



SHROPSHIRE FARM NEWS

Last night

I went to a meeting where the public could “Meet the Farmers!”. An opportunity for the locals to meet the local farmers and ask them what they do, how they do it and why they do it.

Turnout was great with a full car park. We can only dream of such a crowd when we organise meetings. Maybe the local beef and local cheeses were a great motivator?

I was quietly sat in the crowd enjoying my evening until questions started flying my way regarding veterinary topics. It surprised me how many questions there still are around TB, not only by the general public but also by our clients. How confusing it is to get a positive animal on skin test and that they then return with no visible lesions and / or negative culture. Which I pointed out is the better situation to have over results coming back with visible lesions and positive culture.

It is frustrating for farmers and vets alike to only have a test that merely finds 80% of positive animals at best. And that is why we have to do multiple tests. To have a better chance of finding TB.

I realise we have more explaining to do to make sure farmers and the general public understand more about TB. I’m not sure if I am landing myself with a similar prospect of running a meeting called “Meet the TB Testers!” where questions can be asked by farmers to vets/ TB testers.

We are looking at dates as I write this. We’ll keep you posted. In the mean time I’m happy to take all sorts of TB related question and I’ll endeavour to get answers to you via the newsletter or the meeting,

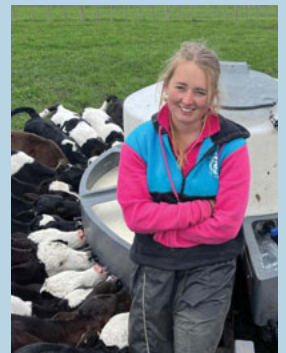
Roel

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Please introduce yourselves to our new Vet Tech when you see her!

Hello, I’m Emma Johnson, a dairy farmer’s daughter from South Shropshire. On our family farm, we are milking 400 Holsteins on an all year round calving system and rear our own replacements. I studied agriculture at Hartpury college and worked on a local dairy farm during my placement year. I then travelled to New Zealand for 7 months to work on a dairy farm calf rearing. I have a great passion for the dairy industry, and I look forward to meeting clients.



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Joint-Ill in lambs and calves

A common problem that we've seen after calving and lambing during the wet spring of 2024 is joint ill. We have had several calls from farmers asking us about the best treatments for joint illnesses, especially in lambs.

This year, the inclement weather has had a major impact on our ability to provide a clean dry environment for newborn lambs and calves; for many, turning out lambs has been impossible on account of waterlogged fields, lengthening the housing period and increasing the incidence of joint ill and other hygiene related diseases.

Joint ill ('septic arthritis') is a bacterial joint infection of youngstock that occurs in the first four weeks of life in calves, and usually in the first week for lambs. The infection causes pain, swelling, and lameness in one or more joints, and if the spine is affected, young stock may be unable to stand.

When calves are born into a dirty environment, infection through the navel is likely. However, infection via any open wound, including castration site, can lead to localised disease in the joints.

Lambs are often born indoors on straw bedding and remain indoors for at least 24-48 hours after birth. Unfortunately, the bacteria most commonly responsible for joint ill in lambs (*Strep dysgalactiae*) will live happily on dry straw, and if the bedding is contaminated with these streptococci, there is ample potential for lambs to be exposed. This makes management of outbreaks

in lambs more challenging to control than in calves. As with calves, infection can happen via the navel, but also through castration sites, tail ringing sites, ear tagging sites and perhaps even orally (from dirty udders or unclean stomach tubes).

The most common bacteria that will cause joint ill are streptococci and sometimes *E. coli* in calves. Infection is always environmental, so when calves and lambs are born into a clean environment and navels treated with iodine, the incidence of both navel infection and joint ill will be reduced. Quick disinfection of castration/tailing rings and eartags with surgical spirit before use can also help.

Colostrum management is also an important risk factor for newborns getting the disease; calves need 6 pints of good quality colostrum in the first 6 hours of life, while lambs need 50ml/kg bodyweight in the same timeframe.

The treatment for joint ill is antibiotics for 5-7 consecutive days. Penicillin, Betamox, or long-acting Draxxin for calves are all effective against the bacteria; the prognosis will depend on how quickly the infection is treated after setting in, and what degree of permanent damage has already taken place within the joint cartilage. In addition to antibiotics, to reduce the pain and inflammation, it is also important to administer an anti-inflammatory medication such as Metacam.

Calin



Beware of crypto in lambs this year

Cryptosporidium is a common and well-known foe of the dairy farmer. This highly contagious protozoan parasite can survive tenaciously in pens and on walls, and causes an extreme and, if untreated, fatal scouring disease in calves.

Its sheep counterpart is less well known about. Partly this is because (despite being the exact same parasite), it is rarely fatal in lambs, and causes a severe but non life threatening scour. Partly it is also because lambs catch crypto at the same age that they catch watery mouth, and we are likely to automatically attribute a sick lamb of a few days old to having *E. coli* without investigating it further. In truth, they often have *E. coli* and crypto at the same time. Even those experiencing crypto without accompanying watery mouth will suffer a substantial growth check from the scour.

The relevance of this disease to you is that people can also catch crypto – you probably know somebody who has had it. Without going into too much detail, the symptoms in humans are broadly the same as in lambs; if you catch it, you'll need to cancel your plans for at least a week.

I mention this now because the very wet weather means that some people are having to extend their housing periods and delay turnout of ewes and lambs, and this inevitably leads to the accumulation of various bugs in the housing. Exercise good hygiene everywhere

you can, and, if you see week-old lambs with a watery scour, avoid handling them and give us a call. We can diagnose crypto immediately in the practice using a scour sample and a lateral flow test, and we have effective treatments on the shelf.

It's one to be aware of!

John



Spring calving herds – Pre-breeding planning

Most spring calving herds will be well into their calving season and now's about the time that we start thinking forward towards the start of the breeding season in May (before the weather improves and spreading can start!).

What do we need to consider, why and when?

| What to consider | Why | When /How |
|---|---|---|
| Post-calving clean checks of cows 21 days calved (or 5d if appear unwell) | <p>Cows who are dirty (metritis and/or whites) take longer on average to get back in calf than those who weren't dirty, or have been treated for it.</p> <p>Waiting until the 31 days before planned start of mating "paint-up" is a bare minimum but risks missing cows who appear to clean up on their own but often carry subclinical infections</p> | <p>This should be done on a weekly/fortnightly basis and ALL cows over 21d calved should be checked at least once (rechecks for those treated is a good idea)</p> <p>Check cows manually with a clean gloved arm, or use a Metricheck</p> |
| Pre- "Planned start of Mating" (PSM) heat detection | <p>It is no good reaching the end of your first 3 weeks of service only to realise that a large percentage of the herd aren't cycling – this will lead to a poor 6 week in-calf rate, poor front-loading of the block and probably higher 12wk empty rates</p> <p>Starting heat detection BEFORE PSM means that any animals not cycling can be examined and treated if required so that they are READY for service AT PSM</p> | <p>Start pre-PSM heat detection 31 days prior to PSM</p> <p>Any animals not seen bulling (NSB) should be examined 10 days before PSM</p> <p>Ensure pedometers/collars are working and properly synched</p> <p>"Paint up" all cows with tail paint/crayon/scratch cards 31 days before PSM</p> |
| Post PSM heat detection | <p>Decision should be made on how we are going to effectively monitor submission rates (SR)(% of eligible cows served in each 3 week period after the PSM). This will allow us to spot if SR's drop below target and actions can be taken if needed</p> | <p>There are various ways this can be done using either farm management software, wall charts etc</p> <p>The key thing is ensuring the whole farm team are engaged in spotting bulling cows and ensuring no potential services are missed</p> |
| Management of non-bullers | <p>There are many reasons why cows may be Not Seen Bulling (NSB). It is CRUCIAL that these animals are examined ASAP so that if any problems exist, they can be treated early. This maximises the chances that animals can be served and thus get in calf within the crucial 1st 6wks of service</p> | <p>Present NSB cows early. Treated cows have a significantly higher chance of getting in calf – since cows that aren't serve CAN'T get in calf</p> <p>Typically cows should be seen every 2-3wks during the AI phase of the service period</p> |
| AI equipment checks and Bull breeding soundness exams (BBSE) | <p>If your AI or Bull's equipment isn't working properly then how can they get your cows and heifers in calf?</p> | <p>Check AI equipment is all in good order and Dyneval test your AI straw stock to ensure it's swimming well ASAP once arrive</p> <p>BBSE should be done 6-8wks before bulls go in</p> |
| Heifer specific Breeding considerations | <p>Heifers are often the forgotten members of the breeding herd. They haven't just calved, and aren't seen as regularly as the milking herd. It is therefore key to make sure that relevant checks are done to avoid reaching PSM and finding that they aren't in fighting fitness</p> | <p>Pre-service bloods – these should be done 6-8wks pre-PSM</p> <p>Check size and BCS</p> <p>All properly vaccinated against: BVS, IBR, Leptospirosis?</p> |

We would recommend having a **pre-breeding meeting with your vet ~6-8 weeks before your PSM** so that the above can be discussed. We can also then **book in any fertility visits, bull breeding-soundness exams, PD sessions** so that they are booked in ahead of time and you are most likely to get the dates and times that are **most convenient for you!**

Remember, getting the above right is crucial if you want to achieve **target 6 week in-calf rates of >72% and a 12 week empty rate of <9%**

Nathan





New Video Out Now!
Nematodirus - The worm that has to be different...





The Contrarian Worm!

 92 subscribers



TB UPDATE

This month we tested 7,675 cattle over 47 tests. There were 18 reactors and 19 inconclusive reactors.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

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| DUARTE MONTEIRO | 07481 128686 | MATT ASHLEY | 07528 097594 |

Please keep a note of the mobile numbers for the vets should you ever need them

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