



# SHROPSHIRE FARM NEWS

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## WELCOME TO 2013. LET'S HOPE IT'S A HEALTHY, WEALTHY AND SUNNY ONE FOR MAN AND BEAST ALIKE.

In this month's newsletter we have hopefully something of interest for everybody. Barry and Nathan have put together some information for our sheep farmers who are facing their busiest time of year, Rod has an article on controlling pneumonia in pigs, Roels update on foot trimming courses and James continues to feed in the latest findings of research in the dairy industry.

The diversity of the articles in our newsletter reflects the variety of challenges we deal with when covering Shropshire farms. It is this variety of challenges and interests that continues to inspire us to improve our level of knowledge and to improve our level of service. Of course, for those of you who only want a bit of light reading, Alistair has details of his recent time as a rather large Hobbit in New Zealand - it's amazing how far he will go to find someone to buy a battered bluebird.

On the training front, XLVets have successfully bid for some training funds via Defra and Rural Development Programme Funds (RDPE). However the funds available are now targeted which means we will no longer be able to get funding for AI training and foot trimming courses. We will endeavour to keep these courses as affordable as possible and to utilise the funding we have got to the best effect. One of the topics that will be funded will be training on BVD control. Cont'd...

## PHOTO COMPETITION WINNER

The winner of our photo competition is Anthony Heath with his picture - 'Has anyone told the driver which way to go?' Thank you to everyone who sent theirs in you may see them appear in future editions.

## INCREASE ENERGY DURING COLD STRESS

The colder it gets, the more energy the calf needs just to stay warm! In general terms, a calf's need for energy increases 2% for every degree below 5 degrees. So when it is cold, increase the volume or concentration of milk powder.

## FUNDING FOR FARMERS

Over the last few years we have been successful in helping our farmers gain grant funding for various infrastructure and health projects. There are a couple of eligible grants that you may be interested in but applications must be in soon:

1. Dairy Fund- Aid for farmers who want to co-operate .
2. Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF).

Details of these and other items can be found at:  
[www.rdpnetwork.defra.gov.uk/assests/files/New%20Offer/DEF-RDPE-DAIRY%20WE.B.PDF](http://www.rdpnetwork.defra.gov.uk/assests/files/New%20Offer/DEF-RDPE-DAIRY%20WE.B.PDF)

## LAMBING COURSE

Barry is running his successful lambing course on Thursday 24th January, 10am-3pm at Walford College. If you would be interested in attending please contact the practice to book your place.

## WELL DONE JAMES!

James has passed his Masters Diploma in Bovine Reproduction. He has put a lot of hard work and study over the last two years and we would like to thank those of you who have helped him along the way.

Cont'd...

You may be aware that both Scotland and Ireland have already got national schemes to eradicate BVD and while there is no such scheme in England recent advances such as bulk milk PCR testing and especially the ear notch BVD test means that it is now feasible to establish a BVD eradication programme on any given farm. The more farms that get involved in voluntary control, the less pressure of infection in the national herd and the prospect of having large BVD free areas becomes possible. Keep an eye out for more information to follow but also please let us know if there are areas of training you would like for you or your staff and we will endeavour to organise something suitable for you.

## MANAGEMENT CONTROLS IN PORCINE RESPIRATORY COMPLEX

Porcine Respiratory Disease Complex (PRDC) results from a combination of infectious agents and environmental stressors and challenges. PRDC can manifest itself as a marked decrease in performance due to severe outbreaks of respiratory disease but it can also appear as low grade coughing which is just as important as a barrier to fattening and growth efficiency. As well as affecting the health of the pigs there will be an increase in medication costs and increased mortality.

PRDC usually occurs at 14-20 weeks of age. This is because new born piglets receive colostral protection from their mother (dependent on her immunity) which declines in time, so the piglet becomes susceptible to challenge. Infection can then follow. Therefore in a weekly farrowing system, older pigs are a source of infection to younger pigs, maintaining a cycle of infection. A trickle of challenge to immune sows will maintain their immunity, BUT excessive challenge may override their immunity.

In terms of chronic herd respiratory disease, with its implications for herd health, productivity and sustainability, there are several management controls that can help restrict the disease and its production losses.

- All-in-all-out - separation of age groups by building or rooms, and application of hygiene controls between occupancies; washing, disinfection, drying and resting are fundamental requirements. Pig flow through buildings must be established and maintained.

- Buildings – match production to suit building provision, and if necessary alter buildings. Consideration should be given to what the correct stocking rates are for the building, and ensure adequate ventilation.

- Consider production in light of building availability and consider batch production. Ensure evenness of production to avoid over/under-stocking. Avoid batch mixing of slow growing pigs

- Sick pigs - should be hospitalised. Never return recovered pigs to the main system, especially by mixing with younger groups. Hospital pens should be clean and cleanable. In severe disease situations, partial or full depopulation may have to be considered.

On top of these principles, vaccination and medication strategies can then be applied e.g Mycoplasma, PRRS and PCV2. We will review these with you regularly as new vaccines and protocols become available but don't forget getting the environment and pig flow right is a one off investment that will keep on paying.

PRDC is a major limiting factor in health, welfare and production on UK pig farms but with time thought and investment can be controlled on most pig units.



## NEW ZEALAND

For those that don't know, previously I worked for three years in a large dairy practice in mid Canterbury, New Zealand. It is just a little over ten years since Jane and I came back to the UK and we felt we were overdue a return visit.

Despite this trip being an out and out holiday, I found some time to revisit some of my old work haunts and take a look at the changes that have occurred.

Most of the farmers I knew have now gone, having sold out to other farmers or to corporates, of which there seems to be a never ending supply. I already had the impression that NZ farming was much more dynamic (in terms of people movement) but this seems to have accelerated.

Much more ground has been brought into dairying as well; whole woods and hedges have just been ripped out to be replaced by bland wire fencing. Dairying has also extended well into McKenzie Country in Otago, previously only ever populated by sheep. Another very visual change is the number of centre pivot irrigators, and their size - most are between 750-900 metres in length!, in fact when you fly over Canterbury, you see land that is made up from multiple green circles. All a far cry from the whirly-gig or flood irrigators I would know.

Farms also have more cows; the average size herd I knew was approx. 950 cows; this now runs at nearly 1300! Staffing is always an issue and the kiwis have solved this by employing lots of Philipinos.

So, does this mean they are doing a better job? There certainly seems to be a lot more money around which is driving town expansion (the earthquakes have also played a large part in this) and everywhere just seems a lot busier and costly! The industry is heavily chasing the Chinese market (more money and a lot closer) and nearly everyone I spoke to couldn't give two hoots for the EU and all the rules.

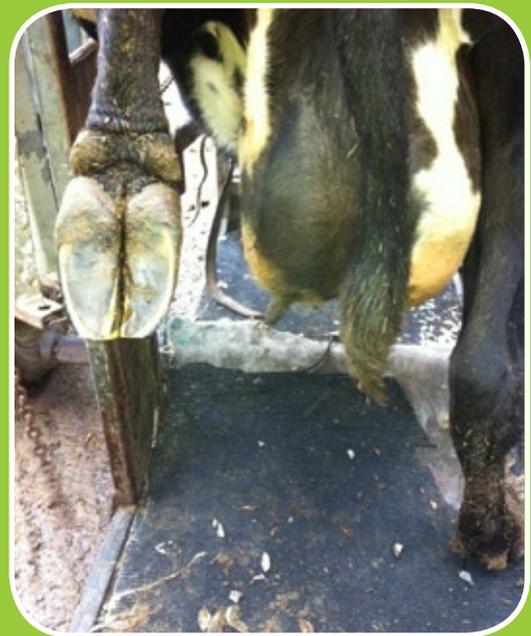
To my eye, they are finally doing a better job of animal care, and of supplementary feeding(!), so yes, perhaps they are doing a better job. Certainly it is better than ten years ago, but how long will the bubble last as there are more than a few in New Zealand who are highly concerned at the dominance of dairying and the detrimental environmental effects. Alistair

## ALL GOOD THINGS COME IN PEARS/PAIRS/PARES!

(Those of you who were at Roels courses will understand the title!).

Roel ran two Foot Trimming Courses in a week with 10 people successfully completing the Initiation/Refresher Foot Trimming Course. On Tuesday he trained four people on farm from the same farm. Thursday was a battle with hypothermia with the mercury just under -6 C. Sadly the only solution was to retreat to a pub for the theory part of the course. The cows that Dan Webster presented were perfect and the automated trimming crush was a dream to work with.

If anyone is interested in the benefits of learning how to trim feet properly please contact the practice. The pub however cannot be guaranteed.



## ORF - DON'T LET IT BE TOO ORFUL!

With the lambing season fast approaching we thought we'd send out a reminder about vaccinating against Orf. Orf is a distressing disease for the animals affected and also for the shepherd looking after them.

Please see Nathans enclosed handout for information on treatment, prevention and vaccination.

## SHEEP HEALTH AND WELFARE CONFERENCE

Zoe and I had the pleasure of attending the recent inaugural conference of the Sheep Health and Welfare Group (SHAWG) held in Worcester. It was well attended by some 200+ sheep farmers, vets and industry associates. Despite taking over 3 hours to get there in appalling weather we still arrived in time for mid-morning coffee and biscuits!

The morning started by looking at the wider sheep health issue as the NSA launched their vision for a new health and welfare scheme to operate in England under the new CAP regime. As the funding from Pillar 1 (Single farm payment) shrinks this will allow farmers to access money from Pillar 2 provided they earn enough points from a menu of best practice initiatives. Such things might include; health planning, advisory visits from their vet, involvement in voluntary health schemes and implementing effective quarantine measures. This is particularly appropriate for UK farmers as our Governments spending cuts look set to continue.

We then had a testimonial from a Gloucestershire farmer about how she has successfully implemented SCOPS principles in her flock. Despite cutting her wormer usage in half she is still achieving both excellent scanning results and selling 90% of lambs by September at over 19kg deadweight. This shows that using wormers responsibly can be done and great results can be achieved!

Schmallenberg virus (SBV) was discussed at length following reports of poor scanning percentages. What was agreed was that we should definitely not assume that poor scanning is necessarily SBV related. While there is little we can do about SBV in the short term there are other causes of poor scanning and abortion, such as EZA and Toxoplasmosis, which we can do something about. It is also clear that the health of many ewes this winter will be impaired by nutrition and a high internal parasite burden, especially fluke. Testing and monitoring of both blood and faecal samples this winter could well pay off!

The day was rounded off with a panel discussion on the challenge faced by the industry from sheep scab. There was agreement that there needs to be an industry led control programme going forward but for this to work farmers will need to work in collaboration. Some delegates suggested that those who do not comply with the measures be penalised for example having their single farm payment docked. DEFRA did announce that they will fund a nation-wide scab awareness campaign which will be launched in January 2013.

In all a positive and constructive day was had. This conference represents a great platform for you to voice your opinions. I would actively encourage as many of you as possible to attend the next one.

Barry

## TWIN LAMB DISEASE

Twin lamb disease can be the consequence of inadequate nutrition during the final trimester. It is highly fatal and can occur in the final week of pregnancy. Older ewes carrying two or more lambs are at most risk.

Classical signs are of a disorientated ewe separated from the flock. They often appear blind and are easy to catch. This quickly progresses to the ewe becoming dull, depressed and recumbent. Once the ewe becomes recumbent her prognosis is very poor.

To prevent twin lamb disease ensure that ewes carrying multiple births receive supplementary feed with adequate energy in the last 6 weeks of gestation.

Twin lamb disease can be treated by providing an energy supplement like oral propylene glycol so ensure you have plenty in stock for the coming lambing.

## Clostridial/Pasteurella Vaccination Reminder

Clostridial/pasteurella vaccine boosters should be given to ewes 6 to 8 weeks before lambing. Any replacement ewes should receive a full course, 2 injections 4-6 weeks apart. Bravoxin 10 protects against all clostridial bacteria but has no pasteurella cover so is only suitable for certain flocks. If there is a history of problems with pasteurella on farm then Heptavac-P, whilst providing cover against 7 clostridial diseases, will also cover for Pasteurella. Ovivac-P can be used for store lambs. Please ask if you are in any doubt as to which vaccine is right for your flock.



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