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SPRING EDITION 2015

Livestock MATTERS

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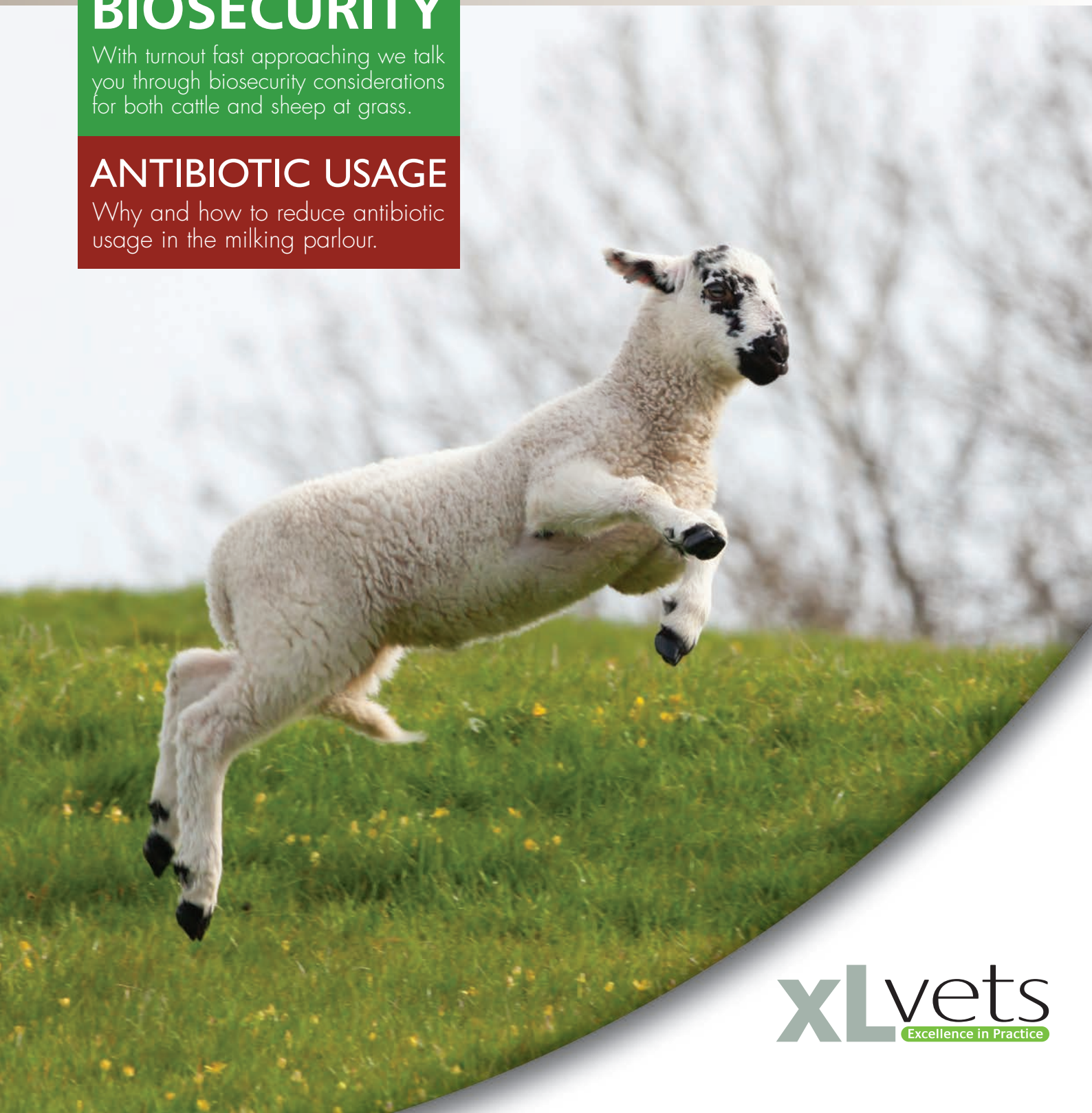
Why and how to reduce antibiotic usage in the milking parlour.



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THE EDITOR

Welcome to the 'Spring' issue of Livestock Matters

The weather is finally beginning to turn, the first daffodils and crocuses are blooming and this year's lambs are now either racing around the fields in teams, or taking a break basking in the spring sunshine. With turnout fast approaching, Jon Reader from Synergy Farm Health in Dorset and Andrew Millar from Ardene House Veterinary Practice in Aberdeen talk us through biosecurity considerations for both cattle and sheep at grass.

We also consider the practical implementation of selective dry cow therapy, to help reduce the use of antibiotics in mastitis management. Scarsdale Veterinary Group and Endell Veterinary Group explain how two farms have benefited from the change in approach from blanket therapy to selective treatments. And with Alnorthumbria Veterinary Group, we take a look behind the scenes of Farmers Weekly Beef Farmer finalist, Simon Bainbridge's farm.

Finally we have our new column 'Graduate Diaries' which will follow two recent graduates who have joined XLVets practices. We'll follow them through their first year in practice and their participation in the XLVets graduate programme that equips newly qualified vets with practical skills.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Livestock Matters.

Joanne

Joanne Sharpe XLVets

CONTENTS

Success in Scotland at AgriScot 2014

Helen Miles, XLVet Training Services

AgriScot 2014 got off to a great start with a large and enthusiastic crowd descending on the Royal Highland Centre in Edinburgh for what was to be their biggest show yet.

The XLVets stand focused on our Make Your Farm Your Fortress campaign giving farmers advice on how to prevent biosecurity breakdowns on farm, and keeping diseases out of their herd or flock.

Our award winning BVD campaign also featured heavily on the stand with many of the visitors already aware of the campaign's messages through exposure in the farming press.

There was also, as ever a lot of interest in our FarmSkills workshop dates, from students and experienced farmers alike, and many people left their details so they can find out more about forthcoming training courses in their area.

A huge thank you must go out to all the willing volunteers from local XLVets practices who helped out on the day.

XLVets supports veterinary student website

XLVets were approached in summer 2014 by the Farm Association of Veterinary Students (FAVS) committee asking for help and support to develop a website and members area.

FAVS was set up to support veterinary students across all the universities, who have a specific interest in farmwork. They wanted a new website that would ensure effective communication between all the partner university groups.

XLVets and FAVS worked closely together to develop a fully interactive, mobile friendly, website and members area, which was launched to students at their annual FAVS Congress in February. The site provides a central hub for FAVS members to keep up to date on upcoming training days and EMS placements, as well as holding interesting clinical discussions between the various universities through the web forum.

Emily Gascoigne, Synergy Farm Health and founding Chairman of FAVS says:

'Working with XLVets has been essential for moving the national vision for FAVS forward. The target for FAVS was that it would be a central resource for individual veterinary students and farm animal veterinary societies. Social media has proved invaluable for communication, But a big part of the vision was the ability for students to share resources (with references to EMS placements, interesting cases, event sharing) and website development has been imperative to this.

With an ever changing committee and representatives, managing a website as an association has historically proved challenging. The help provided by Sean and XLVets has been crucial for developing this new resource and the feedback from students has been testament to what has been created. Phase 1 has been creating the website, populating with up to date information and getting students familiar with the format with the hope that Phase 2 will involve development of a secure space for discussion.

This has been a massive step forward for FAVS - on behalf of FAVS and the up and coming 'farm vets of the future' thank you XLVets for the support and resource made available to us and the website that has been created!

XLVets is proud to support such initiatives that encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing between veterinary students, and in turn supporting the development of our farm animal vets of the future.

BVD CHECK TAG wins industry marketing award

A national initiative, developed by XLVets member practices, scooped a top industry marketing award at the Veterinary Marketing Association (VMA) Awards on 13th March 2015. The accolade was presented to XLVets for demonstrating initiative and innovation in the marketing of BVD CHECK TAG.

XLVets is delighted to have been awarded the Practice Marketing Award in recognition of the work undertaken by all the veterinary practices and industry organisations that have backed the campaign since its launch in 2014. It's a great boost for the campaign and demonstrates the strength of the XLVets group to develop industry-leading initiatives.

'The BVD CHECK TAG campaign focuses on one simple message – identify persistently infected (PI) animals and remove them from your herd. It offers farmers a simple, cost-effective and practical method of testing for BVD, backed up with veterinary support from practices that have got on board with the scheme,' explains Stuart Gough of XLVets Calweton Veterinary Group.

To add value to the testing, a national web-based database was developed which provides verification of negative test results for the disease. 'The new database is central to the BVD CHECK TAG initiative that uses branded white ear tags as part of a BVD status testing procedure. The white tags show that an animal has been tested for BVD and provides an easily identifiable and highly visible prompt for calf buyers to check test results online before purchase,' adds Stuart.

From left to right: Kerrie Winstanley, XLVets; Gemma Ayre, Farm Brand Manager, XLVets; Joanne Sharpe, Marketing & Communications Manager, XLVets; Roddy Webster, Merial Animal Health (Award Sponsor) and Kate Silverton (Awards host).

A range of marketing tools were developed to support the initiative including a selection of veterinary practice and livestock market posters and a collection of informative BVD Free fact sheets to help farmer's better understand and control the disease.

To help generate support for the campaign, XLVets has worked with veterinary practices across the country to get as many involved as possible to ensure the initiative is a nationwide success. 'Only with this critical mass and support from livestock markets, tag companies, pharmaceutical suppliers and calf rearers can we ensure the initiative is a success and routine testing for BVD on farms becomes the norm,' adds Gemma Ayre, Farm Brand Manager at XLVets.

If you are not yet involved with the scheme and want to find out more about BVD CHECK TAG then contact your XLVets practice.

Contract award winners of TB testing and other veterinary services in England announced

Five independent companies, each owned and managed by separate consortiums of farm veterinary practices have been successfully awarded contracts to deliver Government veterinary work, including TB testing, in England on behalf of the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA). The companies named as the contract 'Delivery Partners' for the five APHA designated English regions are: XL Farmcare North Ltd; XL Farmcare Midlands Ltd; XL Farmcare South East Ltd; XL Farmcare Devon and Cornwall Ltd (for South West 1); XL Farmcare Wessex Ltd (for region South West 2).

The new Delivery Partners are all businesses owned and run by independent farm animal veterinary practices, all of whom are firmly rooted in their local, rural communities. Many, but not all, of the veterinary practices already have experience of collaborative working, through their membership of the XLVets group. 'Experience of working co-operatively, along with the high levels of trust that have developed over many years, will definitely help ensure a cohesive approach to TB testing is maintained. This in turn will support a smoother transition of delivery of the Government veterinary services to the new regional companies,' says Bridget Taylor of XL Farmcare North Ltd.

So what do farmers need to do to register their preferred supplier of testing? For clients of XLVets practices, if you're happy for your practice to continue providing your TB testing, then you don't need to do anything. Your XLVets practice will be automatically recorded as your choice of preferred practice by the appropriate regional XL Farmcare company. Alternatively, farmers can choose to register their preference on the XL Farmcare website www.xlfarmcare.co.uk.

The veterinary practices involved already undertake a significant proportion of the TB testing work in their respective geographic areas and they will now work with other veterinary practices to carry on the delivery of TB testing, providing a continuity of service for farmers.

The result is welcomed as a positive step by many, as the management and procurement of TB testing remains firmly with the veterinary profession. 'It's critical that farm clinicians stay involved in the management of one of the most important infectious diseases of cattle,' says Andrew Curwen, Chief Executive of XLVet UK Ltd. 'By maintaining a positive approach to disease control and demonstrating that vets can work collaboratively, the profession is in a strong position to support and deliver national undertakings such as TB testing and to continue to safeguard and improve the health and welfare of UK livestock,' he concludes.

To learn more about the delivery of TB testing services in your area contact your local XL Farmcare contracted provider, details of which can be found on the XL Farmcare website www.xlfarmcare.co.uk.

Farm biosecurity:

Just how strong are your defences against disease?

Biosecurity protocols are a part of herd health planning and required for farm assurance schemes. But it can be tempting to relax the security measures, or overlook the dangers, and as a result, new disease problems can enter a flock/herd.

Biosecurity is not just about having a foot-dip and disinfectant straw at the farm gate. It is largely about protecting animals from exposure to biological diseases. Here, Jon Reader of Synergy Farm Health in Dorset and Andrew Millar of Ardene House Vet Practice in Aberdeen share some of their knowledge and experiences of biosecurity lapses, which can threaten a farm's biosecurity and livestock health. And two farmers give some insights into the biosecurity precautions they have taken.

But first, before reading on, ask yourself: Do you know the disease status of your own flock/herd currently? Is it a closed herd/flock? What precautions should you take if you hire, or buy, a bull? What disease issues do your neighbours have? Do they vaccinate and/or monitor for disease?

Too trusting of others?

Jon says: 'Two phrases I commonly hear when I'm with farmers who have bought in some livestock without knowing its health status or testing for any diseases are: 'well it will be ok, I know the farmer' or 'it will be ok, they vaccinate for everything'.

'My response is, yes, but why do they vaccinate?

'If a farm that you are planning to purchase stock from is vaccinating, then find out what for, and why. Is it because they have a naïve herd and it's to safeguard animals from diseases coming in? Or, as is more commonly the case, is it because disease is already circulating, and so vaccination is giving protection to the non-infected animals in the herd?

'Because vaccination is not just about protecting your animals from what's coming in, it may also be needed to protect the new animal from the diseases on your farm. So you should know the health status of your own herd/flock too. And consider vaccinating incoming animals before they have contact with yours.'

Too trusting of vaccination?

Vaccines are an essential part of proactive disease prevention. They provoke an animal's immune response and cause specific antibodies to be raised against the disease thereby protecting the animal.

However, Andrew Millar from Ardene House Vet Practice believes that vaccination may sometimes give a false sense of (bio)security: 'Vaccines have their limitations. Firstly, no vaccine is 100% effective, and some are better than others. So if vaccinating for BVD, and testing reveals there is probably a persistently infected (PI) animal present... find it, and cull it.

'Incorrect storage is another factor which can reduce - or even destroy - the efficacy of a vaccine. So check the label on the bottle, and/or read the manufacturer's data sheet. The data sheet will also tell you how long it takes for the vaccine to start working and giving protection. They won't have an immediate effect, so bear this in mind when dosing animals and then mixing them with others.

'For example, when vaccinating cattle for lungworm in advance of turnout to grass, using the oral vaccine that is available, the protocol is to give two doses with an interval of four weeks between them. The onset of immunity is not until two weeks after the second dose has been given. So, plan ahead to ensure that animals are fully protected when they go into the fields.'

Veterinary surgeon	Jon Reader
XLVets practice	Synergy Farm Health

Veterinary surgeon	Andrew Millar
XLVets practice	Ardene House Vet Practice Ltd

Beware of the bull

'Contrary to some people's beliefs, if you buy or hire in bulls, then you do not have a closed herd,' says Jon. 'And it's the same with rams and flocks.'

'Bulls have as much potential to bring in disease as cows and calves, and they will be kept with your valued breeding animals. So when bringing in a new bull, find out its vaccination history. Then, even if it has been vaccinated, it's still worth testing. A routine blood test should be carried out on the source farm to check for BVD, Johne's, leptospirosis, IBR, and of course, TB. In some cases, the type of vaccine that has been given will influence the test required, so knowledge of this is also important.

'If the bull has leptospirosis, and your herd is naïve for this disease, then it can be treated with antibiotics before coming onto the farm.

'With BVD, it's possible for the virus to cross the blood-testis barrier. This is quite a rare occurrence, but it does mean a bull can test negative as a PI animal, yet produce BVD-infected semen. So, depending on its history, you should discuss with your vet whether it is worth having the semen tested by viral antigen PCR.

'To test whether Campylobacter is present, a sheath wash can be carried out, and samples sent to the lab for analysis.

"If the bull - or any livestock - is taken off farm to a show, then allow for 28 days of quarantine on their return, before blood-sampling. This allows time for antibodies to any disease encountered to be raised and identifiable in tests.'

Jon adds: 'In addition to these biosecurity measures, all new bulls should, of course, always be fertility tested before being set to work.'

New arrivals checklist

When new animals come on to the farm, they should be quarantined for 28 days before appropriate tests are carried out. Then they should remain there until the results are back.

Jon explains: 'With sheep, wormer resistance is a major issue in the industry. So when buying-in sheep, dose them with an appropriate wormer on arrival, as discussed with your vet, and let them stand before coming onto the land.

'In dairy cows, digital dermatitis can cause problems - consider foot-bathing animals as soon as they come on the farm.

'The act of transportation and then arriving into a new environment can be very stressful for some animals. A lot of diseases can show themselves at such times. For example, if an animal is harbouring salmonella, it could start excreting it. So if after arriving on the farm any animals become sick or abort, then it's important to talk to your vet who may carry out some diagnostics tests.'

Jon warns: 'If you are buying in animals from the Continent, then you need to beware of potential new strains of blue tongue disease. There's also a high risk of purchasing animals with Johne's; a negative sample result may also not necessarily mean the animal is clear of the disease.

'Always keep an eye out for skin lesions which may be due to mange - including Psoroptic mange - or ringworm. And this year, be aware that on the Continent there are reports of a new skin disease - bovine besnoitiosis. It is caused by a parasite and is seen as skin and eye lesions.'

Symptoms of disease may show during the transportation of an animal due to stress

Outdoor hazards

'The most likely source of disease is from another animal, with some disease problems transferred across species,' explains Andrew. 'Where sheep and cattle are grazed outdoors in the better months of the year, there can be added biosecurity risks from unwitting dog walkers.

'For instance, dogs can be carriers of a tapeworm which also infects sheep. One farmer had a report from his local abattoir of cysts in the muscles of his sheep. This had arisen from a tapeworm infection - from dogs or wild carnivores, such as foxes. The farm has a public footpath through it, and dog owners sometimes think it is ok not to 'pick up' after their dog when it is on farmland. Whilst we can't control the habits of dog owners, educating them can help. So if this is a problem, consider putting a sign up to the public, and encouraging them to keep their dogs wormed.

'It is known that other ruminants, such as sheep can be a source of Johne's disease infection for cattle. We consequently advise that cattle and sheep should not graze together. The only exception to this is in extensive hill areas, since the low stocking density reduces the risk.'

Look over the fence

Andrew explains: 'It's not only important to know the disease status of your own herd or flock, but where field boundaries are shared, it's a good idea to know the health of your neighbour's animals too.

'I recently tested a supposedly 'BVD-free' herd, and discovered that it had youngstock - of 9 to 18 months - that had met the virus and developed antibodies. So we tested the herd, including the bulls, but couldn't find any PI animals.

'Eventually it transpired that the neighbour's cattle had broken into one of the fields over the summer and mixed with some of the farm's heifers. Amongst them there might have been a PI animal.

'So if you discover that cattle have broken in - or yours have broken out - do talk to your neighbour. If the health status of one or both groups is not known, then it's advisable to test a proportion of the animals involved to look for antibodies as this can indicate they have met the disease. But you will need to wait three weeks for these antibodies to develop.'

Case study 1

alnorthumbria veterinary group

Veterinary surgeon	Joe Henry
XLVets practice	Alnorthumbria Veterinary Group

Joe Henry, Alnorthumbria Veterinary Group

Simon Bainbridge, farmer

Beef farmer Simon Bainbridge has considered the cattle populations 'over the fence' from his farm, and taken precautions to safeguard his high health status herd.

Simon's herd is naïve to leptospirosis. His vet, Joe Henry from Alnorthumbria Vet Group explains: 'As part of the "horizon scanning" we did when reviewing the biosecurity protocols in the herd health plans, we looked at the risk potential of diseases coming into the herd from other sources. Lepto is passed out in urine and the bacterium, can be spread to other farms via streams. Since there's a farm upstream from Simon where cattle of unknown health status are regularly bought-in, we took the decision to vaccinate the breeding herd as a precaution.

'Simon wants to achieve one calf/cow/year. But an infection of leptospirosis would result in a proportion of his cows not conceiving. It would be a big drop in income for the relatively very small cost of the vaccine.'

Simon has also put a lot of effort into becoming accredited free of BVD following an outbreak of mucosal disease in 2005, in which he lost 33 cattle. BVD is very contagious so, wanting to keep disease out, and conscious that some fields bordered other farms which grazed cattle of unknown BVD status, Simon has double-fenced the field perimeters.

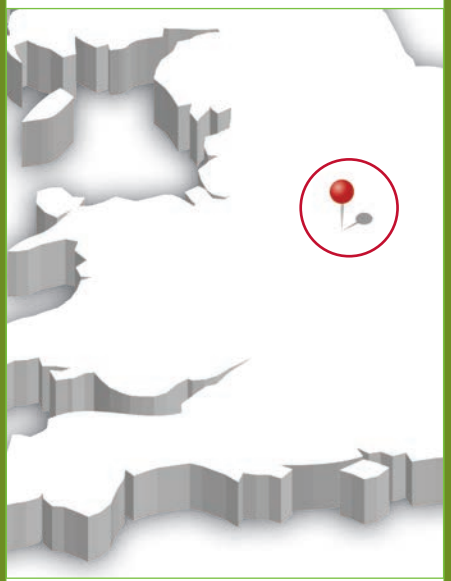
Double fence around the field perimeters at Simon Bainbridge's farm

Case study 2

A very biosecure beef unit

Derbyshire beef farmer Andrew Hallifield of Bank House Farm, near Burton-upon-Trent, runs a beef finishing unit, in partnership with his parents, Eileen and Richard.

ScarsdaleVets Farm



Veterinary surgeon	Sandy Jamieson
XLVets practice	Scarsdale Veterinary Group

Sandy Jamieson, Scarsdale Veterinary Group

Andrew Hallifield, Beef farmer

Cattle are bought at markets, or off-farm, aged from 22 months or older. They stay on the farm for between one and three months before being selected for slaughter. They are fed a high-energy TMR based on straw, and bakery, potato and distillery co-products, and are currently averaging 1.65kg of liveweight gain per day.

Sandy Jamieson of Scarsdale Veterinary Group makes fortnightly visits. Andrew explains: 'Sandy spends nearly half a day with us and sees every beast, and afterwards I get a checklist of animals which may require treatments.

'Since many animals have come from the markets, there is a lot of stress. So we do have pneumonia here, which is stress-related, and Sandy discusses pneumonia strategies with me.' Sandy adds: 'Andrew is always buying from a variety of unknown sources, and so there is always a high risk of disease. To help overcome some of the challenges, on arrival, all animals are wormed for lungworm, dosed for liver fluke, and vaccinated against IBR using a quick-acting nasal spray.'

Three years ago the farm became an Approved Finishing Unit (AFU). This allows Andrew to buy in cattle from TB-restricted farms. 'It requires any animal that leaves the farm to go straight to the abattoir, but we were already doing that anyway,' says Andrew.

The majority of cattle are still bought at markets when Andrew judges there is potential for more growth. However around 10% are bought from TB-restricted farms and will undergo pre-movement testing within 90 days of being brought to the farm.

To have this licence, Andrew has to have extremely tight biosecurity, so that, in the event of any animal developing TB, the disease will be totally contained.

The prevention of wildlife entry (and exit) is part of the terms of the AFU licence. So at the gate is a drive-through concrete wheelwash. Andrew explains: 'We were putting in a badger-proof cattle grid, and decided to add in a wheelwash as we thought this would be more effective than having lorries drive over disinfected rubber mats.

Preventing wildlife entry

Andrew designed it himself: 'We found what we thought was the largest tractor tyre, measured its circumference and made the bath long enough to coat a whole wheel. The water is constantly replenished via a ballcock system to maintain a 10cm depth, and a biological disinfectant is added weekly.'

Around the whole perimeter of the 5-acre site, Andrew erected some post and rail fencing with sheep netting and electrified fencing. The gates are electrified too. The terms of the AFU licence specify that four strands of electrified wiring are used at set heights above the ground. Andrew uses five strands and in one exposed area has seven. As an extra precaution, Andrew has positioned a flashing indicator - within sight of his office window - which stops flashing if the electric circuit becomes broken.

Electrified gates

Flashing indicator

So now Sandy's visits also include biosecurity checks - he walks the whole perimeter to check that all the fencing is secure.

Andrew takes both animal welfare and his farm biosecurity very seriously. 'We have thousands of cattle pass through here, and have only had a couple of cases of TB lesions found at the abattoir each year.

'Locally there are some very long-established good pedigree dairy herds. If they should get TB, I'm making sure it won't have come from my unit.'

Cattle grid wheelwash

Check your defences!

As part of XLVets' campaign: Make Your Farm Your Fortress, two management booklets have been produced to help you assess the potential for diseases to come onto your farm, and to spread through the herd/flock. They include useful checklists to assess the risks, and guidelines on improving your biosecurity.

For a copy of the sheep and cattle management guides, contact your local XLVets practice.

Make your farm your FORTRESS

Why and how to reduce antibiotic usage in the milking parlour

WILL SHEPPARD, ENDELL VETERINARY GROUP

Back in the 1960's the Five Point Plan was introduced to the dairy industry – a set of simple guidelines which gave a co-ordinated approach to controlling mastitis. It included the recommendation for the blanket use of antibiotics at drying off.

(Left) Will Sheppard, (Right) Richard Sainsbury

But today, the farm environment and the management practices on most dairy farms are very different. Cows are housed in cleaner conditions, the advent of teat sealants has enabled protective cover to be given against infections arising in the dry period, and parlour routines may now include teat-dipping and flushing clusters, plus a more proactive culling of high cell count cows is often taken.

Just this month, Arla announced its 'Arlagården' quality assurance scheme will come into place in the UK from October 2015. For Arla farmers, there will be a requirement to review mastitis management practices which will include discussions with their vet about the use of selective antibiotic dry cow therapy, rather than blanket treatments. It's a move which it's expected other milk companies may well follow in the future.

'With all the improvements in cow health, hygiene and cleanliness, there's now an opportunity on many farms to change from a blanket approach on antibiotic treatments, to a more selective one,' says Endell Vet Group's Will Sheppard.

'Especially when taking into account the fact that using antibiotics can actually increase the risk of toxic mastitis cases. This is because antibiotics will kill off all the bacteria present in the teat canal, including the natural flora – the 'good bacteria'. This then leaves the area exposed to infection by coliform bacteria - the 'bad bacteria'. This in turn can then increase the risk of toxic mastitis, which might have been reduced by the presence of 'good' bacteria.'

Many farmers remain apprehensive to adopt a selective approach, despite the advent of teat sealants. However, Will and his colleagues believe more farmers could be using just a teat sealant when drying off cows which have a low cell count and clear mastitis record. This could save on medicine costs, without detriment to mastitis incidence or cow health.

In the future, there could also be scope to take a selective approach with milking cow tubes, following the availability of on-farm kits which identify the type of bacteria pathogens present in mastitic milk.

Veterinary surgeon	Will Sheppard
XLVets practice	Endell Veterinary Group

A change to selective dry cow therapy has been a positive move all-round

Around half of Endell Vet Group's dairy clients have adopted a policy of selective dry cow therapy. One of them is Richard Sainsbury of Round Barrow Farm, near Salisbury. He has been taking this approach since the summer of 2012, and last year nearly 80% of his cows were dried off using a teat sealant alone.

Richard's 190-cow herd of New Zealand Friesians are fed rations high in forage and graze outdoors in summer. The herd is averaging yields of 6,800 litres/cow. Richard works by himself, and block-calves the herd in the autumn, getting extra help from his wife Claire to rear the calves.

Endell's Will Sheppard explains: 'Richard is someone who pays a lot of attention to the detail, and this always pays off. He had been getting some cases of *E.coli* mastitis originating from the dry period.

'As there is evidence that killing off the natural bacteria with an antibiotic tube makes the teat canal more susceptible to attack from *E.coli*, I advised him to drop the use of dry cow antibiotics in cows which had low cell counts. So Richard's criteria for drying off a cow using just a teat sealant are: a somatic cell count of less than 250,000 cells/ml in the last three milk recordings, plus no cases of mastitis in the lactation.'

This approach has been highly successful and has had no detriment to the milk quality or mastitis incidence: Richard's herd has a mastitis rate of only 19 clinical cases per 100 cows per year. The rolling cell count is 100,000-120,000 cells/ml and only 7% of the herd have an SCC above 200,000 cells/ml.

Will adds: 'These excellent results have been achieved through paying attention to the drying off procedure, the milking routine, and to always ensuring the cows' environment is as clean as possible.'

During the winter months, there are more cows than the 160 cubicle spaces in the shed, so Richard has provided straw yards for the overflow. These yards are totally cleaned out every three weeks and bedded up daily.

'Richard is also very particular in his milking routine, and higher cell count cows will always be milked last and the clusters are flushed after such cows,' adds Will.

Dry cows

Drying off procedure

At Round Barrow Farm, the herd is block-calved over a 12-week period from August to November. In fact, Richard has an enviable 80% 6-week in-calf rate.

Richard adds: 'I want them to calve in September because the weather is usually dry, it fits in with the rest of the farm set-up, and the milk price is better!'

Cows start being dried off from the end of June. The process is treated as a completely separate procedure from the main milking.

When the cows come into the parlour, Richard does not milk the ones that need drying off. Instead, on exiting, these are drafted off to an area where they stay until milking has finished. Richard then washes the parlour down to create a clean standing, before letting them back in again.

Richard explains: 'Drying off is always done at the morning milking, and I do it in batches - of up to eight - where possible.'

'All teats are pre-dipped and then dry-wiped, and cows milked as normal. Then I dip the teats with the pre-dip again and dry-wipe again. I'll dip the next cow before wiping the first, so that the dip has more time to have its effect.'

'Each teat end is then wiped with cotton wool soaked in surgical spirit as an extra precaution to prevent any surface bacteria on the end being pushed into the teat canal with the sealant.'

For each cow, Richard wipes the end and injects the sealant, one teat at a time. He takes care with his injection technique, and also works on the furthest away teats first. He then dips all the cow's teats again using the post-milking teat dip.

Richard explains: 'The herd is grazed outdoors in the summer. So once the cows have been dried off, I let them stand in a clean yard for a while before moving them to fields away from the noise and sight of the parlour.'

Around one month prior to calving, the cows are moved closer to the farm to a 'transition field'. Here they are strip-grazed, moving onto a fresh area of grass every day. Richard also takes care to move the ring feeders daily, so that their environment is always kept 'clean'.

Richard's changeover to the selective use of dry cow tubes has had no detriment to his herd's health and has saved him money too. In the past 12 months, he will have spent around £1,500 less on dry cow tubes. Moreover, he has significantly reduced the incidence of toxic *(E.coli)* mastitis cases.

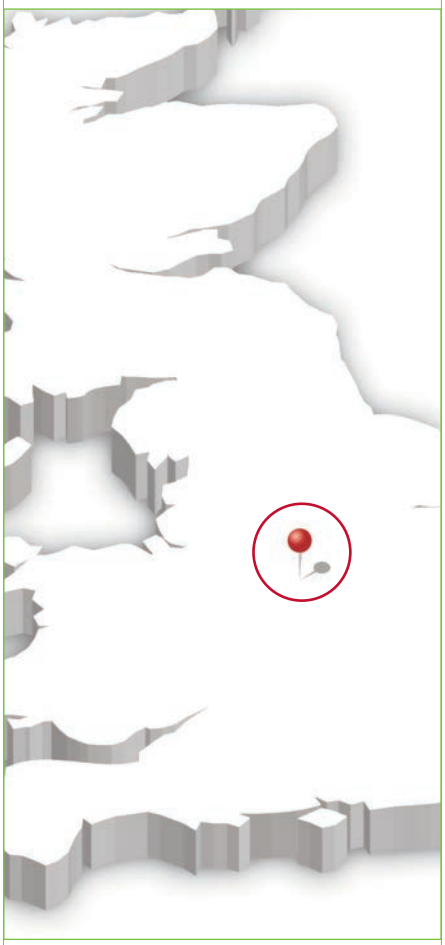
Peter Plate, Jim Willshire and Will Sheppard

Tips on teat sealant use

- The application of teat sealant differs from antibiotic tubes. It is important to hold the top of the teat so that the sealant stays in the teat canal. If in doubt, ask your vet to show you the technique.

- Teat sealant tubes can get hard to squeeze in cold weather - but don't be tempted to put them in warm water. If you know you will be using some, put them in the house beforehand where they will be at a warmer temperature, and then just bring the box out at milking time.

ScarsdaleVets Farm



Veterinary surgeon	Carolyn Baguley
XLVets practice	Scarsdale Veterinary Group

CAROLYN BAGULEY, SCARSDALE VETERINARY GROUP

Alternatives to antibiotics

Leicestershire dairy farming couple Tom and Debra Willoughby have not used any dry cow antibiotics for nearly 10 years. At Grange Farm near Ashby de la Zouch in Leicestershire, they run a 100-cow organic herd, and maintain a respectable cell count of around 180,000 cells/ml, using only a teat sealant at drying off.

Tom and Debra's philosophy is to run a profitable herd, and achieve a good quality of life - both for themselves and the herd. Milk yields are averaging 5,500 litres per cow, with 4,200 litres coming from forage.

Tom explains: 'We are not pushing for high production and try to reduce stress on the cows as much as possible. So we have worked with our vets to eradicate BVD and digital dermatitis, and are vaccinating against IBR. We aim to keep everything clean - the cows, the bedding, our hands, their teats.'

At Grange Farm, the passageways in the shed are scraped four times daily. The straw yards are bedded daily - or twice daily if needed. They are also cleaned out completely and replenished, every 3-4 weeks. So during the winter, over 2t of straw is used per cow. Cows are also allowed plenty of space for loafing, feeding and lying down.

'Reducing antibiotic usage is the long term aim,' says Tom. 'If cows are kept under good welfare conditions, they will be less stressed and healthier. Last year we only had 24 clinical cases of mastitis in our 100-cow herd.'

When signs of mastitis are spotted, the Willoughbys will assess what the most appropriate treatment is. Debra explains: 'In most cases, this will be one of the many homeopathic remedies available, but sometimes antibiotics are the best option.

'If a cow comes into the parlour with a hot hard quarter which is painful to the touch, we might treat using homeopathic Belladonna, for instance. This is an extract from Deadly Nightshade, which has been diluted down for use as a homeopathic treatment. It is in a liquid form which is sprayed onto the cow's nose and vulva - the mucous membranes.

Tom and Debra Willoughby

Carolyn Baguley with Tom and Debra Willoughby

A range of homeopathic treatments

Homemade food protection

'Similarly, any cases of metritis are assessed by looking at the colour, texture and smell of the discharge, and then treated with an appropriate homeopathic remedy, such as Pulsatilla 30. In cases where cows have a high temperature, are not eating, or showing signs of distress, then we consult with our vet.'

Cow welfare is important to the Willoughbys and cows which have had a difficult calving are given homeopathic Arnica, to soothe the bruising, along with a conventional painkiller.

The couple are relatively new clients for Scarsdale Vet Practice. They receive fortnightly visits from vets Carolyn Baguley or Rose Jackson for fertility checks, and are also getting help and advice on many other aspects of herd health.

Tom and Debra have been delighted that their new vets are prepared to support their management philosophy. So, non-cycling cows are not treated with prostaglandins or progesterone, but instead are given a massage of the uterus and ovaries.

Carolyn says: 'The cure rates for cystic cows have been very encouraging. I've also been impressed with the cure rates for mastitis and the cell count levels which have been achieved without the use of antibiotics.'

In addition, Carolyn has helped Tom and Debra to look at the 'big picture' on mastitis threats by working through the DairyCo Mastitis Plan. This identifies the risk factors for mastitis on a farm.

'It's important to identify where the problems are by looking at data, and the timings. Then focus on one area and tackle that rather than trying to look at everything in one go,' says Carolyn.

The Willoughbys are collecting mastitic milk samples and sending them for analysis, via the Scarsdale practice, to determine the causative bacteria.

Carolyn adds: '*Strep. uberis* was identified as one of the key mastitis pathogens. Cases peak in the spring and autumn, when tracks get muddy, so the laying of cow tracks has been identified as part of the solution.'

Like Richard Sainsbury, the Willoughby's successful reduction in antibiotic usage has come about through attention to management practices and a focus on cow cleanliness and hygiene.

Cutting back on milking cow tubes

There are also opportunities to take a selective approach and reduce the use of intramammary antibiotics in milking cows. This is because there is evidence which shows that Gram-negative cases of mastitis (e.g. caused by coliform bacteria) can self-cure, and therefore may not require any antibiotic treatment.

But it is not so simple to apply this approach in practice. When a mild or moderate case of mastitis is encountered at milking, it will take several days to send samples away for analysis to identify whether the causative pathogen is a Gram-negative bacterium, or not.

Endell's Peter Plate explains: 'If the mastitis is the result of a Staph or Strep infection, then early treatment is needed to ensure a good recovery rate. Sending samples away to a lab delays treatment and this would be detrimental if it wasn't a coliform case.'

'However, there are test kits available in the USA, and soon arriving here in the UK, which allow farmers to identify the causative bacteria on-farm, and make informed choices on treatment options in 24 hours.'

'In a trial carried out in the USA, the use of milking cow tubes was halved through using this technique, without detriment to cure rates, mastitis incidence or milk quality.'

The Endell Veterinary Group has obtained funding - from the Soil Association and the Duchy Originals Future Farming Programme - to run a trial to evaluate the success of using one of these test kits.

Peter explains: 'We are recruiting eight organic farms, all of whom milk record, to take part in the year-long trial. Participants will be given training on taking a sterile milk sample, and shown how to spread it onto special 3-section agar plates which are incubated for 18-24 hours.'

Each section contains a different growth medium; farmers will be shown how to differentiate whether the cause of mastitis is due to an infection of Staphylococci or Streptococci/Enterococci (Gram-positive bacteria), or of coliform bacteria like *E.coli* (Gram-negative bacteria), as shown in figure 1.

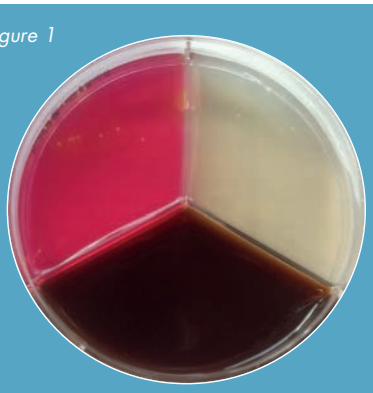
'From this knowledge, they can then choose to treat with antibiotics, or to just monitor the situation.'

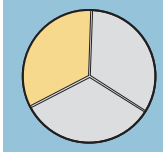
'The incubation period will mean there is one day lost between discovering the problem and treating it. So this trial will test whether this approach can be used without affecting treatment success, recurrence rates or cell count levels.'

A similar trial is to be run with non-organic farms.

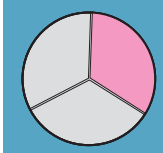
Peter adds: 'The ultimate aim is to see whether the usage of milking cow tubes can be reduced without detriment to cow health. On the farm, this will have financial benefits for farmers in reduced medicine costs, less milk discard, and a reduced risk of antibiotic failure. From a wider perspective, reducing antibiotic usage in the dairy industry enables producers to proactively meet the demands of milk buyers, consumers and governments.'

Figure 1

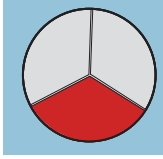




Section 1 Selection for Gram negative bacteria



Section 2: Selection for staphyococci



Section 3: Selection for staphyococci and enterococci

Farmer Simon Bainbridge

Simon Bainbridge, Farmers Weekly Beef Farmer of the year finalist

A change of approach across **genetics,** management and health is paying off

Amongst last year's finalists for Farmers Weekly's Beef Farmer of the Year award was Simon Bainbridge, of Donkin Rigg, near Morpeth, in Northumberland. Together with his wife Claire, he runs an organic suckler herd and sheep flock. The health of which, is under the care of vets Joe Henry and Jenny Hull of the Alnorthumbria Vet Practice.

Over the past few years Simon has received a lot of veterinary input whilst he instigated some quite radical changes to the genetics, health and management of his two livestock enterprises.

Simon explains: 'We became a Monitor Farm for Northumberland and this was a big driver for change: we hosted on-farm meetings, and received a lot of good advice over the 3-year period. We had bought a neighbouring farm and needed to take a fresh look at the business as a whole.'

A change of genetics

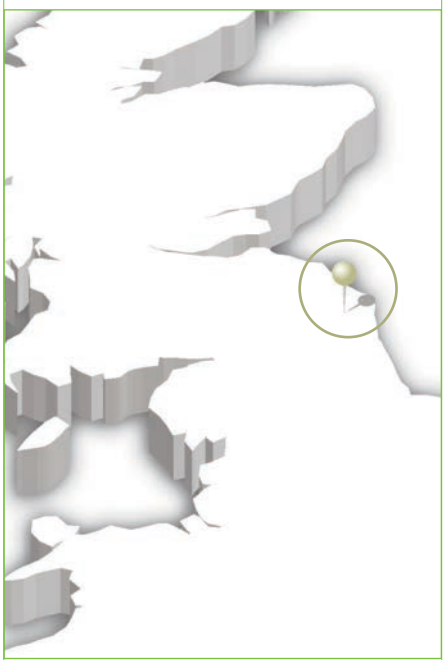
Previously, the herd had been based on the use of Limousin and Blond Aquitaine bulls. But Simon is now using native breeds - Hereford and Aberdeen Angus.

He explains: 'The maternal cow is the key. I'm looking for a medium-sized efficient cow which will calve down at two years, have an easy calving, give plenty of milk and get back in-calf again. The meat of these native breeds also has good marbling and so makes good eating quality, which is important for my end market.'

Bulls, based on EBVs, are selected for easy calving, more than growth. Simon explains: 'If they grow too much then we just get big cows which eat a lot. Angus bulls are alternated with the Herefords, so that by 2020, the whole herd will have become Black/Red Baldies. The crossing of the breeds also confers good hybrid vigour.'

The change of breed has enabled Simon to move from a system of heifers calving down at nearly three years of age, to one where they calve at two years.

alnorthumbria veterinary group



Veterinary surgeons	Joe Henry and Jenny Hull
XLVets practice	Alnorthumbria Veterinary Group

Joe Henry
Alnorthumbria Veterinary Group

Jenny Hull
Alnorthumbria Veterinary Group

Heifer selection

'Heifers need to be 370kg by 14 months to be bulled. Animals that are lighter than this are sold, as are any with a poor temperament,' says Simon.

Joe explains: 'The two factors which affect calving ease are calf size and the dam's pelvic area. 'The aim is to have calves with low birth weights – Simon is better off with lots of smaller calves than having large calves which require Caesareans. Hence, his careful choice of bulls.

'In addition, we measure the pelvic area of his heifers, as an indication of potential calving difficulties. We use special pelvimeter callipers to measure the internal vertical and horizontal diameters of the pelvis. From this we can calculate the pelvic area and compare this against a set of charts drawn up based on age and breed.

For Simon's heifers, they need a pelvic area of at least 148cm^2 by 14 months of age, or they will be removed from the breeding herd and finished for meat.

'It's not an exact science but it does get rid of the smallest 10% and often there are clear outliers. Indirectly it's also proven to be a crude tool for assessing temperament!' Simon adds: 'Using this technique, we expect the heifers we keep on for breeding to calve down easily and so should their daughters.'

The measurements are carried out in June period when the heifers are around 13 months old. They receive their first dose of BVD vaccine and a mineral bolus, at the same time. Heifers will also be vaccinated for lungworm.

'Working with nature'

Simon plans his calving so that it starts from 7th April – this later start means he can turn cows and their newborn calves out straight onto grass within 24 hours of calving, and no additional feeding is required. 'As an organic farmer, I need to 'work with nature' and use the available grass and forages. I don't buy any organic feed in, and instead grow a variety of forages: lucerne, red clover, wholecrop oats and peas. Animals are finished on grass/forage and the average liveweight gain over their lives is 1kg/day. They are ready for slaughter from between 16 and 24 months of age.'

Pelvimeter callipers are used with heifers as a tool to help ensure easy calvings

Good health

Simon's herd is in the SAC Premium Cattle Health Scheme – it is accredited free of BVD and is monitored for Johne's disease via annual blood testing of all animals over two years of age. Jenny adds: 'Simon vaccinates against BVD, and has also double-fenced his field perimeters to prevent any contact with other cattle. He has recently started vaccinating against leptospirosis too, following a risk assessment.

'IBR, however, is endemic in the herd with six out of six animals testing positive at the last check-up. We are monitoring the situation and Simon vaccinates calves before weaning them to give protection from pneumonia over the winter.' Simon adds: 'It's extra work but we don't get pneumonia in the shed like we used to.

'I also want to ensure my bulls are free of disease, including TB, so I buy them off farms in Scotland which are accredited to Health Schemes like myself. New bulls are always isolated and tested before joining the herd.'

Behind the scenes, Claire Bainbridge looks after all the farm's paperwork

One tight calving block

Simon's herd used to be split 50:50 between spring and autumn calving. Joe adds: 'Calving would extend up to 15 weeks each time, so Simon was effectively calving for 30 weeks of the year.'

But now, Simon has one spring-calving herd. Heifers are bulled over a 6-week period, and cows for 9 weeks. Any animal that is not in-calf, is culled from the herd, and finished for slaughter. With this strict approach, Simon's 140 cows calve down in a tight 9-week block each spring. The aim is for 65% of cows to calve in the first three weeks of the calving block. Last year 71% had calved in that time. A number of factors contribute towards achieving this compact calving period. Joe explains: 'The Angus and Herefords have gestation periods which are up to 7 days shorter than the Continental breeds, so there's more time to get cows back in-calf. Also, by ensuring that cows/heifers have easy calvings, this helps them start cycling and get back in-calf again sooner.'

Jenny adds: 'Another factor is mineral status. This soil in this area is renowned for being deficient in copper, cobalt, selenium and iodine. So, breeding females are supplemented with a pre-calving mineral bolus. It lasts for 6 months, which covers calving and supports them to come bulling again. It has also helped calf vitality.'

Another essential factor is bull health. A proactive approach is taken to ensure bulls are fit and fertile; in May, one of the Alnorthumbria vets comes and spends a half a day MOT-ing the five bulls.

Open mind for change

'One of the most dangerous phrases on a farm is "but we've always done it that way". But Simon has an open mind to change, and is always keen to do things better. He's probably made 10 years' worth of change in just a few years,' explains Jenny.

Simon adds: 'I rarely see my vets for emergencies these days, instead they come to do routine or preventative work like bull MOTs and pelvic measuring of heifers. I don't want fire brigade work, and try to avoid emergency callout. In fact, I only had to call the vet out to a calving once last year – a cow with a twisted uterus. We are trying to create a business that will work now and in the future. And to make money you've got to have it all 'nailed' – health and fertility, genetics and feeding.'

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HELEN MILES, XLVET TRAINING SERVICES LTD

Upskilling the next generation: FarmSkills launch the new Dairy Herdsman Certificate in Cumbria

FarmSkills is set to launch the new Dairy Herdsman Certificate to students and the wider farming community at Newton Rigg College in Penrith, Cumbria.

The new initiative which is being supported by MSD Animal Health will deliver a core of practical, vet-led dairy modules to agricultural students using college farm facilities, which build into a recognised certificate of practical skills and competence.

The programme's aim is to upskill the next generation of farmers entering the industry meaning that they gain experience and recognised skills in areas such as DIY AI and cattle foot trimming whilst at college, and in turn enter the workforce as highly skilled and technically proficient individuals.

The certificate is made up of eight core modules covering a variety of topics and will be delivered by our experienced vets and industry experts. Modules can be studied individually to cover particular gaps in knowledge or as a whole over the course of their academic career.

FarmSkills is able to offer students these courses at a discounted rate thanks to the support of MSD Animal Health. The workshops will also be open to the wider farming community, who will attend the same workshops at a slightly different rate, but still take advantage of the high level and quality of learning delivered by our LANTRA approved trainers, along with all the supporting materials and set learning outcomes that our workshops offer.

As with all FarmSkills training, these modules will have a strong practical focus and be delivered to small groups of individuals ensuring that delegates will learn specific knowledge and skills to help manage and improve key areas of health, welfare and productivity issues on farm.

More information of what each course covers along with dates and details of how to book and pay for your workshop online can be found on our website **www.farmskills.co.uk** or by contacting the XLVets Training Services team; Tel: 01765 608489 or e-mail **training@xlvets.co.uk**.

Following the launch of the programme at Newton Rigg College, the programme will be rolled out to other participating agricultural colleges across the country, throughout 2015 and beyond. For more information on this or any other FarmSkills workshops contact the XLVets Training Services team who will be happy to help.

FarmSkills
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NEWTON RIGG COLLEGE
part of ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE

What each module will cover:

Topic	Overview
DIY AI and Fertility (DEFRA approved) *4 days*	Trainees will be able to discuss the regulations governing AI in the UK and describe the theory of safe semen handling. They will be able to carry out correct AI technique using abattoir specimens before progressing onto safely performing DIY AI on live cows to DEFRA approved standards.
Cattle Foot Trimming and Mobility *2 days*	Trainees will be able to describe normal bovine locomotion, identify the important anatomical features of the bovine foot and their relation to basic physiological function. By the end of the course delegates will have experience of how to safely restrain a cow and pick up feet using a foot crush, applying the theoretical knowledge of preventative trimming practically, know when and how to apply blocks and medical treatments and when to seek specialist / veterinary attention.
Calving and Calf Rearing *1 day*	Our Calf Rearing workshop will enable you to understand the basic physiological development in calves and outline the key management steps required to produce a healthy, well-grown calf in optimum condition to be weaned.
Heifer Rearing (weaning to first calving) *1 day*	Post weaning can be a stressful time for heifers, but good management at this stage can ensure that heifers reach the optimum size and condition to allow them to calve without difficulty at the youngest possible age. Trainees will be able to set targets and manage heifers to minimise problems for calving, maximise calf survival and heifer lifetime productivity.
Nutrition and Feeding the High Yielding Dairy Cow *1 day*	Introduction to Bovine Nutrition: anatomy, physiology, metabolism. Trainees will be able to describe the basic anatomy and physiology of bovine nutrition and use this knowledge as a platform for developing understanding of practical feed management on farm. Trainees will be able to describe the principles behind designing and delivering a good diet to high yielding cows.
Safe and Effective Use of Vet Meds *1 day*	The workshop aims to increase trainees' knowledge of safety and good practice as well as outlining the legislative requirements for on farm medicines use. The course also aims to increase trainees' understanding about the different types of medicines used and how these relate to the common diseases relevant to their farms. This workshop supports farm assurance needs.
Emergency First Aid on Farm (QCF) Ofqual Approved *1 day*	Safety is paramount when working on farm but accidents do happen and how you deal with them can impact on the long term outcomes for those involved. Our Emergency First Aid on Farm covers a range of scenarios including treating trauma injuries from livestock and machinery, managing severe hot and cold conditions and treating burns and asphyxia from chemicals and will prepare you to deal with a range of incidents on farm. This course is certificated and meets current HSE standards of first aid in the workplace
Milking Routines, Milk Quality and Mastitis *1 day*	Trainees will develop their understanding of the effects the milking routine have on milking performance, udder health and on a dairy enterprise's economics. Delegates will learn an understanding of the principles of the milking machine mechanics and a milking cow's physiology as well as best practice in terms of record keeping and priorities for your herd. The course will also cover how building design can impact on mastitis rates and how to maximise cow immunity through nutrition.

xLvets Excellence in Practice

MSD Animal Health

LANTRA AWARDS! APPROVED

XLVets new feature...

Following on from the success of our 'Student Diaries' column, over the coming 12 months we're going to take a leap forward and follow two vets who've recently graduated, and joined XLVets practices. Developing the talents of newly qualified vets to help them achieve excellence in XLVets practice is at the heart of the XLVets Graduate Development Programme, which both Matthew and Katherine enrolled on. The programme provides clinical and business training, along with mentoring and support for newly qualified vets within XLVets practices, to ensure they get the best start to their career and we'll hear more from Matthew and Katherine over the coming months.

GRADUATE DIARY

Matthew Hylands, BVM BVS BVMedSci MRCVS

Lambert, Leonard & May

Sticky situations!

Varied, that's the over-riding description for my time thus far as a farm animal new graduate. Thankfully I've managed to fall on my feet up here in the beautiful county of Lancashire in predominantly dairy practice.

I'm lucky enough to be in a very supportive practice who actively encourage my development and as such I now have a few routines of my own under my belt. The initial early day jitters are all but gone and I've met most if not all clients by this stage. Currently, it's fair to say that routine fertility visits take up a fair proportion of my time and as interesting as I find them a bit of variety is always nice to shake things up. A few weeks ago on a stunning wintery morning I couldn't have wished for more variety. After ticking off my early morning routines in a spritely manner off I headed to conduct a breeding soundness exam on a 1,600kg bull then onwards to a panting tup which was soon followed by a uterine torsion and last but not least I headed right to the North West Lancashire coastline to TB test one Belted Galloway cow!

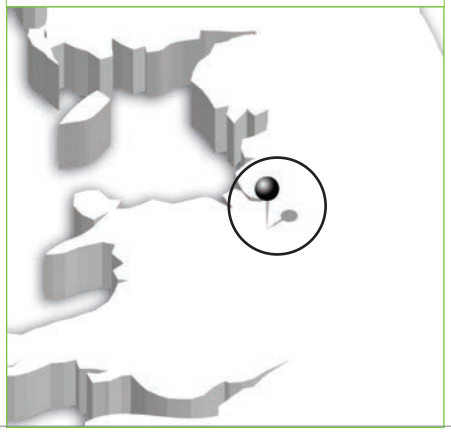
How naïve I was to think this would be a straightforward finish to my hectic day. By the time I made it to the Beltie it was almost dark and the rain, which had been persistent all day, hadn't subsided at all. Having never been to the farm before, I pulled up beside what I assumed to be the barn. Without wellies on I thought I'd sprint across the flooded yard, dodging the raindrops to see if anyone was around to direct me to the right address. Full stride halfway across the yard I suddenly realised why my feet felt so heavy, I'd run right through the middle of a freshly concreted yard! Here I was standing in the middle of the yard with two boots full of wet concrete trying to figure out my next move when out of nowhere a face appeared from within the shelter of the shed, 'You must be Matt, the new vet!'

About me

I graduated from Nottingham vet school in the summer of 2014 shortly before moving to the scenic North West to pursue a career in farm animal practice with the Lancashire branch of Lambert, Leonard and May. Coming from Northern Ireland I'm well used to the rain, however the rural Lancashire accent was another challenge altogether!

With most of our work being dairy based I'm lucky enough to find myself in a position of relative responsibility having a handful of regular routines to my name already. Having recently finished the XLVets Graduate Programme I feel much more confident in day-to-day practice life and have also managed to find myself in a larger network of farm animal new graduates sharing information and experiences on a regular basis.

Outside of work I enjoy shooting of any kind and I've recently bought a mountain bike to make the most of the beautiful fells and moors up here.



GRADUATE DIARY

Katherine Lumb, BVSc MSc MRCVS

Bishopton Veterinary Group

No two days are the same!

The cliché of 'no two days are the same' is something that attracts everyone to vet school at the start, but in my first four months in practice it is something I have definitely found to be true.

Recently, one of these days started with a lambing. A Suffolk, not known for their easy lambings, with two big lambs. After entering the time-warp of trying to give birth to things, where ten minutes feel like about thirty seconds, it didn't take long to come to the decision that these fair sized lambs were going to need to come out of the side entrance. A moderate-amount of time later and my first sheep caesarean of the season and my career was complete!

After a good hosing down, I could taste the mid-morning brew; not so quick… three sick dairy cows. Thankfully a bit of a jaunt through the Yorkshire countryside was needed to get from A to B. In the late winter sunshine it can really be a bit of a 'pinch yourself' moment to be lucky enough to work somewhere so beautiful.

Thankfully no displaced abomasums (DA's) were discovered and after a bit of a work out pumping them all, I was done. What followed were a couple of nice jobs, synchronising some beef cows for AI and a couple of PD's before arriving back to the office for some writing up.

Then at 5:30pm, one of the other vets calls in a caesarean, a dairy cow with a twisted uterus that isn't opening up. By the light of two head torches together we pulled a live black and white heifer out! Job well done… Just in time for tea, or at least a meeting on calf pneumonia.

Just as I get home and sit down. 'Beep, Beep, Beep, Beep' the noise I associate with a rush of adrenaline… A dairy heifer, to an Angus throwing massive calves. She was a bit of a madam from the minute I arrived but after getting her behind a gate and getting a hand in it took about 30 seconds to decide that the legs facing me were about the size of my forearms and unlikely to come out of the back door. Caesar number three of the day awaits. Two halters, a fair dose of sedative and a couple of assistants later and she eventually started to behave. A slightly more complicated one than earlier, but ended with a good, live bull calf, who was soon up and about and being licked by its mother.

Some of my friends look at me like I've got two heads when I tell them what my day-to-day life involves, but really, what is there not to love about this job?

About me

I graduated from the University of Liverpool in summer 2014 and joined the ten vet strong, ruminant team at Bishopton Vets shortly after. An interest in farm animal production and the maintenance and promotion of production efficiency was a key factor in my decision to become a vet and is something that I had a primary interest in throughout vet school training, pushing me to want to work in farm animal practice. I started the XLVets Graduate Programme in September 2014 alongside eleven other recently qualified vets to help develop our skills and interests in farm animal practice. I have a keen interest in infectious disease control and youngstock health and management and would like to develop my interests and skills in these areas further as my career develops. I also have a strong working link with RAFT Solutions Ltd regularly undertaking industry led research projects alongside clinical work. Outside of work I enjoy mountaineering and cycling and am a keen singer.

BISHOPTON VETERINARY GROUP

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FarmSkills workshops coming up

FarmSkills workshops are open to farmers from across the country and on any livestock subject - so whether it's DIY AI in Dorset or lambing in Leicester, please contact us to find out more.

book and pay online at **www.farmskills.co.uk**

Visit us today...

DIY AI

14-17 April	Norfolk
27-30 April	Gloucestershire
27-29 April	North Yorkshire
26-28 May	Aberystwyth
15-18 June	Cumbria

Cattle Mobility and Foot Trimming

27-28 April	Cumbria
29-30 April	Cumbria
29-30 April	Norfolk
12-15 May	Aberdeenshire
8-10 June	Oxfordshire
25 June	North Yorkshire

Dairy Courses and Safe and Effective use of Veterinary Medicines

21 April	Devon	Preparation for Calving
22 April	Cumbria	Heifer Rearing
7 May	Devon	Safe and Effective use of Veterinary Medicines
12 May	North Yorkshire	Dairy Cow Nutrition
19 June	North Yorkshire	Safe and Effective use of Veterinary Medicines
9 July	Devon	Heifer Rearing - weaning to first calving

Please note dates are subject to change

XLVet Training Services Ltd, Mill Farm, Studley Road, Ripon HG4 2QR

Visit us at www.farmskills.co.uk

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