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Introduction – Lucy Jerram

Jim's commentary in our last newsletter of early summer being a 'game of two halves' seemed to continue for July and August, with dairy cow grazing superb but crops taking their time. We have encountered plenty of combines in the last few weeks on our travels as the dry spell hit, there has been lots of straw chopping and straw is going to be expensive this winter.

*As the summer draws to a close we are pleased to have held our first 'in person' meeting since the start of the pandemic. It was a great day enjoyed by vets and farmers alike – read on to find out more – and we remain optimistic that future meetings will be able to occur face to face as well. On the horizon we have our **Beef Lameness Meeting and Farm Walk**, including a guest speaker, hosted at the beautiful Longford Estate. We are also continuing to run AI courses every other month, have a variety of other training opportunities on request and are thoroughly looking forward to The Dairy Show in October – see you there!*

A Little Piece of Normal! – Mel McPherson

On the afternoon of the 16th August we held our first 'post covid' on-farm sheep meeting; **"Pre-Tupping Checks"**. It was so good to be mixing again in this informal setting, and to stand back and watch farmers chatting to fellow farmers and colleagues. The meeting was kindly hosted by the Osmonds of Gastons Farm in Nether Wallop. Matt Osmond started by telling us about his flock of Hampshire Downs with a fine selection of rams in the pen beside us. This was followed by a talk from one of our vets, Mel, about pre breeding examinations of rams, including a dubious sketch on the whiteboard of normal testicle anatomy, and a table of what scrotal circumference to aim for optimal fertility in an otherwise healthy ram.



The scrotal circumference to aim for varies depending on age and breed.

Breed	Scrotal Circumference (cm)		
	<1 year	1-2 years	>2 years
Down/Longwool	30	32	36
Hill Breeds	28	30	34

The main points covered were the '5 Ts' – Teeth, Toes, Tone, Testicles and Treat:

- Teeth – check for under or overshot jaw, gaps and molar abscesses
- Toes – check locomotion, legs and feet
- Tone – aim for body condition score between 3.5-4.0

- Testicles – measure and check firmness (like a flexed bicep) with no lumps or bumps
- Treat – check clostridial vaccinations are up to date, parasites, lameness, shearing.

Some like to use an extra 'T' to remind us to check the penis and sheath but the word beginning with T is not appropriate to include here – but don't forget to check these for adhesions, injuries and ulcers!

Attendees then had the chance to examine the rams in the pens as well as body condition scoring some ewes penned up outside, to ask Matt any questions they had about the flock and to chat some more. Delicious pasties and sausage rolls were bought from the Waldrons at Beechcroft Farm, and the meeting was sponsored by MSD who make the clostridial vaccines – thank you!

Lameness in Beef Cattle – Olly White

Lameness in the beef herd has not received the same attention as with dairy cattle. Despite causing significant production losses and welfare concerns the incidence of lameness is often underestimated in beef herds. This article highlights some of the common conditions, the causative factors and how to manage the conditions.

Non-infectious lesions

Sole Ulcer

- Painful condition whereby the soft tissues that produce the horn of the sole are damaged and normal horn cannot be produced leading to exposed soft tissue. Ulcers are often seen two to three months after the initial inciting cause. Sole ulcers often occur in the middle third of the sole at the site below the pedal bone as this is the area that is damaged due to pedal bone rotation at calving.
- Risk factors include: Thin cattle (thin digital cushion), poor hoof conformation (long toes) and walking long distances on poor rough terrain.
- The aim is to stop the cow having to weight bear on the exposed soft tissue using a shoe on the healthy claw. Pain relief must be provided. Due to the extent of damage required to cause a sole ulcer these cows will often have ongoing lameness issues with multiple trims likely to be required.
- The exposed tissue will be prone to infection. If there is swelling around the coronary band or fetlock joint then a long course of antibiotic treatment is required with the prognosis for a good functional outcome being poor. Severe infection can lead to deep digital sepsis in which case a digit amputation can be considered.



Sole Haemorrhage

- Pink/yellow to red/purple discolouration of the hoof sole caused by excessive pressure on the soft tissue that produces the horn of the sole. Affected cattle often go unnoticed or will be a bit tender when walking, but often the causative insult would have occurred several months prior. Sole haemorrhage is seen as a precursor to sole ulcer formation.
- Risk factors are the same as for sole ulcers.
- Identification of haemorrhage can reduce the severity of a sole ulcer but using a shoe to reduce the weight off the affected claw and the use of an anti-inflammatory medication (Rheumocam) to reduce inflammation.



White Line disease

- Initially non-infectious whereby the hoof wall separates from the sole allowing foreign material to penetrate and infect the white line region. Infection can produce localised abscesses or track deeper.
- Risk factors include poor tracks, sharp corners, stockperson over pushing, thin soles and dietary biotin deficiency.
- Treatment involves paring out the infection; dishing out around the lesion to reduce further impaction +/- a shoe. Deeper infection will require antibiotics.



Hoof fissures

- Vertical: More common in beef cattle. The cause is unknown but is associated with heavier animals and dry conditions.
- Horizontal: associated with periods of stress (calving) whereby horn produced during the stressor is thinner and weaker (hardship lines) and therefore more likely to crack. Often similar lesions are on all four hooves.
- Often fissures do not cause lameness but complicated cases arise when infection gets within the cracks or when soft tissue protrudes through.
- If not causing an issue these are largely left alone and underlying issues associated with their formation are addressed. If infection is present then appropriate antibiotic therapy is required and when soft tissue protrudes this should be removed (with pain relief). In severe cases of horizontal cracks there are options of attempting fusing the sides of the cracked horn.



Vertical



Horizontal

Infectious lesions

Digital Dermatitis (DD)

- Skin infection of the hoof caused by bacteria called *Treponema*, commonly affecting the heels or between the claws - chronic lesions create "Hairy Warts". DD is painful and quickly spreads throughout a herd. In beef cattle it is predominately seen during winter housing – particularly where there is overcrowding or poor slurry management. DD is not present in every herd and can be bought-in with purchased cattle.
- Treatment involves a long term control plan as elimination is unlikely. Common tactics involve frequent foot bathing (copper/zinc formulations or Formalin) and improving slurry management to lessen cows standing in slurry. Individual treatment involves topical treatments including antibiotic sprays/powders or products containing copper/zinc compounds. Bandages for topical treatments must not be left on for more than two days as *Treponema* do not like oxygen, therefore leaving the lesion exposed to the air is beneficial. Systemic antibiotics are not necessary and herd wide use in the foot bath is rarely effective and hard to justify.



Continued .../

Foul of the Foot

- Occurs when bacteria (*Fusobacterium necrophorum*) invade damaged skin, typically between the claws from standing on a sharp stone. Swelling is usually marked, with claws pushed apart and can spread over the entire foot and up the leg – often a characteristic odour is present. Quick identification and treatment with an appropriate antibiotic is required, if untreated the damaged tissue will slough off allowing secondary infection which can enter joints and lead to irreversible damage.



Beef Lameness Meeting

Farm Walk and Talk

Monday 11 October, 3.30pm

Yews Farm, Longford Estate, Odstock, SP5 4JG

Speaker: Jay Tunstall

Jay has spent time in practice in both Somerset and Cheshire and has recently completed a PhD establishing baseline information into the levels of lameness in beef cattle. This is an area that has had very little research carried out and yet can have a large negative impact upon welfare and production. Jay's work involved over 500 beef farmers and showed that while lameness levels may be low, farmers may well be underestimating the true prevalence within their herds. Diagnosis and treatment of beef cattle is often more challenging than on dairy units and this can impact animal welfare. Jay is passionate about providing training into lameness prevention and control.

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– Mel McPherson

The TB Advisory Service (TBAS) has just been awarded a new contract by Defra! This is great news as it will mean even more farmers can benefit from the free bespoke advice from a trained assessor on how to reduce the risk and length of a TB breakdown by making simple, affordable changes to improve biosecurity, primarily from badgers, but also via purchased and neighbouring livestock. Advice is provided via on-farm visits, a telephone service and one-to-one 'drop-in clinics'. The service has been expanded to include any farm in England which keeps livestock, not just those in the high risk and edge area as it was before, and will also be available to keepers of pigs, sheep, goats, deer and camelids, not just cattle. Mel, Josh and Lillith have been trained as TBAS assessors. Please contact the farm office if you are interested in arranging a consultation.



Tetra Delta Discontinued

Please be advised that Tetra Delta has been discontinued with immediate effect due to Zoetis being unable to resolve manufacturing issues.

To discuss the best lactating tubes going forward for your farm, please contact your routine vet.



AI Course: 20-22 September

DEFRA-approved Certificated DIY AI Training providing dairy or suckler farm staff with the knowledge and skills to carry out this important process themselves. The course covers bovine anatomy and physiology and heat detection and AI timing theory. It then provides the chance to get to grips with the practical technique using uteruses and then live cows to ensure safe passage of AI guns through cervixes and into the correct part of the uterus.

Cost: £450 for full course including learning material to take away.

Places are limited, please contact us if you would like to attend.

Webinars

The following webinars are available on our website:

**Beef Benchmarking
Introduction**

**Bovine Respiratory
Disease Prevention**

**Colostrum Management
in Beef Calves**

**Block Calving – to
Estrumate or CIDR?**

**Getting Lambs to Grow
Backyard Pigs**

Please visit
www.endellfarmvets.co.uk
for more information.

Haemonchus – Harry Smith

Overview

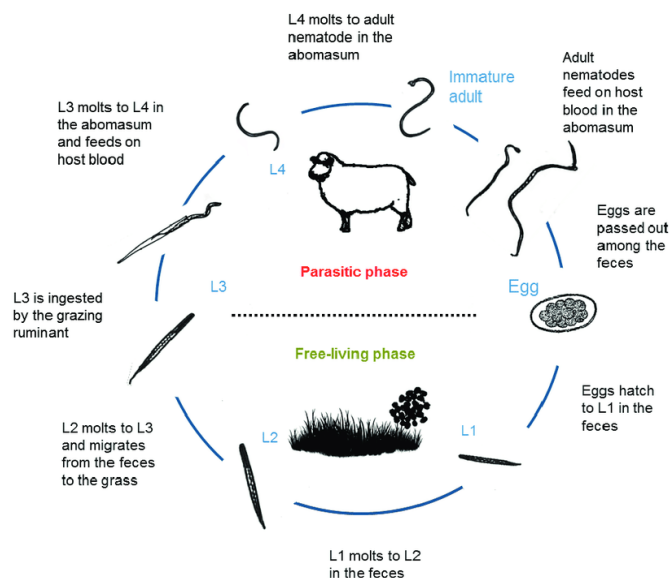
Haemonchus contortus (the Barber's Pole worm) affects both lambs and adult sheep, feeding on blood through the stomach wall. Unlike most parasitic worms diarrhoea is not usually seen, instead the disease commonly presents with anaemia, weakness and/or death. As the eggs do well in wet and mild temperatures, we are seeing high levels this year, so it's important to be on the lookout for *Haemonchus* this summer.

Lifecycle

Haemonchus is most commonly seen in the UK from late spring until autumn; the eggs don't survive well over winter but in warm and wet conditions the eggs hatch rapidly and pastures become highly infective, resulting in very rapid and severe disease.

Disease

The disease usually presents in two forms, depending upon the number of larvae on the pasture. High numbers ingested cause severe anaemia, weakness and death. Low levels may result in a chronic infection; causing emaciation, moderate anaemia and fluid swelling under the chin (bottle jaw).



Haemonchosis can be easily confused with liver fluke infections, so it's important to consult us if you are concerned. Faecal egg counts will help us to diagnose cases, as very high counts (often over 10,000 eggs per gram!) indicate *Haemonchus* infections. The worm is best confirmed by post mortem, your vet will inspect the abomasum (one of the stomach compartments), where infected sheep will have large numbers of visible Barber's Pole worms. This is why affected sheep don't get diarrhoea, as the adults live in the stomach not the intestines.

Treatment/prevention

Haemonchus contortus is reported to have some resistance to our commonly used anthelmintics, so treatment must be carefully considered. Options should be discussed with us if you think your flock may be infected with *Haemonchus*.

Lambs suffering from simultaneous *Haemonchus* and other parasitic worms should be treated with yellow or clear wormers (Group 2 and 3), although there is resistance to these, so consider your farms resistance levels when choosing. To ensure the treatment has worked, a faecal egg count should be redone post-treatment (seven days for yellow, fourteen days for clear) to ensure treatment has been done properly and effectively.

Adult sheep can be treated with products used to treat fluke (Nitroxynil or Closantel), as these are very effective against *Haemonchus*, without promoting resistance in other intestinal worms. Please consult us prior to their use as they can cause side effects in severely anaemic sheep.

Control is best achieved by an awareness of the risk factors (wet and warm temperatures), regular faecal egg counts and by speaking to us to develop a parasite management plan, as part of your flock health plan.

Remember this parasitic disease isn't limited to your lambs. Your flock may all be at risk with the current wet summer, so be on the lookout.



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