

# Farm news

October 2021



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## Loyalty Pays!

I recently tried to renew my car insurance. To renew my policy, the annual cost would be over £100 more than it was last year. If I took out a new policy, I could save nearly £300 per year. The advisor told me to cancel my existing policy, hang up, call a few other companies, then call back and take out a new one as a 'new' customer and ask for the cheapest of the other quotes to be matched. I duly did as he advised, but I was a bit cross and it got me thinking. Why should they reward disloyalty? Why should I pay £400 extra for being loyal? Is that right? Is it ok?

Here at Scarsdale we really do appreciate loyalty and we've been thinking about how best to show this. For clients on regular contracts with regular visits, we already offer a reduced hourly rate, but we've also decided to offer a free hour-long visit (visit fee and 60 minutes time included!) from your routine vet(s) once every 6 months to all our clients that have monthly, fortnightly or weekly routines, to be used separately from your routine visit for a farm walk, a catch up about your priorities and vision for your farm and how we as your vets can help you to realise your ambitions, and a chance to discuss any pressing animal health issues. Each of these visits will be worth over £150 (ex VAT) and we hope they will be well used and valuable.

As always, please do feel free to let us know any thoughts or ideas you have as to how we can improve our service, or how you think we should do things differently. We love hearing your ideas and we're not averse to change!

## Medicine Matters

Welcome to our irregularly irregular column where we give you a run-down of what's hot and what's not, what's in and what's out, what's new and what's changed in the Scarsdale pharmacy department. Medicine names and brands seem to be in a constant state of flux, and we'll do our best to try and keep you up to date. Any questions about what you should use for what, or why your favourite product has disappeared off the face of the earth, just let us know and we'll do our best to answer!

### Highlights for this month:

- Feeling blue? There's a new teat sealant that might be right up your street. Ubroseal Blue is just like any other teat sealant, except that it's – yes, you've guessed it – blue. It won't turn the milk blue or harm any consumers (including calves!), but it will make residues in the milk and milking equipment easier to spot, and it will make it easier to tell whether those annoying 'bits' in the milk are sealant residues or mastitis clots. Would I be able to tell if it ended up in my Stilton? I don't know. But if you want to take the guesswork out of teat sealant removal, it might be a good option. Speak to one of the vets for details!

- The quarterly car boot stock take was performed by the vets, with their usual enthusiasm for the task(!). For the first time ever, there were prizes. (We prefer carrots to sticks, and a little healthy competition is no bad thing). Dave won the prize for most accurate stock take, Emily, Dave, Jess and Vikki for having to return fewest out of date medicines, and Fay, Bobbie and me for being first to complete it. **Well done everyone!**

## The Value of Ventilation

The approach of autumn is a good time to think about preventing pneumonia in your cattle. Changes that we make and preventative measures that we put in place now could very easily save you time, money and - most importantly - keep your cattle healthy in the long run.

We thought about vaccines last month. Now let's think about ventilation.

Poor ventilation in buildings is one of the main underlying reasons for pneumonia in cattle. Even if you vaccinate and do everything else right, you are likely to still have disease issues if your buildings are not adequately ventilated. Air flow through buildings is driven by the animals' body heat – hot, 'dirty' air rises and should leave the building through outlets in the roof, then, as the hot air rises, cool 'clean' air should be sucked into the shed through the inlets – this is called the 'stack effect'. Where there is insufficient outlet, the dirty air cannot escape and will recirculate within the building; where there is insufficient inlet, clean air cannot enter the building; and where there is insufficient heat being generated by the animals (as perhaps they are too small to heat a large barn) then they are unable to drive this 'stack effect'. These factors will all lead to an increase in respiratory disease within your cattle.

How do we know how many animals of what size should be housed in what shed? There are recommendations for the number of different sized animals which should be housed in an airspace, and by measuring the building dimensions we can calculate what your stocking density, air inlet and air outlet should be to effectively ventilate your buildings. It could be that by making some very small changes to your buildings (e.g. taking off some ridge tiles) you could vastly improve the environment.



**Emily Sycamore**

BVetMed CertAVP MRCVS

# Corporate Practice – Good or Bad? Let's hear from the vets!



Rule changes in 1999 allowed non-vets to own practices for the first time, and this triggered a wave of corporatisation. Today, thousands of UK vets work for corporates – that is, practices that are owned and operated by a company rather than an individual vet or small group of vets. We've been part of this journey, and it's been just over two years now since Scarsdale joined IVC (Independent Veterinary Care), a corporate vet group.

It's true that when an independent practice sells to a corporate, a lot of money changes hands and the previous partners tend to do well out of the deal. But this is a one-off event, a decision made by the partners at the time, and for the next generation of vets in that practice, corporate is the new norm. Many existing independent practices are also likely to 'sell out' at some point, and this trend looks likely to continue.

So what does it mean for us at Scarsdale to be part of a corporate? There's been a lot of attention in the national press over the last few years about corporate veterinary practices. We get a lot of questions about it, and there's a lot of misinformation out there, so we thought we'd take this chance to let you know how we feel about it and give you a farm-vet-on-the-ground perspective!

The essence of the team hasn't changed. We're still a local team of local people, doing the best job we can for our local clients. But we're also part of something bigger – something that connects us to other vets across the UK, enables us to think about the bigger national picture as well as what's happening just on our little patch, gives us greater buying power, and allows us to share resources, knowledge, ideas and experiences.

Different corporates take different approaches. IVC prides itself on encouraging its practices to retain a significant degree of autonomy, allowing them to make local decisions at a local level, while still enjoying the benefits of being part of a group.

**But, of course, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and happy, confident vets tend to make for happy, confident customers. So let's hear from some of our vets how they feel about Scarsdale's corporate journey!**



## Finances – boring but important!

Carolyn, Farm Clinical Director

The 'traditional' model of veterinary practice, where vets work for a few years in an independent practice as an 'assistant' and then invest large amounts of money to buy into a practice, doesn't work for everyone. Not all vets have the financial backing or security to be able to buy into a partnership or set up by themselves, and for those who can't afford to, or simply don't feel able to take the risk of a large financial investment (for example those who aren't already well off or don't have other income streams to fall back on if things go wrong), corporate practice can offer a good alternative. In fact, corporates may offer their vets a chance to buy shares and invest, which is a more affordable path for many vets. The bigger structure also spreads the risk and reduces the chances of things going wrong if partners in a small practice fall out!

Corporate practice allows vets to progress their careers in a structured way and offers a lot of opportunity for promotion or progression in alternative ways to buying in to a partnership. It also frees up vets who don't want to be 'business people', spending inordinate amounts of time and energy on things like tax returns, payroll, GDPR regulations or accountants' meetings (to name but a few!), to focus on what they're really good at – clinical vetting - in the context of a stable employment.

If I'm honest, I don't feel strongly about whether I work for a corporate, a partnership, or a practice owned by one person. All these models are valid and all have their own advantages. Having said that, I do like the 'being part of something bigger' that our corporate offers. I also like the fact that my monthly wage is fixed and not directly tied to the income that I generate for the practice – this frees me up to feel able to advise clients objectively, independently and without the uncomfortable feeling that a cut of the money I encourage them to spend on animal health goes directly into my pocket. I think this is an ethically sound way of working, and for this reason we've steered away from the 'performance-related pay' that some other practices encourage.

What I do feel strongly about is having the support, the security and the clinical freedom that enables me to be the best vet that I can be and to deliver a personal, tailored service to my clients. I've been pleased to find that this is as true now that Scarsdale is a part of IVC, whose farm side is excellent, as it ever was under the old partnership.

## Sharing resources, teaching and new graduate support

Fay, Senior Farm Vet

As part of a corporate, we have access to a far bigger pool of resources than vets working in independent practice – whether that's specialist equipment, knowledge, access to consultants and specialists or a nationwide team of vets on the ground to ask questions to and get answers in seconds. So when it comes to the weird and wonderful, if we don't know it you can guarantee another IVC vet will, whether they are in England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland or the Netherlands! Being part of a bigger community brings so many opportunities for development in all areas of veterinary medicine. I personally do a lot more camelid teaching now than I used to, as within the IVC community knowledge is valued highly and vets are always keen to learn and improve their skills. Being part of a corporate doesn't change our day-to-day vet lives at all, we can still treat as we see fit, we can still organise our diaries as we always have and alongside this we can provide a higher level of care by always striving to better ourselves and the team.

Being part of a corporate is also beneficial for our new graduate vets, starting out in the vet world can be very daunting and in independent practice you're only as good as the effort your seniors put in, there's no network of others at similar stages in their career. As part of IVC our new graduates are enrolled in a scheme which is not only clinical but helps with networking. It creates a positive and supportive atmosphere for them to share tips and stories of life as a new farm vet which only serves to aid in their development.

## MABS

Dave, Farm Vet

Corporate practice allows greater collaboration and co-operation between practices, meaning that we can work together on, and invest in, projects and initiatives that may not be feasible for individual practices to do by themselves. Over the last few months, I've been able to conceive and drive forward an exciting new sheep breeding initiative.

**CIDR Ovis** is effective at inducing and synchronising oestrus, a valuable tool for advancing the breeding season in seasonal breeding ewes.

**Offer 1:** Buy four packs, get your fifth pack free

**Offer 2:** Free CIDR Ovis applicator with your first purchase of twenty or more devices.



Offer in partnership with Zoetis, visit [www.zoetis.co.uk/fertilitysolutions](http://www.zoetis.co.uk/fertilitysolutions) for more information.

\*Offer available to customers making their first purchase.

## Introducing... *Midlands Advanced Breeding Services*

Back in April a number of clients approached me to discuss what options there were for synchronising their flocks, as well as for artificially insemination (AI) of their pedigree ewes. This got me thinking... was this something we could offer you to increase the access and convenience of advanced sheep breeding?

**In a word; yes!**

In July, despite the fantastic weather for baling, it was excellent to welcome representatives from almost 30 (due to COVID restrictions) of the sheep farms that we look after to attend the launch of Midlands Advanced Breeding Services (MABS) followed by a talk on ram selection by Dewi Jones from Innovis.

### **So what is Midlands Advanced Breeding Services (MABS)?**

MABS provides an advanced, bespoke breeding service to pedigree and commercial sheep farmers looking to improve their flock's reproductive performance, productivity and profitability. We are now offering the following services across the midlands;

1. Laparoscopic Artificial Insemination (LapAI)
2. Ram Pre-Breeding Exams
3. Semen Collection & Evaluation
4. Vasectomies and advice on the use of teaser rams
5. Synchronisation protocol advice tailored to your flock

Visit [www.scarsdalevets.com/Midlands-Advanced-Breeding-Services](http://www.scarsdalevets.com/Midlands-Advanced-Breeding-Services) to read more about how each of these services can benefit you and your flock.

All of these can be provided either on farm, or for small numbers, here at Markeaton Lane. You may have seen, or even attended, one of our vasectomy days this summer and next year we will also offer pre-breeding exam clinics as well as LapAI days where the set up fee can be split between clients.

By being a part of IVC Evidensia Farm we have been able to collaborate with two other large farm practices in the Midlands and this allows us to draw upon the collective experience of 25 vets with over 150 years of experience in farm animal practice.

**If you are interested in discussing how MABS can work with you to enhance your flock's breeding needs or to book in for LapAI or other services contact the team on 01332 294929 or [MABS@scarsdalevets.com](mailto:MABS@scarsdalevets.com)**

**We're also delighted to offer two Midlands Advanced Breeding Services (MABS) launch year special offers;**

We're excited to announce two MABS launch special offers for our clients, in association with Zoetis .

- Any first time user of CIDR Ovis will receive the applicator free with their first pack of 20.
- Larger clients will be able to buy 4, get the 5th free on packs of CIDR Ovis.



### Our strength is the size of our herd

With 400+ farm vets working across the UK, IVC Evidensia Farm Vets is a vibrant and knowledgeable community.

### Farm community

Livestock farming is at the heart of rural life and with the widest farm practice footprint in the UK, our farm teams are woven into the fabric of these communities.

With over 10,000 farms, estates and small holdings under our care, they are our colleagues not customers and we're part of their team. As trusted partners to these businesses we look after the health of 14% of the cattle in the UK (nearly 1.5 million cattle) and 10% or >2.5 million sheep.

### History

Whilst some of the veterinary practices that make up IVC Evidensia Farm Vets, have been working with local herds and flocks for over a hundred years, our inception is more recent. Our growth rate has,

however, been astounding as mixed and farm veterinary practices in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have joined us at an incredible rate since 2016.

Comprising of over 50 farm sites at the start of 2021, with more joining since, the wealth of knowledge, experience and ambition for the farming profession encompassed within IVC Evidensia Farm Vets is undeniable. Couple this with the proven track record of a supportive group, we believe we are one of the most exciting and progressive veterinary farm businesses to work for today, and for many years to come.

### International Links

IVC Evidensia also has farm practices in Ireland, as well as the Netherlands, allowing for knowledge sharing not just across our UK practices, but with those in other countries too. For example, since 2019 the farm vet stream has welcomed our Dutch colleagues onto the IVC Evidensia Graduate Academy and we look forward to resuming our exchange programme for farm vets within our practices in the Netherlands as soon as travel restrictions are lifted.

# Vet Techs

We are happy to be able to offer efficiently-priced Vet Tech services here at Scarsdale. Vet Techs are non-vets who have been fully trained in undertaking certain tasks, and our Vet Tech hourly rate is approximately one quarter of a vet's hourly rate. Our Vet Techs are happy to come onto farms to assist with:

#### Disbudding of calves

- This is done in young calves before the horns are properly developed using local anaesthetic, long-acting pain killer and cautery.

#### Vaccination of calves and adult cows

- All types of vaccination can be undertaken by our techs from calf vaccines to whole herd adult vaccination. This can be done in conjunction with a TB test or at another pre-arranged time to suit you.

#### Independent mobility scoring (required by many milk contracts)

- Our Vet Techs are accredited by ROMS (Register of Mobility Scorers) and are happy to score the herd on a day and time convenient to you.



#### Youngstock monitoring

- Our Vet Techs can take a wide range of diagnostic samples. We also offer calf pneumonia scoring for disease monitoring and prevention.

#### Genomic sampling

- Ear notch or hair sampling is commonly used for genomic testing of cattle. Our Vet techs have everything they need to both collect and submit these samples and the results are then returned to your vet.

**Farm and Equine Centre**  
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Alfreton  
01773 304900

Pride Veterinary Centre  
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Allestree  
01332 554422

Shelton Lock  
01332 700321

Hilton  
01283 732999

Stapenhill  
01283 568162

Langley Mill  
01773 304914

Stretton  
01283 565333

Mickleover  
01332 518585

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