

BVD Stamp it out - Lunch and Learn

Did you know the BVD status of your herd? RDPE Government funding available for testing your herd. We already have more than 50 clients signed up!

Come to our meeting; Find out what is involved, sign up and get the first cluster meeting ticked off all in one go – whilst getting a bite to eat as well.

January 17th 12.30—2pm -- Venue TBC —please contact the office to be added to the list (numbers will now be restricted as the funding we have secured is running out).

Don't miss out on establishing your BVD status for free!

Dairy Mastering Medicines Course:

(Dairy version) Thursday 10th January 1-3.30pm, Kendal, £35.00

This course is in line with the new Red Tractor standards aiming to increase trainees understanding about different types of medicine used and how these relate to common diseases relevant to their farm. To book your place please call 01539 722692 or 015242 71221.

Other Courses:

We will also be running another **Beef Mastering Medicines Course** in the new year. If you would like to attend either of these please ring the surgery and put your name on the list so we can contact you when new dates have been arranged.

Milk Sure Course Thursday 21st February 1–3.30pm at Kendal Surgery.

The MilkSure initiative is something you may or may not have heard of yet. It has been initiated by Dairy UK and developed in conjunction with BCVA (the British Cattle Veterinary Association), with the aim to ensure that the production of milk is free of veterinary medicine residues. MilkSure is an accredited training course for British dairy farmers and their employees, delivered by us to you. The course is split into 3 parts: part 1 - technical issues, including why tank failures occur, the different tests available to check for residue levels, how residue levels are set (which can be carried out in the office or round the kitchen table), part 2 - practical issues (this section must be done on farm) and part 3, which is the on-line test, to check understanding after completing parts 1 and 2. Don't worry about the test as this can be done with the vet present to help you along.

xLvets
Excellence in Practice



Kendal Surgery
Monday to Friday 8.30am—7.00pm
Saturday 8.30am-12noon
Tel:01539 722692

Kirkby Lonsdale Surgery
Monday & Thursday 8.30am-7.00pm
Tuesday 8.30am-6.00pm
Wednesday & Friday 8.30am-5.00pm
Saturday 8.30am-12 noon
Tel:015242 71221

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FARM SERVICES

PRACTICE NEWS

KENDAL ○ KIRKBY LONSDALE ○ ULVERSTON

January 2019

A Happy New Year to All!

Dairy cow fertility already seems to be dramatically better than last year, with cows coming bulling better and holding better too. We are getting a smattering of twinnings from time-to-time and also a few cysts popping up, however cows which are anoestrous (not cycling) are well down on last year, showing that they're in a better state of health.

The mild and wet weather may be partly responsible for a bit of an upsurge in E. coli mastitis cases recently. These still occur with a range of clinical presentations, some recent ones have been cows with a swollen quarter where the milk fades away and may or may not return. The sensitivity pattern we get in the lab, when we see which antibiotics have the best chance of working in side the cow, varies a bit from time-to-time so it's a good plan to have a look if treatment outcomes are less than expected. As with a lot of these environmental mastitis cases, reducing the risk of it happening in the first place is always time and money well spent. If the seasonal risk is high- upping the amount of bedding materials used and using a specific pre-milking teat disinfectant is a good idea. These may be temporary measures, but adapting your management and milking practices to cope with the risk at the time is sound advice. If you change nothing, nothing may change.

The BVD Stamp It Out Scheme is in full swing- we'll be having another cluster meeting in the New Year, where we expect that the final 25 or so places will be filled. Please have a look at this scheme as it has breathed new life into the subject of BVD control, already positively affected thousands of farmers nationally, and turned up some useful-to-know information on farms where BVD status was unknown or it was assumed to be controlled. A whole generation of young farmers have started in the industry since the original vaccine was launched, and it's a disservice to them to assume that they've acquired the same level of knowledge or understanding that was publicised then.



Richard Knight

Winter Beef Suckler Cow Nutrition

It feels as though we bang on and on about dairy cow nutrition and beef suckler cow nutrition barely gets a look in, despite it being equally important. Good nutritional management of the beef suckler cow is essential for good fertility as well as calf survival and growth. Body condition scoring and blood sampling are two important tools we can use to help us optimise productivity, health and fertility.

Body Condition Scoring

Feeding the suckler cow over winter is the biggest variable cost to your business; therefore we need to keep it as low as possible without causing detriment to the cows. Allowing the cow to use her own body reserves (provided she has some) through winter will reduce feeding costs. For this to be possible cows should come in looking fairly fit at BCS 3-3.5 and calve down at BCS 2.5.

Overly fat cows as we all know are a very high risk for calving problems and thus need to be managed carefully over winter to ensure they slim down! This can be achieved by weaning later or feeding a relatively low energy diet throughout winter. The energy content needs to be increased in the last 4-6 weeks of pregnancy to allow for foetal growth. Low energy diets are often low in crude protein which reduces their digestibility as well as affecting colostrum quality and milk production. Supplementation with high protein feeds may be required.

Thin cows i.e. those less than BCS 2.5 at the end of the summer will need preferential treatment as they have no body reserves to lose and calving too thin has severe consequences for subsequent fertility as well as colostrum quality. Studies have shown that only 61% of cows calving down at BCS 2 are cycling by day 60. She only has 80 days from calving to conceive if she is to have one calf every 365 days. Wean these cows early and supplement with extra feed but take care not to over feed as calves may grow too big.

Trace elements and minerals

Grass silage usually provides the bulk of winter feeding. The energy, crude protein and trace element content can vary hugely year on year and so analysis is essential. Trace element deficiencies are common in beef suckler herds and they can cause a range of effects from subtle decreases in fertility to stillborn calves. Selenium, magnesium, iodine and Vitamin E supplementation is usually required in the last month of pregnancy. Often these deficiencies are diagnosed when it's too late e.g. at calving or when scanning.

Assessing the Diet

Blood samples are a rapid and cost effective way of assessing whether the diet is providing the cows with what they need before problems start to arise. We can assess energy, protein, mineral and trace element status. Ideally 6-10 cows should be sampled one month after introduction to winter rations and then again 3 weeks prior to calving.

Jasmyrn Smith

Sheep News

Happy New Year to you all; having said that I am fully aware of the challenges that face our industry in the next 12 months. Now is perhaps the time to take stock and plan for this lambing and rearing season. Every year is different and brings its own challenges but planning ahead can help reduce the impacts of life's vagaries.



What will your New Year's resolution be this year? Here are a couple of suggestions (mostly to myself!)

- Monitor lamb performance more closely to take action earlier when lambs aren't thriving
- Condition score ewes regularly and make keeping ewes in the right condition a priority
- Use Drench checks to make sure the wormers you are using are cost effective and not costing you money.
- Get the EID reader out of its box and learn how to use it!
- Once you've done that - keep accurate medicine records and look for your main issues. Are they lameness, mastitis, watery mouth, joint ill or pneumonia?

Once you've done that – talk to us about reducing them!!

- Tackle lameness by implementing the 5 point plan- just imagine a life with fewer lame sheep!

If you cull or lose too many ewes, make this the year you find out why and deal with it—contrary to popular opinion, sheep don't just die! Aim for ewe deaths at <3% of your flock/year

2018 saw ewes in poor condition early in the year after a miserable autumn and winter. The early summer dry weather didn't help but a 'growy' back end has allowed them to bounce back as only sheep can! Clients are reporting that ewes are in good condition and early scanning figures are looking good at around 200% . Now the challenge is to keep the ewes in the right condition to lamb good sized lambs and have plenty of milk. Late pregnancy is not a good time to try and adjust ewe condition. There is some 'wiggle room' in mid pregnancy when ewes can loose up to 0.5 CS without any deleterious effect on the lambs. For many of you, now is the time to condition score and batch ewes to make sure they hit late pregnancy where we want them. This is especially important for the triplets and quads which the scanners are seeing in more numbers than usual. In late pregnancy, these ewes can easily lose condition unnoticed. Don't try and underfeed over fit ewes in the last 4-6 weeks of pregnancy, its too late and they will mobilise body fat affecting their liver function and make them more prone to twin lamb etc. If you are worried about feeding your ewes or their energy balance in late pregnancy, we are here to help.

Wishing you all a successful and prosperous year!

Judith Lee