



# SHROPSHIRE FARM NEWS

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## SCHMALLEMBERG HAS LANDED

Three of our farms had confirmed cases of the Schmallenberg virus last month. Clinical signs can easily be confused with other viruses such as IBR so we recommend that you contact us to establish what you are dealing with.

Now seems an appropriate time to review the experiences of our XL vet colleagues from elsewhere in the UK, to give us a clear picture of what clinical signs we are likely to see in our herds and flocks; what the likely impact is; and what can be done in terms of both treating sick animals and minimising the damage.

### Sheep:

It seems that the only signs reported in sheep have been abortions and malformed lambs. Reports vary from no cases of abnormalities in seropositive flocks, **up to 20% of ewes producing one or more malformed lamb.** However, fortunately the majority of practices report only 2-3% of ewes producing any abnormal lambs.

Interestingly, ewes may give birth to both affected and normal lambs, but it has been reported that the normal twin/triplets to affected lambs generally develop serious joint disease and fail to reach weaning. Ewes are not reported to be systemically ill with SBV.

### Cattle:

Fewer malformed calves are reported. Vets in East Sussex recorded more than elsewhere in the country, with 3 requiring caesarians in 2012. Cases have been seen in both beef and dairy herds. Cont...

## NEW MAN AT THE TOP!

We are pleased to announce that as of 1st October 2012, James Marsden became a director in the business. James is now fully committed to the practice and Shropshire and will take responsibility for clinical development. As is the custom, please doff your cap when you next see him, then give him a kick to bring him back to earth.

## CALVING AND LAMBING - HOW TO RECOGNISE THE TRICKY ONES...

Every now and then you are faced with a lambing or calving that just doesn't seem to be coming. Most are worth getting on the phone and calling the vets in asap, however, some may only need a bit of work and you increase your chances of a positive out-come. See our insert for a brief description of some of the commonest problems and how to best recognise them. If you recognise what it is, then you can know straight away if you need to call the vets NOW or can give it a go yourself.

## STRIKE A POSE!

We are looking for a picture to take pride of place on the head of our January 2013 newsletter. Do you have a livestock related photo that could adorn our top spot or do you have an amusing one that we could use for a caption competition?

Please send them via email to:

[zoe@shropshirefarmvets.com](mailto:zoe@shropshirefarmvets.com) in JPEG form (if poss) before 12th December. A gift voucher will be awarded to the winner. Happy snapping!!

## DATE FOR THE DIARY

Lambing Meeting End Jan 2013/Beginning Feb with Barry.

Schmallenberg cont'd.. So far in beef herds the only signs we have heard of have been in the affected calves. Dairy cows seem to be worst affected, although no confirmed deaths have been reported by XL vet members as yet.

Typical signs include malaise; raised temperatures of up to 41C; milk drop of up to 4L per cow on a herd basis or 30-50% on an individual cow basis; scour; reduced PD+ at routines; some abortions late on. Freshly calved cows are, unsurprisingly, the worst affected, and farmers noted a loss of appetite as both the initial sign of disease, and its return being the earliest sign of recovery. A lot of cases were initially presumed to be a winter dysentery virus, but subsequently confirmed as SBV on blood tests. Pregnancy rates at PD have been reduced by 75% of usual rates, recovering over 6-8 weeks Individual cows are reported to recover in 10-14 days for the majority of cases, and more severe cases over a month. Supportive therapy includes NSAIDS to bring temperatures down, and isotonic oral fluid therapy such as restore sachets.

Other Management: No vaccine is available as yet although there may be one in the next few months, so risk management is key. Whilst natural immunity must be gained from exposure to midges, a reduction in the infectious dose may possibly be achieved by regular fly and midge controls such as Butox Swish, Cooper's Spot on and Neem Pro Riddance. This is particularly pertinent during the 2nd month of pregnancy in sheep, and the 3rd/4th month of pregnancy in cows. Those of you who are lambing or calving in the spring, may wish to use a long acting fly repellent now, to reduce risk of malformed lambs and calves arriving or delay tupping for as long as possible until midge activity ceases.

Most importantly, you must know what you have got in the herd and provide appropriate supportive therapy to sick animals with SBV where appropriate. Phone your vet to examine and blood sample all suspect cases. It is vital to differentiate SBV from other infectious and non-infectious diseases on farm, to determine whether vaccination is possible to control the spread, whether antibiotics are required, or if like SBV, there is no specific treatment available. This is particularly crucial if the affected animal is a freshly calved dairy cow, where good supportive therapy as outlined above may reduce the chances of prolonged negative energy balance, displaced abomasums and prolonged calving to conception intervals.

For more information and advice, please speak to your vet. For any further enquiries regarding this update, feel free to contact James (07876 443950 or james@shropshirefarmvets.com).

FOR SALE – ONE CAREFUL OWNER\*. NEVER BEEN RACED OR RALLIED! NO EXTORTIONATE OFFER REFUSED.



\*(there has been more than one owner of this car!) Alistair has decided to replace his 'Ultimate STI'. 'Bluebird' as we call her. She is being replaced by a... You'll all have to wait and see!

## ROBOT MILKING AND MASTITIS

Nathan recently attended a course that dealt with Robot milking herds and how best to manage and prevent cases of clinical and subclinical (ie. high cell counts) mastitis. This can be a particular challenge in a robot herd, as there is proportionally less hands-on time with the cows on a daily basis. If you would like some advice on mastitis in robot herds, or regarding getting into robots in general please contact Nathan (01743 860 920 or email nathan@shropshirefarmvets.com).

## MEDICINES REQUEST- A POLITE REMINDER

In order for us to provide a quality service when supplying medicines, we require 24 hours' notice if possible. This ensures firstly that, all veterinary medicines must be authorised by a vet for use and secondly, to ensure that they are in stock. For medicines that are prescribed to your farm on a regular ongoing basis and included in your herd health plan these can be requested via email: farm@shropshirefarmvets.com

## MAKE CELL COUNTS COUNT!

Whether you have milk recorded for donkey's years, or just more recently in line with milk contract requirements it is worth considering if you are getting the most out of your cell count data. Tim and James have both recently attended meetings on cell count, mastitis and milk quality management using Interherd +. The course is run by Andy Biggs, a vet and author of mastitis texts from Devon, and by James Hanks of Pan Livestock and the University of Reading. Both contributed useful and thought provoking information from their wealth of experience.

One stand out piece of valuable information was the relationship between the number of cows in a herd which have chronic high cell counts (above 200,000) and the overall 12 month rolling bulk somatic cell count.

The graph below demonstrates that if your herd has less than 10% of cows with chronic high cell counts, then there is less than 9% chance that your herd 12 rolling cell count will be over 200,000. On the other hand if 15% or more of cows in the herd have chronic high cell counts, there is a 92% chance that your herd 12m rolling cell count will be over 200,000. This small rise in the number of chronic high cell count cows in the herd makes it a real struggle to remain in the top payment band for milk.

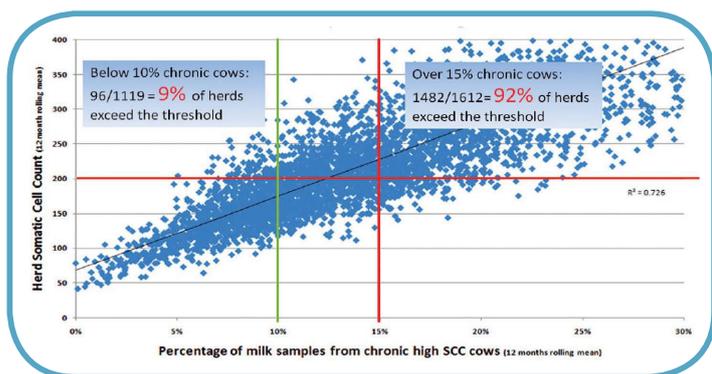


Image from analysis of NMR records from 41million milk samples from UK farms, conducted by James Hanks and Nick Taylor at the University of Reading and Pan Livestock.

Each 1% rise in the number of chronic cows increases the bulk tank reading by an average of 11,000. Furthermore, high bulk tank readings also increase the risk of mastitis to individual animals within the herd, which can result in increased wastage of milk during treatment for mastitis.

We now offer a comprehensive range of tools and services to help you keep your cell count under control such as Clover cell check and Interherd+ reports, bespoke for your farm, along with a hands-on practical approach when needed on farm.

These really do help to avoid a lot of expensive fire brigade work such as treating outbreaks of mastitis on farm and discarding milk from several cows all at once in an attempt to avoid cell count penalties. Cell counts count, let's make sure they count in your favour!

## 'BEN VOYAGE'

We've all known for a while that Ben was 'broody' but we couldn't have guessed how 'egg bound' he was! Ben is leaving us this month to put another 'feather in his cap' and 'rule the roost' in poultry medicine.

He will be 'scratching out a living' as the number two vet in the country for a leading chicken producer and will be 'strutting his stuff' travelling all over Britain. He will be going to bed with the chickens and waking early with the sunrise!

Ben has been a valuable member to our team, the kind that is as scarce as hen's teeth! We sincerely wish him all the very best, I'm sure he is very egg-cited about his future venture. (Sorry about all the puns Ben, but it had to be done!) By the way, which did come first, the chicken or the egg?

## TB CATTLE MOVEMENT CONTROLS 2013

Tighter control measures to reduce the risk of bovine TB spreading between cattle are to be introduced in January 2013.

Please familiarise yourself with these changes by visiting the AHVLA website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2012/10/18/cattle-movement-controls-and-surveillance-strengthened-to-tackle-bovine-tb/>

## FOOTROT

Footrot remains a major welfare problem in sheep and is the most important cause of lameness in the UK flock. Poorly controlled, the disease causes visible pain, reduces performance and costs the sheep industry millions of pounds each year. The average direct cost of a single case of lameness is upward of £8.



As with previous years, we would encourage whole flock treatment with Micotil to eradicate footrot. The most economical time for this is over winter when there is the fewest number of sheep on the farm. Micotil must be given by a vet only and the fleece should be dry. Provided all sheep are treated and you

maintain good biosecurity there is no reason why your flock should then not remain footrot free.

Whilst treatment with Micotil will not totally eliminate lameness from your flock, ie white line disease, we believe it to be a very cost-effective treatment.

## PIG WELFARE RULES

From January 2013 welfare rules which only applied to newly built or re-built premises since 2003 will now apply to ALL pig holdings regardless of whether farms are assured or not. The Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (WOFAR) implements the EU pig welfare directive which lays down the minimum standards for the protection of pigs. The provisions coming into force include:

- Maximum slot widths and minimum slat widths for concrete slatted floors.
- For sows and gilts, minimum lengths specified for the sides of pens.
- For sows and gilts, minimum unobstructed floor area and dimensions for solid floors.

Details of specific requirements can be found on the Defra website at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/food-farm/animals/welfare/on-farm/pigs-welfare/>

## WHAT THE FEC?

Following the positive response to our Grass Roots Sheep Worming meeting a few weeks ago we are pleased to announce that we are now doing in-house faecal egg counts for gastrointestinal worms in sheep. The service costs £12 + VAT for a pre-pooled sample.

As a quick reminder, samples should be collected at random from 10 animals, that are a true representation of the group (don't pick the poorest 10 animals, or the best as this will not give an accurate result). Samples should be collected either: from piles left by animals kept on concrete for 10-15mins, from animals in the field as they stand up and walk away, or direct from source with a gloved finger! The sample should then be presented to the practice either as a pooled sample (approximately 3g) or as 10 small samples in individual plastic bags (to be pooled here). If we need to pool the samples ourselves there will be an additional charge, as is the case at all labs.

Remember, if the sample cannot be presented to the practice straight away it can be kept for up to 24 hours in the fridge, in an air-tight container (ie plastic bag) with all the air removed. This is because chilling the faeces makes the worm eggs less likely to hatch, thus making the test less accurate. A large, fist-sized mass of mixed faeces in a glove is less than useless, since as we only use 3g of faeces to run the test there is no way we can find a representative sample of the group from this mess.

If you would like any further information please contact Nathan at the practice.

### DID YOU KNOW?

You can view copies of the newsletter on our website. On the homepage to the left hand side you will see a box 'FARMNEWS', click here and a page will open up with all the newsletters on. If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by email please let us have your email address.