



Farm Vet News

March 2020



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On Our Rounds

Meet our Livestock Service and Sales Team

We launched our Livestock Service and Sales department in 2013 to increase support for our clients and complement the traditional work delivered by our vets. Our veterinary technicians work alongside the vets and also function independently offering a wide range of quality, affordable on-farm services for all our clients.

Rachel Light ■ 07823 343260



Rachel comes from a strong agricultural background and has worked in the agricultural retail sector for over twenty-five years working for two well established agricultural merchants in the Salisbury area. It was during this time that she qualified as an R-SQP Animal Health Advisor.

Rachel joined the Livestock Service and Sales team in 2014 and takes an active role in the daily running of the sales aspect of the department where her depth of knowledge, especially ear tags, is always appreciated by our clients. Rachel can also be found on farm as one of our veterinary technician team.

When not at work Rachel likes nothing better than taking long walks with Fudge her Cocker Spaniel.

Emily Smith ■ 07855 420570



Growing up in and around farming, Emily was always destined to enter the agricultural industry. She studied at Sparsholt Agricultural College, graduating in 2017 with a Level 3 Extended Diploma in Agriculture. On leaving college Emily took

up the position of assistant stockperson on a local beef farm before becoming the latest veterinary technician to join the Livestock Service and Sales team. Emily has a particular interest in beef and sheep and plays an important role in both the vaccination and fly control schemes run by the practice.

In her spare time Emily greatly enjoys looking after and riding her three ponies. She is an active member of

Stockbridge Young Farmers and represents Hampshire Young Farmers in their women's tug-of-war team.

Emily has also continued the strong family ploughing tradition, her Grandfather holding both County and National champion titles as well as competing internationally, ploughing in the vintage classes with her Massey Ferguson 35.

Ashley Chandler ■ 07393 765672



Ashley has lived in Salisbury all his life and has always had an interest in farming. He studied at Sparsholt College on a full time course after leaving school, then went onto a mixed dairy, calf and tractor-based apprenticeship while he was working on a large dairy unit. He started off checking around the farm and helping out on weekends and holidays with calf duties such as feeding and milking the cows. He progressed on the farm with a Level 2 then Level 3 apprenticeship in mixed farming, leading on to him becoming a herdsman and tractor driver. He joined our team at the end of August 2019 excited for a new challenge. Ashley has a particular interest in dairy and calves, but since working for Endells he has also developed an interest in goats.

Ashley's interests outside work are lawn mower racing with his own-built lawn mower sprayed to look like a cow. He attends a club in Salisbury called Mower Madness, who race and help out in any way to get you racing. He has recently joined the Stockbridge Young Farmers Club and is looking forward to the adventures within the club.

Cattle Injection Sites *by Conor Barry*

Many of the veterinary medicines used in cattle are designed to be injected into the muscle, with the most common intramuscular injection site used being the gluteal region (the rump). Many people are comfortable injecting here as it is easily accessible while the cow is restrained in most handling systems and it is what they are most familiar with. However it has been shown that there are considerable risks associated with how most people inject in this region, particularly in young or thin animals.



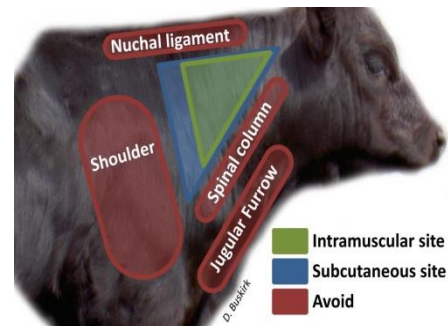
If you choose to inject into the rump, the recommended site is further forward and lateral (away from the midline of the animal) than many of us generally use. This is demonstrated in image 1.

Another option is to avoid the rump altogether! Up to 4.1% of carcasses have injection site lesions (ISLs) which can include cysts, abscesses and scarring which must be trimmed from carcasses, resulting in economic losses for the farmer, abattoir, and wider industry. These are generally seen as lower deadweight payments to the farmer. It has been shown that ISLs tend to occur more frequently and severely in the gluteal region compared with the neck region

which is believed to be because there are numerous small muscles in the neck, rather than one big muscle.

Injecting into the neck is seen as undesirable by some who fear that if an ISL occurs it may cause a false positive reaction during TB testing. However, the TB tester will always

check the injection sites for pre-existing lumps prior to injecting tuberculin. This site for injection should be avoided between day 1 and 2 of the TB test.



For the full article, please visit our blog page at www.endellfarmvets.co.uk.

If you would like to discuss injection technique, or anything else relating to the health and productivity of your herd, please do not hesitate to contact one of our vets who will be more than happy to advise you further.

Comparison of Heat Detection Methods in Dairy Cows *by Josh Williams*

Modern dairy cows are showing less behavioural traits associated with oestrus, or heat, and for a shorter period of time than they previously were; the proportion of cows showing oestrus by standing to be mounted has reduced from 80% to 50% for a period from 15 hours to 5 hours. Improved heat detection is one of the largest contributing factors in generating an increased number of pregnancies in a herd. By better detecting heats, the hope is that we can create those pregnancies earlier in lactation. In turn, this will mean we can reduce the average days in milk (DIM) of the herd, improving feed conversion efficiency and increasing milk yield. There are a number of reasons attributed to these reductions in oestrus expression and reduced fertility, including but not limited to:

- Reduced body condition score, particularly in fresh cows.

- Cows who suffered from hypocalcaemia, mastitis, retained foetal membranes or endometritis.
- Lameness.

Improved heat detection is one of the largest contributing factors in generating an increased number of pregnancies in a herd.

Observing cows for bulling signs has been shown to be the most successful method of heat detection. Two 30 minute observation periods a day identified 63% of heats, but these observations should be performed separately from other management tasks. Anklet pedometers and collars show significantly increased activity during heat; these involve an initial expense and false heats can be flagged up on days of whole herd increased activity such as TB testing. Tail paint and heat mount detectors are similar and are aimed at identifying oestrus



mounting behaviours. These can have issues with cow brushes and it is not uncommon for cows to knock them when lying down producing a false positive.

As the detection of heat is so vital for the fertility and productivity of your dairy, it can be a good idea to combine the use of multiple heat detection aids instead of relying on one method alone. Combining the use of pedometers with oestrus observation has been shown to identify the greatest number of oestrus events compared to any other method combination. However, it is essential that observations are performed as a standalone task, rather than at the same time as other management practices.

For the full article, please visit our blog page at www.endellfarmvets.co.uk.

If you would like to discuss heat detection, or anything else relating to the fertility of your dairy, please do not hesitate to contact one of our vets who will be more than happy to discuss it in further detail with you!

Are Your Ewes Fit for Lambing? *by Harry Smith*

Lambing is all about preparation, whether it's ensuring ewes are in good body condition scores (BCS), utilising vaccines or managing your singles, twins and triplets appropriately. Good management over the whole year is vital for the success of spring, ensuring ewes are best prepared for lambing so all your hard work pays off.

Up to 70% of fetal growth occurs in the last 4 to 6 weeks of pregnancy. Udder development requires more energy whilst the increasing fetus size within the abdomen decreases rumen capacity. These factors mean the ewe is fighting an

uphill battle, and therefore requires more nutrient-dense feed to maintain her condition.

It's important to consider not just how feeding will affect the ewe, but also how this negative energy state will affect future lamb growth.

The table below discusses the most common diseases seen around lambing time and how we can avoid these, often solved by correct management and feeding practices.



Disease	Treatment
Twin Lamb Disease <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most common in ewes carrying twins or triplets. When the ewe is no longer able to meet the demands of growing fetuses she breaks down body fat and releases ketones. 	<p>To meet increased energy demand it is usually necessary to feed concentrates. It may also be necessary to provide additional supplements of protein and calcium.</p> <p>If ewes are affected they may require treatment with additional glucose and calcium.</p>
Hypocalcaemia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased demand for calcium from fetal growth and milk production. This is usually seen pre-lambing. Signs include dullness, inappetence, inability to stand and bloating leading to death. 	<p>Administration of calcium under the skin often results in rapid recovery when cases are identified and treated quickly.</p>
Vaginal Prolapses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually occurs in the last month of pregnancy. Keeping ewes at maximum BCS 3.5, avoiding high fibre diets, minimizing lameness and not docking tails too short help prevent incidence of prolapses. 	<p>Prolapses should be cleaned and replaced promptly under epidural. This should be done with care as the tissue can be friable. A prolapse spoon, harness or Buhner stitch can help to keep it in the correct place.</p>

A successful lambing period relies on good ewe condition. Those provided with enough energy, protein and calcium will support themselves and their lambs. Grouping ewes by number of lambs due and managing them separately in the last month prior to lambing avoids excessive weight gain in single groups and decreases the risk of metabolic diseases in twin groups.

What to Expect When You're Expecting *by Conor, Lillith and Harry*

It is important to know what the normal stages of labour are to help you identify when there is a requirement for help. During Stage 1 the animal will separate herself off from the rest of the group and seem restless, the protrusion of the water bag marks the beginning of Stage 2 and the animal will usually lie down and start to push. The forelimbs and head should present first. The third stage is expulsion of the placenta.

Stage	Duration
1: Cervical dilation	Two to six hours
2: Expulsion of fetus(es)	Thirty minutes to two hours
3: Expulsion of placenta	Two to three hours

One of the most important questions we need to ask ourselves is when to intervene and this should not be taken lightly. It is important not to intervene too early, nor is it acceptable to intervene too late due to the potential negative outcomes. Unfortunately there are no hard and fast rules that guarantee success but in the extended article online at www.endellfarmvets.co.uk we discuss some guidelines in more depth which should be helpful.



Leptavoid-H Vaccine



Protect your animals from Leptospirosis

10 dose pack: £15.15 ex VAT

25 dose pack: £31.50 ex VAT

Compatible vaccination guns also available to order.

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Carolyn (pharmacist) on **01722 333291 option 2**
or Rachel (SQP) on **07823 343260**

New Agricultural Bill by Jim Willshire

What a year 2020 is promising to be! Within the first three months we've had Brexit, a new Agricultural Bill, new environmental and DEFRA ministers, a new "State of Nature" report and the wettest February on record for 150 years! With 58% of farmers believed to have voted for Brexit, leaving the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) seems inevitable – but do we have any idea what we're changing to?!

The re-presentation of the Agricultural Bill to parliament in January might give us some ideas and it seems that the government is hoping to replace the CAP with a system where farmers are rewarded for "public goods" including water and air quality, animal welfare and the creation of wildlife habitats. The government has confirmed that 2020's £2.8bn support cheque will be the first payment funded in full by UK taxpayers, with the new system being phased in over seven years beginning in 2021.

Whilst the government's move towards increased "countryside custodianship" makes sense from a public sentiment perspective, there is an increased growing public support for nature conservation as illustrated by the increased non-government organisation (NGO) spend on biodiversity (Figure 1) and a 46% increase in the amount of time donated to conservation by volunteers since 2000 (State of Nature, 2019), it is slightly at odds with the requirement for food security (although the new Bill requires the government to report on the nation's food security every five-years).

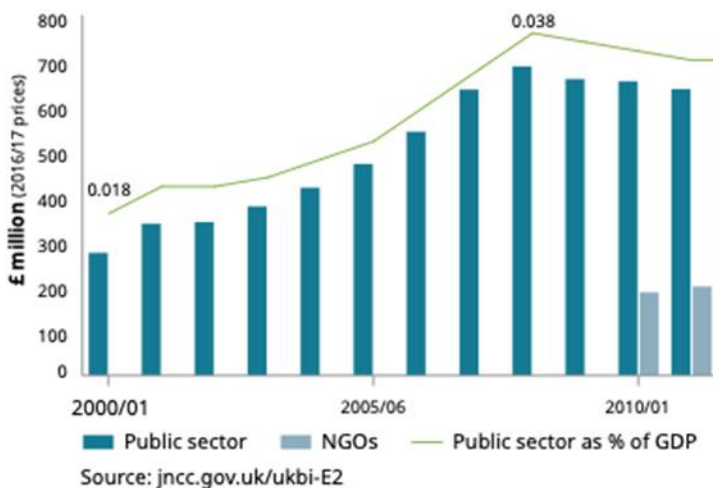


Figure 1 - NGO vs Public Sector spending on biodiversity (State of Nature, 2019)

Perhaps the most obvious absence in the new Bill, is the lack of commitment to maintaining and protecting the UK's production standards in the face of potentially cheap imports of foods produced at lower welfare standards, once (or if!) international trade deals are confirmed – particularly given the UK is a net food importer (Figure 2).

It is likely that 2020 will be one of the most turbulent years in the history of UK agriculture and, like all good soap operas, it's likely there will be a few cliff-hangers in the months to come!

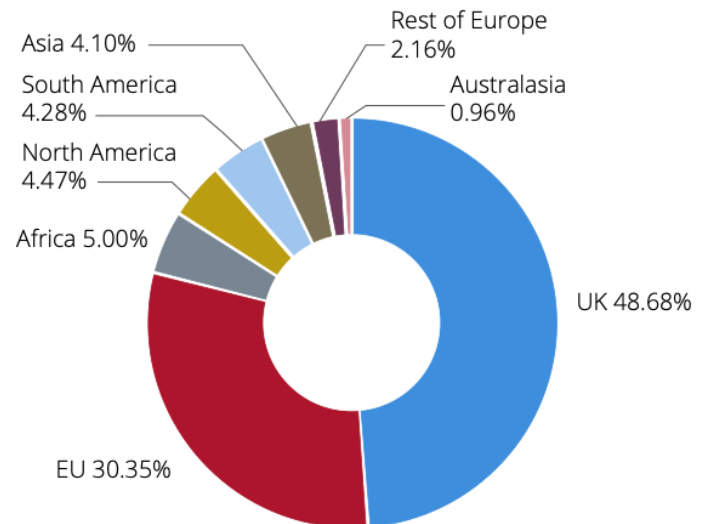


Figure 2 - Origins of food consumed in the UK in 2016 (Brexit: food prices and availability, House of Lords)

The US have been clear in their intentions, with Washington wanting comprehensive access to the UK food market including the removal of barriers related to "sanitary and phytosanitary" standards in the industry, a sign that it wants to export products such as chlorine-washed chicken and hormone-treated beef to the UK. The government further increased nervousness when Dr Tim Leunig, treasury advisor, claimed that the food sector was not "critically important" to the country's economy and that agriculture and fisheries "certainly isn't" (Independent, 2020) and George Eustice (Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), when speaking at the NFU Conference, stated that "I can't provide any such assurances," when asked if Boris Johnson's government would back an amendment to the new agriculture bill to impose tough standards on imported food.

The final concern on most of the industries related to agriculture will be the availability of labour, as it is likely that the new "points-based" immigration policy would leave farming with a shortfall of 65,000 workers. When questioned on this risk, George Eustice hinted that he would "push to get numbers of seasonal workers up or put farming on a protected shortage occupation list like nursing".



Turn out is around the corner!

It is time to start thinking about keeping your herd happy and healthy inside and out this summer.

For the best advice backed up with competitive prices for all your summer parasite control needs, please call our

Pharmacist Carolyn on 01722 333291 or our SQP Rachel on 07823 343260

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49 Endless Street, Salisbury Wiltshire, SP1 3UH

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Upcoming Meetings:

- **Tuesday 17 March**
Bovine Respiratory Disease, 7 for 7.30pm at The Grosvenor Hotel, Stockbridge.
- **Tuesday 24 March**
Smallholders Pig Talk, 7pm at Endell Equine Hospital.
- **Wednesday 25 March**
Smallholders Pig Talk, 7pm at Newton Wood Barns.
- **Wednesday 22 April**
Block Calving Performance (venue to be confirmed).

If you would like more details or to attend, please call us on 01722 333291(1) or email info@endellfarmvets.co.uk

On Our Rounds ...

This month we join Josh on one of our Beef farms...

For some of us, calving has only just started, and all our focus is on the cows! However, it is really important not to forget about the bulls who, although quietly resting in the field, should be preparing themselves for a busy working summer.

It takes around 64 days for a single sperm cell to fully develop. This means a bull's fertility can be affected for at least two months after an incident resolves. Around one third of bulls tested in the UK have been shown to be sub-fertile, with this rising to around 50% in bulls greater than six years old. Of the bulls who failed, only 60% had abnormalities which were identifiable by physical examination (Eppink et al, 2005); therefore, annual testing is vital!



'...One third of bulls tested in the UK have been shown to be sub-fertile...'

There is no time like the present to get your bulls booked in for a Pre-Breeding Examination with one of our vets. After a thorough clinical examination, we will collect and analyse a fresh semen sample on farm, using our mobile lab. After completion of a sperm morphological examination, using phase contrast microscopy at the practice, you will be presented with a signed certificate.

Remember, it is recommended to test annually, at least two months before you plan to put the bull in with the cows. This allows time to re-test or replace should your bull not receive a full bill of health. Pre-Breeding Examinations can also be completed on stock rams, as similar issues are seen.



If you would like to book your bulls or rams in for testing, or would like to discuss bull fertility further, please call the office on 01722 333291(1) or Josh on 07387 261962.



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