



# SHROPSHIRE FARM NEWS

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### A FUNNY OLD YEAR

As I sit here (in mid-September), it seems a bit like we have passed straight from August into October, with dark storm clouds outside the window, nights rapidly drawing in, and a certain nip in the air.

There is still quite a lot of grass, some corn still to cut (though it will probably need the drier now), and some bumper maize crops standing in fields, which have come on a pace in the past four to six weeks.

What a diverse year we have had, a mild early winter prolonged the "midge" season, so cases of Schmallenberg were seen far later than expected, followed by a late cold snap which brought a lot of snow and icy conditions when we were thinking of spring. Following the rains of last year, and the snow, turnout was much delayed in most cases, as the cold winds inhibited grass growth, and led to a very difficult lambing time. It was cold, miserable, and there was nothing to turn the lambs out to.

When the sun did come, the rain stopped and as we experienced the warmest, driest summer for some time, pastures were again beginning to suffer and grazing was becoming short. It never ceases to amaze me however, how youngstock seem to thrive in these conditions.

Corn crops which were very patchy in the spring grew and ripened, and although straw in some fields has been very short, a reasonable harvest has progressed, with some fall in livestock feed prices.

If the lamb market has not been so good this year, there has been an increase in milk prices, pig prices and beef has helped the margins a little.

### DON'T FORGET!

Our 10 year celebration bash is at Shrewsbury Football Club, Friday 25th October 7pm-midnight. Please contact the practice and let us know if you are attending.

### YMCP POWDER

Buy one tub of YMCP Fresh Cow (20 sachets) and receive two extra sachets free. Offer ends 31/10/13

### EPRIZERO

This year we will be stocking Eprizero instead of Eprinex. This product came to the market earlier in the year and can be used in exactly the same manner as Eprinex. What you will see is that the price is down considerably compared to last year.

### STAMP OUT SCAB!

We will be holding a meeting on Sheep Scab as part of the ADAS eradication program in November. Please contact the practice for more details.

### FIRST AID COURSE

In the autumn we will be running a fully certified first aid course. Please contact Tia at the practice for more details.

Do you have any funny pictures or jokes we could use in our newsletter? If so, email them to [sam@shropshirefarmvets.com](mailto:sam@shropshirefarmvets.com) and you could feature in the next newsletter!

## USING METACAM IN CASES OF CLINICAL MASTITIS

The following article is reproduced with permission from Boehringer Ingelheim.

Pain management in cows is becoming a hot topic with some milk buyers now stipulating that every cow should have pain relief after a difficult calving.

### But what about mastitis?

Whilst it is clear to see that toxic mastitis is very painful, less severe mastitis is often considered not to be painful, mainly because cows are incredibly good at concealing it. So how painful is mastitis?

Mastitis by definition is inflammation of the mammary tissue and inflammation = pain, so even mild cases will cause some discomfort to the cow. The majority of cows with clinical mastitis will have a high temperature and dry matter intakes are likely to suffer. All cases of mastitis get antibiotics to treat the infection, but what about treating the inflammation, pain and temperature with an NSAID?

There are lots of NSAIDs on the market but only Metacam has been proven to have beneficial effects when given to cows with mild or moderate clinical mastitis. Due to its multiple effects on pain, inflammation and high temperatures it not only has beneficial effects on udder health but also overall cow health in comparison to antibiotic treatment alone. Cell counts decline more rapidly in Metacam treated cows and culling rates are also significantly lower (potentially due to the reduced impact on intakes and thus fertility), making it very cost-beneficial.

## PERFECT UDDER

The golden rule for colostrum has always been 6 pints (3 L) in the first 6 hours of life, and this still holds true. It is important that this colostrum is good quality, given at the right temperature. This gives the calf protection against infectious agents over the first 7-14 days of life, and has a huge impact on future growth rates and milk yields in the later life of a dairy heifer.

Colostrum contains immunoglobulin, or “antibodies” produced by the dam against infectious agents encountered either in her environment, or via vaccination. This makes it very valuable to use colostrum from your cows on your farm. With some risk of Johnes disease, it is advisable to use the colostrum from Johnes free cows, and if you are unsure of their health status then just use the colostrum from a cow on her calf.

We have come across “The Perfect Udder” over recent years, and found it an excellent tool in colostrum management for new-born calves. It helps protect the quality of colostrum, provides an easy way to freeze, store and defrost colostrum, and an excellent way to administer it thereafter.

### So how do you know if colostrum is good quality?

1. Use a colostrimeter to check. The colour and thickness of colostrum is not a good guide to the concentration of immunoglobulin, and the quality varies hugely between dams. The float colostrimeter is simple to use – simply drop it into a pot of the colostrum and the float settles on green, amber or red. “Green” colostrum is the best quality and can be stored from Johnes free cows for future use, “amber” is acceptable to use in a dam's own calf but if colostrum shows up “red” then use some stored “green” colostrum in its place.

2. Either feed colostrum straight away, after it has been milked, or if storing it then cool it AS FAST AS POSSIBLE and freeze it. Rapid cooling prevents bacteria from breeding in the colostrum and reducing its quality. The number of E.coli in colostrum doubles every 20 minutes when colostrum remains above 16°C. Cooling rapidly in a perfect udder bag is easy as they are flat – allowing a big surface area to volume ratio. Dropping the full foil bag of colostrum straight into a bucket of water containing a 1.5L bottle of frozen water is a good way to cool the colostrum in the parlour as soon as it is milked off the dam.

### How best to feed colostrum?

1. Allowing the calf to suckle does allow for the best absorption of immunoglobulin into the blood according to research. HOWEVER – it takes a full 20 minutes for a calf to suckle 6 pints (3L) of colostrum – which is a long time after a calving in the middle of the night!

2. Stomach tube the calf with colostrum. When used as a farm protocol for every calf, this provides the best overall odds of calves in the herd having adequate immunoglobulin in the blood over

the first fortnight of life. This research was recently conducted at Liverpool University, using data from real UK dairy farms. Perfect udder bags actually have a teat or stomach tube attachment straight onto the bag – making administration of high quality defrosted colostrum fast and easy to do.

We now stock “Perfect Udder” kits, and at a very competitive price. We have found it to be a great tool in giving your calves the best chance in life from day one. Please contact the office for details, or pop in and ask to have a look at them.





So what about this coming winter? As the distant sound of gunfire in Gloucestershire and Somerset begins (not Alistair's Subaru backfiring), TB more than rumbles on causing hardship and distress to those shut down with it in Shropshire, and no apparent initiative yet to stamp it out, and with the effects of SBV this year an unknown quantity, there remains much uncertainty how this winter will turn out.

A good backend will mean forage supplies can last later into winter and spring, but then with this good weather and despite the dry spell very heavy worm burdens are being seen which will decrease the productivity of livestock. Maize crops look good, but still have to ripen and then be harvested.

The falling cereal prices have seen a small reduction in livestock feed prices, but will the supermarkets and milk buyers now say costs are down so drop the milk price?

It will be another long tough winter, and a close eye on costs is inevitable. Farming goes in cycles, and I suppose in my 50 odd years in farming as a farmer's son and vet, this is probably the third cycle I have seen, and things generally come right in the end, but it's hard out there.

Where can we help? By supporting you and helping you with individual problems on each farm, whether its milk price penalties, lameness, reducing calf mortality, unthrifty lambs, we can offer help, hopefully by reducing potential losses we can improve profitability for you, and a brighter future. Please pick up the phone, we are here to help.

Rod

## NEW MEMBER OF STAFF

We look forward to welcoming Alison Anderson, a new female vet who will be joining our team on 21st October. She comes to us with four years' experience, is very enthusiastic, and is keen to meet you all – I am sure she will divulge a bit more about herself in the next newsletter!

## THE LATEST NEWS ON: TB

On the 6th of September Alistair attended DEFRA's consultation on the future of TB control. The following is a list of ideas for the future direction of TB in England:

- Introducing high risk/low risk trading zones
- Voluntary risk based trading (this is already in place)
- Linking top-up compensation to on farm biosecurity/ help with biosecurity measures
- A wider roll out of the badger cull
- Enhanced depopulation and controlled re-stocking of herds
- Improved epidemiological investigations regarding the local situation
- Local eradication strategies
- Improved breakdown management
- More sensitive breakdown control regimes
- No longer being able to use a short-interval test as a pre-movement test
- Badger vaccination

More onerous options being considered are:

- Relaxing culling licences
- Banning ALL cattle movements within the high risk zone (except straight to slaughter)
- Compulsory post movement testing
- Extend use of gamma interferon testing
- Depopulation of all breakdown herds
- Prohibiting restocking
- No more Inconclusive results, animals will be a pass or fail only
- Imposing badger vaccination

The timeline proposed by DEFRA is to have TB controlled in England within the 25 years.

Alistair's thoughts on the subject were heavily critical and that the plan was 20 years too long. Most of the subjects mentioned above are only at the consultation stage but Alister also expressed a strong concern that DEFRA did not appear to be fully aware of the AHVLA's TB tendering proposals which will shake everything up over the next 12 months. This consultation is now closed but no doubt there will be more and we would encourage you to take part, plenty on the badger lobby do.

## FARMING FUNNIES

A man is driving down a country road, when he spots a farmer standing in the middle of a huge field of grass. He pulls the car over to the side of the road and notices that the farmer is just standing there, doing absolutely nothing. The man gets out of the car, walks out to the farmer and asks him, "Excuse me sir, but what are you doing?"

The farmer replies, "I'm trying to win a Nobel Prize."

"How?" asks the man, puzzled.

"Well, I heard they give the Nobel Prize to people who are out standing in their field."

## ENZOOTIC PNEUMONIA IN PIGS

A disease that most pig producers will be aware of, EP is commonly seen in growing and finishing pigs. It is highly contagious, and caused by the bacteria *Mycoplasma hypopneumoniae*. It reduces feed conversion efficiency and predisposes pigs to more acute pneumonia.

It is considered a major source of economic loss in the pig industry, occurring in all the major pig producing areas of the world.

Clinical signs include coughing (with or without fever), laboured breathing, reduced appetite, variable growth rates and unthrifty appearance.

Secondary infections are common, invading lung tissue already damaged by EP.

The disease can be transmitted between pigs via direct contact or aerosol, on dust, fomites and by wind. This can cause it to spread to farms up to 5km away, though most commonly introduced to farms through importation of other pigs.

From our pig producers at the moment abattoir reports are indicating high levels of lung pathology without causing condemnation of carcasses. There are also indications of secondary disease, and on farm there have been reduced feed conversion rates.

Eradication is difficult both practically and economically, as reinfection can occur rapidly.



Antibiotics limit the effects of the disease without providing a totally successful recovery.

Vaccines are available that will help with control of the disease, reducing clinical signs, lung lesions and pneumonia. M+Pac has been around for a while, and can be used from an early age and repeated at weaning. More recently Ingelvac MycoFlex has been produced to be used at 3 weeks +, providing protection for 26 weeks. This vaccine has the advantage it can be combined with Ingelvac CircoFlex. These can be mixed together allowing for one injection on farms where Circo virus is also a problem. This is also advantageous from a welfare point of view.

As with any species, management, good nutrition and attention to the environment is essential in trying to control respiratory disease.

Rod

## PARASITE FORECAST

Following on from Nathan's article last month regarding worm egg counts - parasite forecasts have now been given for the autumn. Fluke levels are expected to be high again, even after a cold spring and dry July. Worm forecasts are quoted as being unpredictable, but already we are seeing very high worm burdens, especially in sheep and fattening lambs. Some of these burdens are following regular worming regimes, so the threat of anthelmintic resistance is becoming real and worming strategies need to be carefully considered. Along with worms, there seems to be secondary disease present at the same time, such as pasteurella in sheep and pneumonia in cattle, exacerbated by the fluctuating day/night temperatures and humidity changes.

Rod

## POLITE REMINDER

We would be grateful if all drugs orders could be phoned/faxed/emailed at least 24 hours in advance of collection.

We appreciate this is not always possible and the reception staff will endeavour to process your order as quickly as we can. Don't forget we are also at the market every Tuesday where you can collect orders between 9:30am and 12noon. Where possible we would be grateful if all medicine orders for market could be placed by 5pm on the Monday. Items which we do not keep a stock of will need to be ordered by 4.30pm on the Friday before.

Reception

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