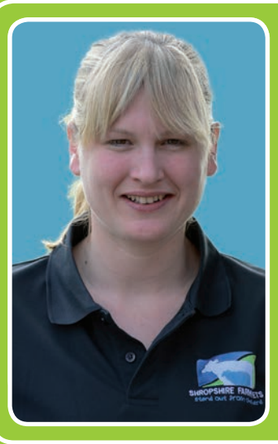

ALLY

Ally has decided to move on to pastures new and will be joining Zoetis (the pharmaceutical company) in April.

Her last working day will be 1st April. We would like to take the opportunity to thank her for her time here and also to wish her well for her future career.

E-Mail

Over the next six months we will be updating our computer practice management systems. As a part of this update, we will be looking to significantly increase our use of email.

We already have quite a few email addresses, but you will at some point be asked to confirm the one we have is valid, or for a contact email address.

We will never give this address to anyone else or any other organisation, this is purely to increase efficiencies with our own admin.

MEDS CORNER

As a reminder, some products come in 250ml bottles, which for farms with higher volume use makes more sense.

Mostly these are non-steroidals – Allevinix, Metacam and Ketofen, but also Marbox.

Talking about things bigger, DOOPs, the yellow plastic containers for waste sharps and bottles also come in a 60 litre size, making this cost a bit more economic.

Please note the changes in Allevinix withdrawals

Milk	24 hours w/d (i/v);	36 hours w/d (i/m)
Meat	10 days w/d (i/v);	31 days w/d (i/m)

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

ALISTAIR MACPHERSON	07909 517184
TIM O'SULLIVAN	07909 517479
ROEL DRIESEN	07813 833385
JAMES MARSDEN	07876 443950
ROD WOOD	07809 227426
NATHAN LOEWENSTEIN	07815 543546
ALLY ANDERSON	07973 567367
EMILY DENTON	07762 069182
JOHN HEMINGWAY	07496 305412
PABLO NUNEZ	07455 882210
PELAYO PEJARES	07522 637322
ROSA FERNANDEZ	07719 270835
EVA LEIBIG	07874 054328

TB Update for January

We carried out 75 tests, with a total number of animals tested coming to 8,546.

Of these animals, 2 were inconclusives and there was only 1reactor.

Find us on social Media

www.facebook.com/ShropshireFarmVets

www.twitter.com/ShropFarmVets

Shropshire Farm Vets
Unit 3, The Depot, Hanwood, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 8NY
T: 01743 860 920 **F:** 01743 861 934 **E:** farm@shropshirefarmvets.com **W:** www.shropshirefarmvets.com

SHROPSHIRE FARM VETS
stand out from the herd

SHROPSHIRE FARM NEWS

IN THIS ISSUE: March 2016

BULL FERTILITY

We have continued to do a number of bull fertility examinations this winter, and some of our findings have shown the value of taking a proactive approach. On individual farms this winter, we have found bulls with inadequate testicular size that failed to produce viable semen, bulls with infected semen and bulls with defects of the penis itself. All these bulls would have been subfertile. In one of these cases the bull's poor performance meant that 4 months went by with no conceptions, while in the other two cases conception rate was very disappointing. One of these bulls was insured for fertility and the results of the test allowed our client to make a successful claim for loss of use.

As we are already in the calving season for our spring block herds, suckler and dairy, it is already time to start thinking about testing the bull or bulls for the breeding season ahead. If you can detect a problem bull well before the breeding season, you have at least got time to source extra bull power. Alternatively you have time to consider A.I, or to retest the bull after rest, depending on your needs. In all cases the worst time to find out that your bull isn't working is when you have no calves on the ground. However it is often the case that a bull is sub-fertile, (capable of getting a lower percentage of cows in calf) and over time this can often be just as costly –these bulls may be kept on to do further damage year after year, and these are the ones that we really want to identify on our bull checks.

It is also important to remember that, just because a bull has been fertile in one season, doesn't mean he will be fertile in the next. In fact, bulls 5 years or over are significantly more likely to be sub-fertile and the risk increases with age.

We have two bull testing kits at the practice and have done several hundred bull tests over the last few years. All we need is a safe crush with access to the bull's underneath and a power supply for the microscope. You generally get your results there and then, (occasionally we do further examinations of the semen at the practice) and the examination is charged on a time basis.

Usually we would allow up to an hour for the first bull (set up takes some time) and then approx. 20-30 min per additional bull. On average we find that approx. 20% of bulls we examine are unsatisfactory in some way and if "your bull is half your herd" can you really afford not to get him checked? Equally if you are buying or selling a bul,l getting him tested before he is used will give you the opportunity to ensure peace of mind for all parties. What everyone wants is sound bulls that are up to doing the job quickly and reliably, i.e. lots of calves on the ground at the right time!

Contact the practice to find out more or to book your call to test your bull.

PRACTICE/DISPENSARY TIMES

We are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; office hours:

Monday – Friday	8:15 – 5.30

Shropshire Farm Vets
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CHOOSING A BULL

Purchasing a bull can be an expensive process, but the value that he brings to your herd can be worth far more than his initial cost. It is important to consider what you want from your bull before choosing him, and once you have chosen, to ensure that he is healthy and fit for purpose.

Understand your market

Your production system will govern which traits you should be identifying as important in selecting your bull. For instance, beef producers selling progeny at weaning, Calving Ease (direct), Birth Weight, Muscle Area and 200 Day Growth would be important. For those producers finishing stock, 400 Day Weight is paramount and Fat Depth must be considered. Those breeding their own replacements need to also consider Calving Ease of Daughters, 200 Day Milk, and Scrotal Circumference. Scrotal circumference is closely related to the fertility of daughters and they will reach puberty earlier. For dairy herds considering a beef bull to maximise the value of surplus calves, looking at traits such as Calving Ease, Low Birth Weights, and Shorter Gestation (Calving Value) are important to reduce costs associated with dystocia and also to reduce calving interval. In addition if the progeny are to be sold as young calves then 200 day weight is also important.

Breeding for specific objectives enables strengthening of current herd genetics', and improvement in areas which are deficient when breeding replacement beef heifers. Dairy producers, selecting semen for artificial insemination of cows for replacements use PTAs (predicted transmitting abilities) or proofs to advance herd genetics. This will ultimately enhance herd profitability. EBVs (estimated breeding values) a measure of genetic potential of a given sire, measured from collecting data from known relatives, can help in selection of your bull, looking for traits as mentioned above. Ensure breeding policy forms part of your herd health plan discussion with your vet.

Fertility status

A fertile bull should be able to get 90% of 50 breeding cows in calf within 9 weeks. Producers with a tight calving period, including block calving dairy herds using a sweeper bull, need to know that the bull is going to achieve those targets. A sub fertile, infertile or sterile bull will not achieve this and will result in costly extensions to calving interval, so get your vet to perform a pre-purchase examination. This usually consists of a thorough physical examination, including assessment of internal and external, sex organs, and a semen test. Your vet will obtain a semen sample which will assess the volume, density, motility of the sample and assess sperm for defects. Do this before the breeding season begins. A semen evaluation does not assess libido or mounting ability, and therefore does not confirm the ability of the bull to breed.

Health Status

Try to avoid bringing in disease. For closed herds this is often the only animal coming onto the unit, and the herd may be relatively naive (susceptible to disease). Establish from the vendor, their herd Johne's status as it is difficult to test for in young animals. Other infectious diseases, such as Leptospirosis, BVD, and IBR should be tested for, or vaccination status should be established. Campylobacter is a venereal disease causing infertility and is spread by bulls. Have your bull tested for this before he is allowed to serve any cattle. Quarantine your bull on arrival and treat him for internal and external parasites; fluke, worms and lice, and observe for any signs of disease.

And lastly, find out the diet that the bull has been fed to ensure as smooth a transition as possible and promote rumen health.

Measurement of Colostrum Levels (Part 2)

In part two, Rod will discuss measurement of colostrum; just because a calf/lamb has had colostrum, there is nothing to say the quality is any good. All sorts of factors such as age of dam, nutritional status, health status and previous exposure to disease will all affect the actual quality, if not the quantity of colostrum.

As said before, colostrum levels are said to be high if IgG levels exceed **50g/litre**. But how do we assess this? At the moment there are two main ways of measuring this in the colostrum, plus a blood test in the calf to see if adequate levels have been reached.

Colostrometer –measures the specific gravity of colostrum; >1050 approximates to an IgG concentration of >50g/L. Temperature and milk fat can affect the accuracy. Measurements should be taken at 22°C for consistency and accuracy.

Refractometer- more recently the Brix Refractometer has been used, which measures sucrose, directly related to the IgG levels. Temperature and fat has no effect, 22% correlating with IgG levels of 50g/L. Easer and accuracy mean this is probably the best option for measurement.

ZST – Calves can be bled between 24 hrs and 7days old and we are looking for total protein levels of >5.2g/dl in at least 90% of calves, the higher the better. (Sadly, we rarely see this in many groups of calves that are sampled).

STORAGE:

Colostrum can be stored satisfactorily in fridges for up to 7 days, as long as the cooling process is rapid, the IgG levels will remain stable.

Similarly, colostrum can be stored successfully in freezers, eg in Perfect Udder bags, in suitable amounts for individual use, but defrosting should be quick, so that bacterial numbers do not have a chance to increase while thawing is taking place.

COLOSTRUM REPLACEMENTS:

Just to mention that in both sheep and cattle there are many colostrum "replacements" on the market, some a lot better than others, and certainly a product such as **Vetcol** has its role in calf management (and the neonate) when no other colostrum is available. Vetcol has one of the highest quantities of colostrum on the market.

PASTEURISATION:

Not many people use pasteurisation but the recommended method is at 60°C, for 60 mins, as this doesn't affect IgG levels.

A quick mention of **Johne's Disease** is necessary.

Obviously colostrum from known Johnes carriers should not be used to protect other calves.

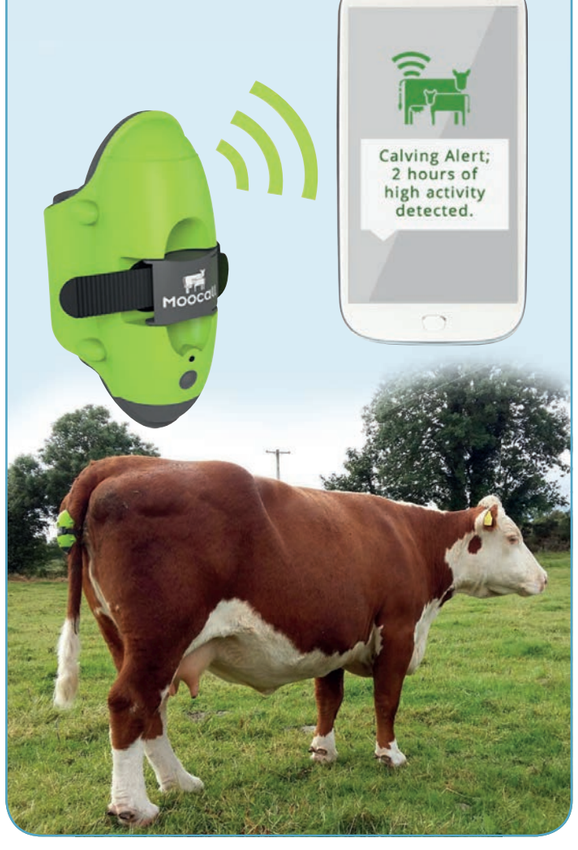
This is a large and topical subject that we will come back to again in the future.

Moocall

monitoring cow & calf for you

We are stocking **Moocall**, a new device that clamps to the tail of calving cows and which will text up to two mobile numbers with approximately an hours notice of calving. Extensive trials have seen a very high farmer approval rate as it allows checking (+/- intervention) without watching the cow continually. There is one on the front desk for anyone that wants to have a closer look. Obviously this is not going to be for everyone but could be very useful for some.

After calving, just move the Moocall to another cow. The battery lasts approx. 30 days.



Don't forget ewes after lambing

When it comes to feeding sheep at this time of year, we focus primarily on nutrition during late pregnancy. If we have scanned the ewes and split them into different management groups, then the emphasis is on feeding them to account for the number of lambs growing inside. Once the lambs are out, the pressure is off... isn't it?

We all know, of course, that the lactating ewe needs a bit more energy to produce milk, but what is perhaps sometimes misunderstood is just how much more energy she needs, and how quickly she needs access to it. For example, a 70kg ewe carrying twins 3 weeks before lambing has an energy requirement of about 15MJ/day. After she has lambed and is producing 2 litres of milk/day, her requirement is about 22MJ/day (about 45% greater than 3 weeks pre-lambing), while a more milky breed peaking at 3 litres/day can require in excess of 30MJ (double her pre-lambing requirement).

What this means is that unsupplemented ewes at the peak of lactation (4-6 weeks post-lambing) will certainly be in 'negative energy balance', especially in the early season when the sward is poor. When energy is short, sheep will not sacrifice their own body condition to produce milk nearly so readily as cattle do, so milk yield is one of the first things to suffer when nutrition is inadequate. This results in poorer pre-weaning growth rates in the lambs, during the period when good growth rates are potentially most readily achieved.

In summary, we should be giving supplementary nutrition to our ewes during their peak of lactation, and the earlier in the year they lamb, the more important it is. It will always be cheaper to achieve good lamb growth by supplementing the ewe now than it will be to supplement the lambs themselves later, as well as keeping the ewes in fair condition. Feel free to talk to us regarding feeding your lactating ewes this spring.