

Livestock

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MATTERS

Inside this issue:

SAC ON-LINE HEALTH PLANNING

We focus on the benefits that it has brought to two XLVet farm clients who are now using the service.

WORMING REGIMES FOR SHEEP

Bob Norquay of Northvet reports on how certain factors need to be considered for a worming regime to remain effective in both the short and long term.



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SUMMER EDITION

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Livestock Matters is published by:
 XLVet UK Ltd, Carlisle House
 Townhead Road, Dalston
 Carlisle CA5 7JF

Tel: (01228) 711788

*This publication is supplied free of charge to farm clients of XLVets member practices.

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THE EDITOR

Welcome to the 'Summer' issue of Livestock Matters...

In this issue we take a look at the SAC on-line health planning tool and see the benefits it has brought to two XLVet farm clients who are now using the system in conjunction with their XLVets practice. We also feature one XLVet farm client, who, working with their XLVets practice is reaping the financial benefits from implementing the Clover Cell Check service on their farm. The Cell Check tool is available to farm clients of all XLVet member practices; the reports generated by the vet provide advice and action points to help farmers to detect potential problems early and reduce cell counts in individual cows.

The FarmSkills pull-out guide focuses on lameness in sheep; highlighting the common conditions seen in UK flocks and how to identify them and most importantly how to treat for each condition. We also look at the use of farmer training records; essential already in the pig and poultry sectors, but we see how opportunities exist through FarmSkills training courses for the dairy, beef and sheep sectors too.

We hope you enjoy this issue of 'Livestock Matters'.

Joanne Dodgson XLVets



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Worming regimes for sheep

Bob Norquay of Northvet reports on how certain factors need to be considered for a worming regime to remain effective in both the short and long term.



Beef Expo 2011

This year Beef Expo was held at Newark showground in Nottinghamshire. A willing team of helpers, consisting of Sophie Throup from FarmSkills, Andrew Curwen, Alyson Staines and Iain Richards from XLVets, Sarah Hughs from Scarsdale, Mike Thorne from Rutland, Hollie Dale and Helen Worth from Wright and Morten and a brightly coloured juggler, they set to work with bright green t-shirts and bucket loads of enthusiasm to attract the crowds.

Visitors were encouraged to participate in mini-challenges, to learn a new skill and be given the opportunity to win a FarmSkills t-shirt; learning to make a halter out of a piece of rope went down well along with the art of juggling. All participants leaving the stand with a new found skill, a green FarmSkills t-shirt, XLVets pen, literature

and the anticipation of attending a workshop in their area in the not too distant future.

Helpers on the stand commented that enquiries for future courses and workshops came from across the UK, and feedback from past attendees was very positive ensuring that the future of FarmSkills is set to grow and grow.



National Cattle Mobility Event 2011

The National Cattle Mobility Event took place at Cirencester on **Wednesday 6th April 2011** and XLVets was represented by Drove Veterinary Practice and Tyndale Farm Veterinary Practice. Thanks go to Chris Hayes and Russell Fuller, Tyndale and Chris Price, Janet Blikmans, Mel Speechley and Ann Chambers, Drove for helping out on the day.



Nottingham University Careers Day

Wednesday 9th March 2011 was Nottingham careers day; it was a great event, providing an important opportunity to present the XLVet member practices as a good place to work to the Nottingham students.

Special thanks to Steve Glanvill (Hook Norton) for joining the 'Quiz the boss' session and presenting on the realities of practice life: to Lois Cowie (Allen and Partners) and Emily Robinson (Scarsdale) for representing the group so well on the young graduate question and answer session and to Chris Parker (Scarsdale), Jane King (Westmorland) and Mike Clark (Minster) for working hard on the stand talking to the students and to Steve Smith (PAVVS) who was busy lecturing to the second years all morning.



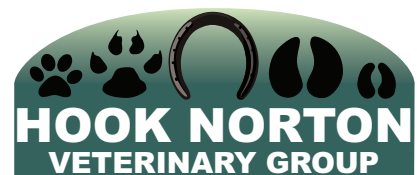
RVC Careers Day

NANCY HOMEWOOD, HOOK NORTON VETERINARY GROUP

On **14th April 2011** four XLVets members attended the annual careers fair at the Royal Veterinary College Hawkshead Campus.

The fair was open to final year Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing Students, and with over 250 students present it was a busy evening. Craig and Gemma kindly set up the stand in the afternoon, before a tour of the college's hospital facilities was given. During the careers evening, many students approached the stand, enquiring about the XLVet group. Lots of students were

interested in going into mixed practice when they qualified, and seemed pleasantly surprised at the number of XLVet practices that were mixed. We highlighted lots of the benefits of working for XLVets, such as the forum and internal CPD for the students and encouraged those who were interested in working for XLVets to check the website regularly for positions being advertised.



Thanks to Nancy Homewood, Hook Norton, Craig Waldron and Gemma Lockwood, Drove and Jack Ashby, Glenthorne for attending the event on behalf of XLVets.



BOB NORQUAY

For effective control of worms on the farm, now and in the future, it is essential to develop a planned worming control strategy, that is regularly reviewed and monitored.



Worming regimes for sheep

Over the last decade the problem of treating worms in sheep has been further challenged by two emerging problems, namely anthelmintic resistance (AR) and changes in the disease patterns of many of the common parasitic worms. Any worming regime must now take these factors into consideration if it is to remain effective in both the short and long term.

The prevalence of anthelmintic resistance to certain drugs is now fairly widespread in the UK, with recent studies reporting resistance to benzimidazoles (BZ) to be as high as 80% on lowland farms and 55% on hill/upland farms. Similarly resistance to levamisole (LM) was 47% on lowland and 29% on hill/upland farms. Only a very small amount of resistance to the ivermectin type drugs has been recorded, but if these drugs are to remain effective then it is essential that they are used as part of a planned worming regime rather than random indiscriminate dosing. There is therefore a very real need for farmers to act to slow down the emergence of resistant worm populations.

The cause of the changes in the disease patterns of parasitic worms that have been seen throughout the UK in the last few years is uncertain, but may be due to climate change resulting in conditions that are more favourable to the survival of these parasites.

Nematodirus battus was traditionally a spring/early summer problem, but has now been seen at all times of the year. *Haemonchus contortus* 'Barber's pole worm' has extended its domain from originally in the South of England, to the far North of Scotland.



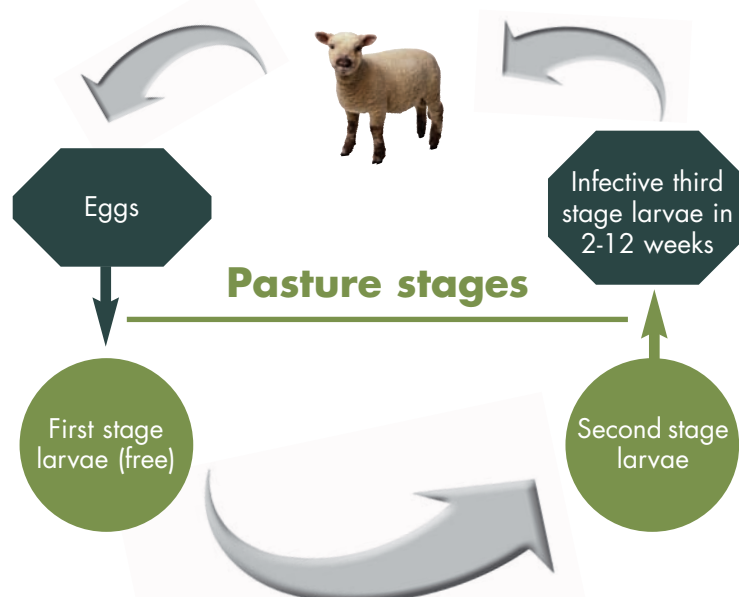
Veterinary Surgeon **Bob Norquay**
XLVets Practice **Northvet, Orkney**

Basic Life Cycles

The life cycles of most of the parasitic gut worms are similar with one or two variations, which are important to the control of these worms.

Nematodirus battus eggs can survive over winter in prolonged cold conditions and require a climatic stimulus (cold followed by warmth) before hatching. This allows *Nematodirus* infections to pass from one year's lambs to the next.

Haemonchus is a prolific worm producing up to 10,000 eggs per day which develop to the infective larval stage very quickly in warm wet conditions. The high egg production rate means that relatively clean pasture can become highly infective very quickly leading to significant and unexpected disease outbreaks.



Anthelmintics for use against parasitic gastrointestinal worms

There are four main groups of broad spectrum wormers:-

Benzimidazoles (BZ) 'white drenches'

These are effective against all the gut worms, but some vary in efficacy against *N. battus*.

Levamisole/morantel (LM) 'yellow drenches'

Can also be given by injection, but tend to be high volume doses and can be irritant. Overdosing can produce symptoms of hyperactivity and salivation.

Macrocyclic lactones (ML) 'clear drenches'

Includes avermectins (ivermectin/doramectin) and milbemycins (moxidectin).

Can be given by drench or injection and due to their storage in fat tissue tend to have longer meat withdrawal periods.

Monepantel

This is a relatively new wormer on the market so resistance to it should be negligible at present. However it should be used as part of a worm control regime that incorporates some of the other wormers, rather than a total conversion to this wormer. This will allow it reduce the build up of resistant populations, but at the same time delay any build up of resistance to the drug itself. This wormer has to be prescribed by your vet so its use should be accompanied by advice on when and where to use it.

Use of faecal worm egg counts

Worm egg counts are a useful tool in a worm control programme.

10 sheep from a group should be sampled. This is best done by loosely holding the group of sheep in a corner of a yard or field for 10 minutes then letting them go. The fresh dung samples can then be easily picked up and sent for analysis.

Guidelines for controlling worms and avoiding development of resistance

Quarantine treatments

These should be used for all new arrivals on the farm.

- Assume the sheep are carrying resistant worms (BZ & LM).
- Treat sequentially with an ML product followed by an LM product.
- Hold sheep off pasture for 24-48hrs to allow eggs in the gut to pass out.
- Turnout on to dirty pasture that is contaminated with eggs and larvae. This allows the remaining potentially resistant worms in the gut to be 'diluted' by infection with the 'home' population of worms.
- Consider using Monepantel if your vet advises this.

Test for anthelmintic resistance

This is done by post-dosing faecal egg counts from a sample of 10 sheep. Timing depends on the type of wormer used.

- LM - 7 days
- BZ - 10-14 days
- ML - 14-16 days

Administer the wormer effectively

- Dose at the recommended level for the heaviest sheep in the group. Actually weigh some of the heavier sheep.
- Check the dosing gun is working properly and calibrated correctly.
- Use the correct technique. Dose onto the back of the tongue not just into the mouth.
- Restricting feed (where possible) enhances the activity of BZ & ML wormers. Do **NOT** do this with heavily pregnant ewes.

Use wormers only when necessary

- Pre-tupping dosing of ewes is not usually required as ewes at this time of year have a low worm burden. Dosing will tend to select for AR. Treat only gimmers and thin ewes.

- **Dosing ewes after lambing.** There is a dilemma here as dosing may select for AR but failure to dose will result in contamination of the pasture for the lambs.
- **Dosing of lambs.** The risk period can be very weather dependent. Make use of worm egg counts to accurately determine the time for dosing.

Select the appropriate wormer

- Avoid combination (fluke) wormers unless this is indicated.
- Rotate the type of wormer used. An ML wormer should be rotated with either a LM or BZ. However rotation should not take precedence over other factors such as the need to treat quarantined sheep.

Preserve susceptible worms on the farm

The traditional advice of dose then move is good for keeping fields with low levels of infections low for longer periods, however it does tend to select for AR by allowing the build up of resistant strains on the clean pasture. Research in this area is ongoing and possible solutions are to dose only part of the flock or to delay the move after the dosing to allow low levels of infections to re-establish. Consultation with your vet is essential before embarking on such policies.



SUMMARY

For effective control of worms on the farm, now and in the future, it is essential to develop a planned worming strategy, that is regularly reviewed and monitored.

- Consult with your vet to develop a control programme.
- Quarantine sheep on arrival and treat appropriately.
- Use worm egg counts.
- Administer the wormer effectively and only when necessary.
- Carefully select the type of wormer used.
- Use techniques that preserve susceptible worm populations on the farm.

Worm egg counts can be used to

- Diagnose a worm problem
- Estimate the level of infection (with some worms)
- Allow targeted timing of dosing
- Monitor efficacy of treatment or the emergence of resistance



Animal Health Planning Programme...



Taking advantage of a web-based health planning programme

An online health planning programme devised by the SAC is proving beneficial for sheep and suckler beef farmers. It produces a concise but comprehensive health plan, and allows health and performance to be compared year on year. It also allows users to benchmark against other farms.



Lindsay Eaglesham

Jeremy West Balmer Farm

Nanja Verkuijl Cliffe Veterinary Group

Sheep farmer Jeremy West of Balmer Farm near Lewes in East Sussex has had a paper flock health plan for several years. However he has now signed onto the SAC programme, recognising the additional advantages of a computerised system with scope to include more information and allow forward planning.



Veterinary Surgeon	Nanja Verkuijl
XLVets Practice	Cliffe Veterinary Group, Lewes



The web-based Scottish Animal Health Planning Programme is free to Scottish farmers, and for a moderate annual cost is now also available to farmers and vets in England and Wales.

Altogether, around 260 veterinary practices have farm clients using the programme. The sheep programme, launched three years ago, has 700 sheep farms using it. The beef suckler programme was launched last September and already 470 herds have been signed on to it.

The SAC programme co-ordinator Lindsay Eaglesham explains: 'In 2006 when we first started to build the system, other organisations had health planning programmes but none were web-based, or allowed online collaboration between vet and farmer. The SAC programme is a live dynamic system, so information can be entered by both farmers and their vets, giving a central set of data which is readily accessed and can easily be reviewed.'

Jeremy West



On the South Downs, Jeremy runs 800 north country mules which are put to a Suffolk or Charollais ram. This year the flock was divided to lamb down at three separate times: January, February and April.

'This is going to be a useful management tool,' says Jeremy. 'It will enable my vet and I to evaluate which period gave the best results. I tend to keep the lambing percentages in my head, but having this programme will make sure it is recorded, and will also show how many survived through to weaning and were actually sold.'

Jeremy's vet is Nanja Verkuijl of Cliffe Vets in Lewes, she adds: 'It encourages a more disciplined approach, and makes you look harder at your performance figures. At the Cliffe practice we start up new users by giving them a sheet of information to fill in, and then we provide a bureau service to upload it onto the programme. Then we just ask our farmers to fill in the additional numbers as the year progresses. So there is a bit of work to enter the initial data, but then after that, the programme copies it forward each year and you need only make small adjustments.'

NANJA VERKUIJL

The SAC Health Planning Programme encourages a more disciplined approach, and makes you look harder at your performance figures.



Jeremy's flock is vaccinated against foot rot before tupping, and he records the date and treatment details on the system. The dates and product details of the pre-lambing anti-clostridial vaccine and fly prevention pour-on are also recorded.

The programme includes a product reference section in which technical specifications - such as withdrawal times - are kept constantly updated, so users can guarantee that the information is up-to-date. Jeremy adds: 'I'm not a "computer person" but it's better to log it on this programme than be writing it on a piece of paper.'

'We're lambing 800 ewes now and plan to increase to 1000. This programme will help provide information as we go forward.'

'It will become even more useful as the years go by - especially on our worming strategy. We'll be able to look back and see what animals had which wormers, and when. Any of the vets from the Cliffe practice will also be able to see the same information, when they visit.'





Julie Duncan Balkemback
 Ian Gill Thrums Veterinary Group



Veterinary Surgeon **Ian Gill**
 XLVets Practice **Thrums Veterinary Group, Kirriemuir**



Ian Gill

The SAC programme for suckler herds was only launched last September, but already some of the farmers who signed up to it are getting some useful results.



One such beef farmer is Julie Duncan of Balkemback near Dundee. She runs an organic 160-cow suckler herd of Aberdeen Angus crosses and Simmental crosses. The herd is divided into a spring and autumn calving group. Her vets Ian Gill and Graeme Richardson from Thrums Veterinary Group, at Kirriemuir, had already seen the benefits of using the system for their sheep clients.

Julie explains: 'Because we are organic, we are already using a health programme but this one has several extra advantages. We've entered the calving data that we already had on paper and have been able to compare the last two autumn calvings.'

In particular, Julie is paying attention to calving interval and the number of calves weaned per 100 cows mated.

'Our autumn herd is hitting the target, with 94% of calves weaned, but our spring calvers are below target with 89%. The beauty of the programme is that it flags up where the problem is - for us, cow fertility was not a problem, losses were occurring in young calves. It made us look into the reasons for calf deaths. In some cases it was coccidiosis, so we can take preventative action for that next time round, and we also realised we needed to improve our young calf management.'



IAN GILL

Once uploaded onto the SAC programme, Julie contacts her organic certification office and they can then log in as a 'read only' user to view the lab results and grant permission for treatment.



The programme also provides information on the average performance of all herds on the system, and the top-performing 25%. This data can be further analysed by, for example, breed or calving period. Regional, and even county, breakdowns are available too, and Julie compares her herd against others in Scotland.

'It's also useful to have all the test results in one place. Test results are added onto the online programme by the Thrums practice. Not only can I see the results straight away, but Ian and Graeme can include comments on the results advising me what to do next.'

Julie's cows are vaccinated for BVD, and the calves for pneumonia, and all animals are vaccinated against clostridial disease. The programme marks forward on a calendar as to when the next vaccinations will be due allowing Julie time to prepare. She checks the programme on a monthly basis.

Ian Gill has over 40 clients using the programme and is a keen advocate of it.

He says: 'A year on year record allows farmers to review what happened and make plans to improve, or to follow the same practice to maintain good performance. The information is always current, and having it online prevents data getting lost over time. It's also flexible - so if cows were mated a month earlier than normal, it would automatically adjust the dates for vaccination.'

With the organic status of Julie's herd, test results are needed before medicines can be administered. Once uploaded onto the SAC programme, Julie contacts her organic certification office and they can then log in as a 'read only' user to view the lab results and grant permission for treatment. 'It's quick and easy and saves the paper trail,' explains Julie.

Lindsay Eaglesham adds: 'The SAC programme has been especially useful for those who previously were not recording performance at all. It also provides a cost-effective way for farmers to work with their vet - with information uploaded, it then allows quality time to stand back and review flock and herd performance based on a common set of data.'

'As the data is held on-line, and fully backed-up and kept up to date, nothing is lost, it's all there. But time and care are needed

in the first year of the scheme to enter the baseline data. The adage - "rubbish in, rubbish out" holds true. So new users must appreciate the time required to start it up. But thereafter, the information can be copied forward, and the reward is a comprehensive record of health and performance for the farm which can be benchmarked against industry standards or farms in the same region or of similar enterprise.'

IN SUMMARY

The Scottish Animal Health planning programmes - for sheep flocks and suckler herds are available to XLVets clients through their local XLVets practice.





Clover Cell Check Service

A bigger milk cheque thanks to lower cell counts using the Clover Cell Check service



Cumbrian dairy farmers David Lyall, and his sons Martyn and Stephen, are getting an extra £500/month for their milk after signing onto the Clover Cell Check service with their vet David Black of Paragon Vets. Within a year, bulk milk cell counts were taken from around 250,000 SCC/ml to less than 200,000, enabling them to receive an extra 0.2p per litre for their milk.



Veterinary Surgeon	David Black
XLVets Practice	Paragon Veterinary Group, Carlisle

At North Scales farm near Brampton, the Lyalls are milking 280 cows and maintaining average yields of 10,000 litres/cow. Their bulk milk cell count is now around the 100-155,000 mark. But it didn't used to be.

Three years ago, bulk milk cell count would vary from 200,000 to 250,000 SCC/ml. In an effort to improve the quality of the milk and benefit from a higher price for it, their vet David Black recommended the Clover Cell Check service.

David explains: 'Clover Cell Check is an early warning system for mastitis infections across the herd and for individual cows.'

'The whole system is based on stopping cows getting onto the escalator to high cell counts, and catching them early when their individual milk cell count is starting to edge up from the 200,000 mark.'

'It's really important to stop cows becoming cell count 'millionaires', because once a cow has had clinical mastitis, the damage can be irreversible. Her cell count is likely to always be higher and her full yield potential may never be reached. She is also more likely to get mastitis again.'

'The Lyalls have very few involuntary culls and have been building up cow numbers, and consequently the herd has a lot of older cows, so this programme has been especially beneficial.'

David explains: 'Each month, the individual cow cell count readings from the monthly milk recording visit are automatically pulled off into the Cell Check programme, and an outline report is sent to me. I then interpret the findings, based on my knowledge of the farm and the cows, and produce a final report.'

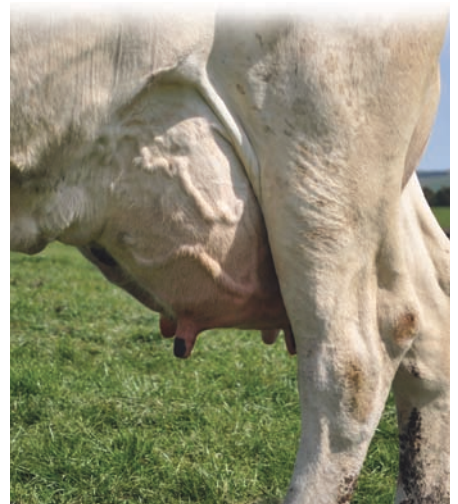
David makes routine fortnightly visits to the farm and each month he uses some of this time to go through the Cell Check results with Martyn Lyall.

Martyn had been having 6-weekly milk recordings but was persuaded to have monthly recordings as the programme works best with these. He has adopted the practice of 'factoring' and although this affects the results slightly (evening milkings always have more concentrated cell counts) the data is no less valuable and the Cell Check service can still be used in these cases.



DAVID BLACK

Clover Cell Check is an early warning system for mastitis infections across the herd and for individual cows. The whole system is based on stopping cows getting onto the escalator to high cell counts.



I do like to keep my cows in milk longer than some. The report identifies those cows that should be dried off, and David prompts me to take action, knowing my habit.'

David adds: 'For the more competitive, there are also league tables showing the averages of everyone on the scheme. Martyn likes to work towards getting all cows into the green, whilst other farmers are keener to improve their position on the table!'

Martyn adds; 'We've been using the Clover Cell Check since 2008, and the cell counts came down to less than 200,000 within the first year. For a monthly cost of only around £30, it had soon paid for itself. Now we use it to monitor cows and prevent mastitis infections getting out of hand.'

David reckons it takes six or seven months to build up a pattern, and then identify where the focus needs to be - initially looking for the 'quick wins' and the cases that will be economically beneficial to tackle.

Martyn adds: 'The programme gives us the opportunity to tackle the problem in bite-sized pieces. Before, when we just had the monthly NMR report, I'd be looking at data from 280 cows in one go which is a bit overwhelming when you are trying to work out where the problems are.'

Recently, there has been a slight increase in new cases of mastitis, and David and Martyn are using the Cell Check report to pinpoint where and why this is happening.

The Clover Cell Check service is available to all XLVets farm clients through their local XLVets practice.

At North Scales, the Cell Check report identified the dry period as being an area on which to focus to reduce cell count. David explains: 'We looked at two aspects: the cure rates - the cows that cured of mastitis during the dry period, and also the protection rates - cows going into the dry period with low cell counts and staying low to milking.'

'Martyn had good protection rates but less satisfactory cure rates. So we reviewed the choice of dry cow antibiotic. Now, one of two different products is used, depending on the anticipated length of the dry period, which on this farm varies from 35 to 60 days.'

All cows with chronic - clinical and sub-clinical - mastitis are given a 60 day dry period to allow the udder time to recover. Chronically mastitic cows are also injected at drying off with a systemic antibiotic. If at the first milk recording they still show high cell counts, then they may be given further treatment.

Orbeseal was already being used on the farm but David checked that Martyn and his family were using the appropriate technique - gripping the top of the teat when administering it so that the sealant stayed within the teat and did not go up into the main udder.

The Cell Check report gives information on individual cows, and bands the results into a traffic light system of colouring, with the aim being to have all cows in the green. Each month a shortlist of problem cows is also included, with suggestions on what to do next.

Martyn says: 'David's expertise in understanding how the data relates to my cows and my herd management policies is a big part of the success of this service.'



Each month David and Martyn review the Cell Check results



Sophie Throup FarmSkills Manager

FarmSkills

GROWING FARM BUSINESS SUCCESS

When asked in a recent survey by FarmSkills whether they thought a training record card or qualifications should be held by farmers, between 50 – 60 % of beef and dairy farmers questioned indicated that they could see the benefit in having this sort of information to hand.

Farmer Training Records... Poultry and Pig Industry

Holding records on skills training attendance can be useful when applying for capital grant funding as well as to show competence in licensed training such as DIY AI or sprayer testing. The FarmSkills team can access your records for you from their own database of training and through the LANTRA national online skills database, should you have taken part in training in an RDPE funded area.

For some livestock sectors though, having a training record is part of running the farm business. Farmers in the poultry meat sector have had to complete training as part of their assured chicken production audits since 2009, a programme known as 'The Poultry Passport'. The passport records the skills training of each individual and can be taken with them should they change employer. Recognising this training need, Minster Vet Practice in York set up training for poultry meat farmers, much of which is now marketed within the FarmSkills brand, but also expanded this to include laying hens and even duck production. Outside the needs of the Poultry Passport, farmers can choose to take workshops in welfare, biosecurity, first aid, environmental awareness and handling.

The FarmSkills Poultry workshops are largely classroom based with some practical lab sessions, as the bio-security implications for visiting farms are more stringent. Minster Vets have trained over 3,000 farm workers to date at their centres in York, Hereford and Sutton Bonington, near Nottingham. They have also just started to roll out backyard poultry keeping workshops through XLVet practices across the country - look out for forthcoming workshops taking place with The Drove (Swindon), Castle Vets (Barnard Castle) and Thrums (Dundee).

Andrew Warriner is a free range egg producer from Pickering, North Yorkshire looking after 22,000 hens. He had several days of FarmSkills Poultry training with Minster Vets in 2010 and is planning to book a further 3 days shortly. He's attended the Veterinary Health, egg production and vaccination and medication courses and found the workshops very useful: 'The courses are fantastic. They've given me much more insight and knowledge about hens and this is helping to increase production and tackle any issues with the flock. The training has shown me how to spot problems earlier and I'm also not vaccinating the pullets as often and at different stages. As a result, they are looking really healthy.' Andrew said that the courses have helped him carry out basic postmortems and to communicate clearly with vets when their assistance is required.



Andrew Warriner





Training structures are also in place in the pig industry, with any training farmers take recorded through the voluntary PIPR (Pig Industry Professional Register) points system. This aims to recognise experience and practical skills in addition to formal training, establish an independent record of skill amongst its members and raise productivity and profitability in the pig sector.

Bishopton Veterinary Group in Ripon and Larkmead Vets in Oxford deliver PIPR registered training for FarmSkills and BPEX in Yorkshire and the Midlands. The new LANTRA Awards approval for these workshops received in May 2011 will also enable farmers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to receive training at subsidised rates.

Steven Blaken from Bishop Monkton near Harrogate recently went through a series of

FarmSkills Pigs workshops with Bishopton Vets. Following a team meeting off site, where fertility was identified as a key area to work on for the farm, the pig team followed a FarmSkills workshop, which concentrated on AI techniques and heat detection. The team saw a big improvement in their skills and they went on to win the Janssen Animal Health Batch Farrower of the Year in 2010, where the winners are judged on productivity and pig health.

Steven commented: 'Even our stockman who has 20 years of bad habits behind him changed his techniques: I'm not sure how the vets managed to change his ways without upsetting him - but they did, and now he really believes in the new way of working.'



The Blaken's who recently attended a FarmSkills Pig Workshop at Bishopton Veterinary Practice.



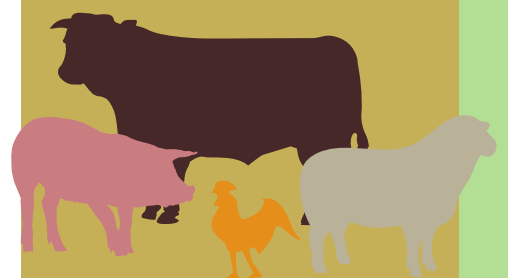
Find out more...

So whether accredited through industry, or followed through the FarmSkills programmes of learning in the dairy, beef and sheep sectors, FarmSkills training is practical, hands on and delivers a business benefit to each farmer who attends. For more information about training available in your area, why not log on to our FarmSkills website;

www.farm-skills.co.uk

or call us on **01765 645893**

FarmSkills, Mill Farm, Studley Road, Ripon HG4 2QR



FarmSkills

GROWING FARM BUSINESS SUCCESS

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Farmer, Fred Scott from Alnwick, Northumberland has saved money by starting regular bull fertility testing and condition scoring since going on the FarmSkills 'Buying the Right Beef Bull' workshop - positive benefits from practical courses.



Courses coming up include:

 	6-9 June DIY AI	<i>Derby</i>
	7 June Vaccination and medication for broiler hens	<i>Hereford</i>
	9 June Sheep parasite control	<i>Skipton</i>
	15 June Backyard poultry keeping	<i>Barnard Castle</i>
	15 June Practical foot trimming (part 2)	<i>Stockport</i>
	20-23 June DIY AI	<i>Northern Ireland</i>
	24 June Calving the cow	<i>Shepton Mallet</i>
	29 June Bull fertility and condition scoring	<i>Ripon</i>
	July Sheep lameness and foot trimming	<i>Exeter</i>
	5-8 July DIY AI	<i>Carlisle</i>
	12 July Basic foot trimming	<i>Baschurch</i>
	14-15 July Advanced foot trimming	<i>Baschurch</i>

Many FarmSkills workshops are funded by LandSkills, which is managed by Lantra, in the North East, Yorkshire and Humber, East and West Midlands as part of the Rural Development Programme for England.

www.farm-skills.co.uk

Telephone 07748 805497 e-mail farmskills@xl vets.co.uk
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PULL OUT & KEEP



06 LAMENESS IN SHEEP

Ian Gill Thrums Veterinary Group

We all know that good foot care is an essential part of successful sheep farming. This guide provides best practice advice for preventing lameness in sheep.



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SHEEP



Guide to Lameness in Sheep

Most outbreaks of lameness in sheep are caused by either scald (interdigital dermatitis) or footrot. Scald and footrot share the same primary cause, the bacterium *Fusobacterium necrophorum* which cause damage to the superficial layer of the skin between the claws and enables the establishment of other bacteria, including *Dichelobacter nodosus*, which causes footrot.

SCALD

In mild cases of scald the interdigital skin is red and swollen and covered by a thin layer of white material. There is no under-running of the hoof wall or sole and no foul smell. Individual cases of scald can be treated topically using oxytetracycline aerosol sprays.

When several animals are affected, walking sheep through a 10% zinc sulphate solution or 3% formalin in a footbath usually provides effective control. It is usually necessary to repeat the foot bathing at weekly intervals throughout the risk period.



FOOTROT

Footrot is an extremely painful disease and affected animals lose weight rapidly. Animals with virulent footrot are very lame, remain recumbent for long periods and may carry the affected leg. When both forelimbs are affected, animals walk on their knees.

A break occurs at the skin horn junction between the claws then infection spreads under the horn tissue so that the hoof becomes separated from the sole and may extend up the wall. Early lesions need footbathing and/or vaccinations. More advanced cases require antibiotics and foot trimming.



CODD

Contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD) is an apparently new, severe condition first described in 1997. The characteristic clinical picture is a primary lesion at the coronary band of the outer wall with subsequent invasion and under-running of the hoof wall from the coronary band towards the toe causing detachment then shedding of the horn capsule. Sheep show severe lameness affecting one digit of one foot in most animals but both digits of one foot in some sheep. The damage to the corium may be so severe that re-growth of the horn is permanently affected. Typically, there is also loss of hair extending 3-5 cm above the coronary band. There is no interdigital skin involvement. Tilmicosin is more effective than oxytetracycline during the acute phase of CODD.



TOE FIBROMAS

These most commonly result from overzealous foot paring with exposure of the corium and excessive use of formalin footbaths. This condition can be resolved by careful foot paring with excision of the growth and application of a pressure bandage to the affected area.

This is a job for your vet.



BELOW:
(LEFT) BEFORE
(RIGHT) ONE WEEK LATER

Making Moves with Genetic Testing

Every month there are around one million cattle movements reported to the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) and 200,000 new applications for cattle passports. With numbers on that scale, it's hardly surprising that some farmers miss the 27-day deadline to report calf births. And all too often, clients suddenly realise there's a problem when they think about moving the animal off the holding for sale or slaughter. Luckily, there's a fast, effective solution available, talk to your vet today.

Vet Rose Jackson from Scarsdale Veterinary Group says, 'Although many of our clients apply for passports on-line, a few have been caught out by the 27-day deadline. When you are busy on the farm, that time can pass before you know it and often once the farmer recognises that there is a problem, it has become an issue that has to be solved quickly too, purely from the point of view of economics. Who wants to continue feeding an animal that has got to slaughter weight or hold on to it when there is a willing buyer?'

The practice has probably done around 30 BCMS DNA tests now to confirm parentage and identity. In some cases the farmer has already heard about the service but in others

ROSE JACKSON

The beef industry is a bit behind the dairy in terms of adopting genetics technology.



we have been able to give a reassuring answer to someone who has called in a panic about the absence of a passport. Most have concerns, usually about the cost and complexity of the process but we've been able to set their mind at ease on that too.

A lot of farmers remember the days when a DNA sample cost upwards of £100 and took months to process. These days it's a fraction of the cost and results can be with us in a couple of weeks. If time allows, we tend to fit in BCMS testing with TB testing, so it doesn't cost a lot extra for our call out.'

The suppliers of the test use an ISO- and BCMS-approved laboratory based in the UK to process the results, ensuring fast turnaround and there is a dedicated customer service team on hand to support vets and their clients and ensure fast delivery of this service.

Other tests are also available for hereditary diseases, such as Contractural Arachnodactyly (CA) (formerly known as Fawn Calf Syndrome) and Tibial Hemimelia - an invaluable resource for those farms where cases keep appearing and can't be traced to one or two individual breeding animals. And while BCMS testing involves blood sampling, many of these other tests can be carried out on hair samples, making multiple testing quick, feasible and cost effective.

Farmers can also use DNA marker tests such as GeneSTAR®, which enables earlier and more accurate genomic predictions to identify an individual animal's potential in areas such as feed efficiency, meat tenderness, marbling and overall palatability. Of course, the advantage of determining an animal's genetic potential in this way is that it can be established early in life. This allows farmers to make management decisions that will ultimately both enhance profitability and ensure that the animals with the most promise are reared in a way that guarantees they reach their full potential.

Rose Jackson says, 'The clients that have used BCMS testing are mainly beef farmers and

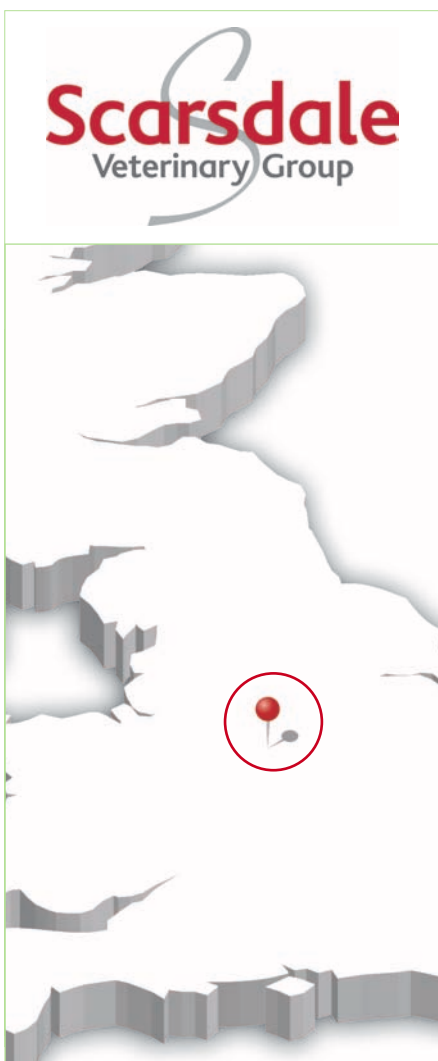
despite the interest in these genetic tests, the beef industry is a bit behind the dairy world in terms of adopting genetics technology. Many of my clients don't understand about EBVs (estimated breeding values) yet but both farmers and vets like new exciting technologies if they seem affordable and useful, so it will be interesting to see the impact as these tests become better known and are used by everyone, not just the specialist producers.'

Things may change more quickly than might be imagined and forward thinking breed societies are actively working to continue to secure the heritage and performance of some of our top beef breeds. In the meantime, BCMS DNA testing provides a practical and accessible solution to what can be a thorny problem.

Late Passport Applications:

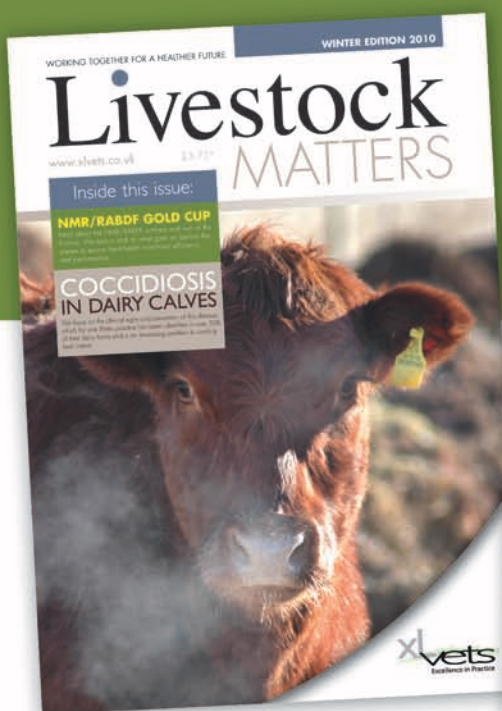
What Do Farm Clients Need to Do?

- Contact BCMS with details of the animal's dam. On confirming that the dam is still alive, BCMS will issue a pre-populated application form for DNA tests on both the dam and her calf.
- Request a visit from the veterinary practice to take blood samples from the dam and calf.
- Blood samples, forms and cheques for lab fees are returned in the postage paid envelope supplied.
- Your XLVets practice can discuss the results further with you.

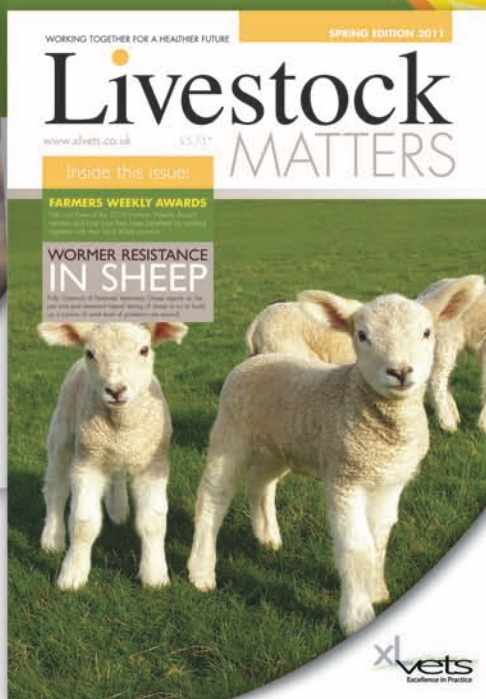


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Name

Mobile

Address

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Job Title

Postcode

Number of dairy cows Number of Adult beef cattle Number of sheep

Daytime Telephone Number

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