape, and who have distinguished themselves on account of their ongoing commitment to using their experience and knowledge to enhance the profession further.

We are sure you'll agree that these awards are very well deserved and are fantastic achievements for Andrew and Jon, both personally and for the practice as a whole. We know you will join us in congratulating them both!

August 2020

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- Are you Red Tractor Assured? We are here to help!
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#synergytweets!

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New Synergy Office near Salisbury

Due to the development of our clients in the Salisbury area, Synergy have expanded their client reach and are proud to say that we have a new location at Lower Woodford, Salisbury. Our East team will be primarily based there and we are in the process of preparing it ready for use! Our telephone number for the Salisbury area is **01722 447411**. We will also continue to have a presence at Salisbury Livestock Market.

Watch this space for further updates.



Synergy Training Courses set to return!

Due to the Covid-19 situation, we had to make the difficult decision a few months ago to cancel our training courses. In the meantime we have run a number of virtual meetings which have been a great success.

We're now pleased to say that we are in the position to **start planning our events again**. Please be assured that safety of both our clients and staff are paramount, therefore we will either be running these online or face to face as socially distanced, Covid-19 safe courses.

Below are the list of courses that we can currently run safely under Covid-19 current restrictions. If you are interested in any of these please give us a call on **01935 83682** to log your interest, and we hope to confirm a date with you asap:

- Lamb Post Mortem
- Sheep Worm Egg Counting
- Milksure Course - Safeguarding Residue-Free Milk
- Safe Use Of Veterinary Medicines (both General & Sheep)
- ROMS Accredited Mobility Scoring Course

Are you Red Tractor Assured? We are here to help!

Some of the recent changes to Red Tractor Farm Assurance have been catching farmers unaware. Here is a quick guide to some of the common pitfalls:

Herd Health Plans need to be reviewed every year

Even if your Red Tractor audit occurs every 18 months the auditor will be looking to see that it has been reviewed at 12 monthly intervals. We now have a reminder system in place to help with this; but please make sure you check your review date and get us booked in plenty of time.

Bulk tank failures need to be notified to your vet within 7 days

We can help you to carry out an investigation if you are unsure of the cause, or help with staff training to make sure that it doesn't happen again. But whatever the cause, under the current rules, we need to be told.

A member of staff needs to have undergone approved medicine training

For Dairy members this is a requirement whilst for Beef and Lamb members it is currently a recommendation. The Synergy Farm Health **Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines Course** is approved by Red Tractor, and the **Milksure Course** also fits the bill whilst focussing particularly on avoiding residues in milk. Medicine training courses are starting up again soon - watch this space!



Rachel Hayton
Veterinary Surgeon



VIRTUAL 0-6 YOUNGSTOCK MEETING



COW SIGNALS®

**Wednesday 12th
August at 1.30pm
Youngstock Signals
Training**

We will be taking the internationally applied **Cowsignals®** principles and focus them on youngstock in a 'Youngstock Signals' training session, discussing growth targets, the right environment to reach these and more.

Please log your interest with the reception team on **01935 83682** and we will be in touch with details on how to access the meeting online.

Vet Tech Reproductive Services

The Synergy Vet Tech team offer a vast range of professional services; most farmers are aware of the more commonly used services such as foot trimming and freeze branding, but we also cover other roles to include a cattle pregnancy scanning service. This can help farms achieve high levels of reproductive efficiency at a cost effective price, targeted at the farmer who requires a simple PD positive or negative answer, and where no hormonal intervention is required. The service is charged on either a per cow basis or time basis, therefore can be bespoke to the client's needs and facilities.



We also offer a **Beef/Heifer Sync AI Service**, which is becoming increasingly popular. For a fixed cost per animal it includes an initial vet visit to check your animals and administer the hormones required to set the sync programme up. You will then receive a scheduled visit

from one of our Vet Techs that are trained and experienced in artificial insemination to serve the animal on the set date. We then follow this up with a pregnancy scan. All the farmer has to do is choose and order the semen you wish to use (from any of the semen companies on the market). For those that don't have an AI flask it can be sent straight to Synergy and we will store it for you free of charge for up to a month.

The advantages of this service are numerous! It allows you to take control of when your cattle will calve, enabling you to tailor your calving patterns to suit your individual set up. There are none of the stresses of buying, feeding and housing stock bulls, along with no risk of bringing disease on to your farm from purchasing a bull. You also have the ability to dramatically improve your herd genetics by using some of the top bulls available.

It's important to recognise that conception rates will be lower than from a stock bull, but providing your animals are of suitable age, size and body

	No. of Cows			
	<5	5-10	11-20	>20
Single AI	£58	£55	£50	£45
Double AI	£65	£60	£55	£50

* Price per animal (includes initial examination, hormonal treatments, AI and pregnancy scanning).

condition, and been on a good stable diet for at least two to three weeks prior to serving then you should expect to see some very good results.

Marc Hamlett
Vet Tech



Meet the Team Yvonne Critchell

Yvonne (aka Viv) is the Data Manager for the practice and has been with Synergy since it started in 2009. Viv spends her time collecting and analysing data, producing reports for vets and clients and preparing Health plans. In her spare time she enjoys cycling – but never too far from home!



News from our Rounds

North Charlotte Moulard



July welcomes vet Tom Angel to the North team, we're very pleased to have him on-board. I've reviewed several herd health plans lately; we've managed these visits relatively smoothly sat outside to comply with social distancing rules (I haven't been rained off yet!). Please help us by booking your health plan review in good time.

Our expanding "Team Sheep" recently hosted the very first Synergy virtual client meeting. With over 27 screens logged in and probably around 40 clients in attendance, it was a great success! The topic was 'Pushing up your weaning weights – bigger is better' and focused on weight data collection and decision making around when to wean. We hope this is one of many virtual Synergy meetings we are able to hold during these unusual times.

The BVD Stamp it Out project is running into its final six months. We are currently reviewing where all participating farms have got to on the project. Please discuss with your routine vet if you signed up to the project and haven't yet been contacted to start the testing process.

West Keith Cutler



I have now completed my first six months working at Synergy after 30 years at the same practice. Moving practices and working with new clients was a little daunting; how would I feel being the 'new boy' again? Would clients accept a grumpy old, new vet and would I be able to fulfil expectations? Six months later I am wondering why I was concerned; all of the Synergy clients I have met have been great. You have all been very friendly and have accepted my slightly warped sense of humour with good grace and patience without exception – Thank you.

All of the practice staff and vets have been similarly supportive and welcoming to me too. As Synergy clients you are so lucky to have such a dedicated and diverse team behind you, sharing interests and expertise to look after your animals and support your businesses.

I have noticed many similarities but also differences between Synergy farms and the farms I used to visit in my previous position; there are many more farms in this area milking their cows through robots.

One of the predominant health problems I have encountered generally is abomasal dysfunction, particularly left displacement. I have performed numerous LDA surgeries since my arrival – the majority I think with good outcomes. I also notice a much lower proportion of suckler cow work at Synergy than in my previous practice. This may, of course, be just chance or a reflection of the time of year. It may, however, be due to a perception that vets have little to add to suckler herd management but veterinary input into suckler cow enterprises can be just as valuable as it is in dairy herds.

Focus on Transition Cows

The transition period is the most critical part of the cows lactation. Done correctly we get a fertile cow with good milk production. Done badly and we get a full hospital pen with increased early lactation culling.

One of the biggest predictors of lactational performance is how much a cow eats towards the end of her dry period. We really need to maximise feed intakes in dry cows.

Feed face space is paramount

It is recommended that dry cows have 80 cm of feed space. Cows are physically at their biggest and need extra room. If buildings can't be redesigned is there an alternative way of offering more feed space – feed trailer in an open yard for example? Head yolks may be advantageous to the subordinate animals in the group by preventing bullying at the feed face. Heifers and cows must be familiar with them though!

Water

A minimum of 10cm of water trough space per cow. Water troughs should be cleaned regularly; tip over troughs make light work of this. If water from boreholes is used it should have a mineral analysis performed. High levels of certain minerals can reduce intakes and interact with the absorption of other minerals.

Feed needs to be palatable

Only top-quality ingredients should be used. Remember lower energy should not mean lower quality. Diets should be formulated to provide the correct amount of nutrients. The ration fed to dry cows can have a huge effect of performance during lactation even once cows are on a lactating cow diet – investment in dry cow rations really does pay dividends.

Icing on the cake

Feed cows twice daily; delivery of fresh feed is the biggest stimulant to eat. If this is not possible then feed should be

Feed intake in transition cows must be maximised



available for at least 23 hours a day, regularly pushing feed back to the cows throughout the day.

As things on farm change over time we can be guilty of allowing ourselves to become 'farm blind'. Cow numbers, calving pattern or grouping strategies may have changed whilst the facilities remain much the same. Would your farm benefit from a Transition cow audit?

If so get in touch!

Sam Cottam
Veterinary Surgeon



Survey and Research into Infectious Diseases in Cattle

Led by researchers at the University of Nottingham in collaboration with AHDB and the University of Warwick, the survey below is part of a government-funded project seeking the opinions and experiences of British cattle farmers for the control of infectious diseases in their cattle. Current disease transmission models do not take farmer beliefs and behaviours into account. However the data collected in this survey will help change that, and they hope that the opinions farmers give will be used to inform future disease control policies post-Brexit. Farmers who complete the survey can also enter a prize draw to win up to £100 in vouchers!

To participate please visit:
<https://nottingham.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/cow-disease>

We are looking into safe options for attending the **SW Dairy Show 2020 this Autumn**. It would be helpful to know if any of our clients were also thinking of attending. If you were considering attending the show this year, we'd be most grateful if you could kindly email our Marketing Coordinator Hayley Boyland to let us know as this will help us in our decision: Hayley.boyland@synergyfarmhealth.com. *Many thanks!*

Sheep Seasonal Promotions



ECTOFLY
2.5L £33.70
5L £58.90



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



SPOTINOR
2.5L £110
1L £60

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.

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

CONTINUED MILKING COW ANTIBIOTIC TUBE SHORTAGE

There is currently a nationwide shortage of lactating cow tubes due to a manufacturing problem with a number of leading products (Tetra Delta, Combiclav LC) and the discontinuation of 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 and Orbenin LA.**

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