

## Good Luck Steph!

At the end of January, we unfortunately said goodbye to Steph who has spent 8 brilliant years with us. Steph has made the decision to pursue her interest in camelids by setting up a dedicated camelid veterinary service, whilst also taking the opportunity to move closer to her family. We are sure will all join us in wishing her the very best of luck with her new adventure.



## Welcome to Jenny

We are excited to announce that we have a new vet, Jenny Welsh, starting with the practice from the 1st of February. Jenny is originally from the Wirral and qualified from Bristol in 2019. After graduating she completed a farm animal internship at a farm animal practice in Kent. Jenny has a keen interest in youngstock and calf health. Outside of work, she recently got an Australian Shepherd puppy so will spend much of her spare time trying to keep up with it! We hope you will give Jenny a warm welcome and she looks forward to meeting you all in the next few months.

## Medicine Hub

You may remember we mentioned the Medicine Hub a few months ago. It is a new online platform for medicine records and is capable of recording both medicines purchases and usage easily. It can be linked to the practice so your purchases should be transferred across automatically. It also has the benefit that we can also see the use, possibly flagging up trends which may have gone un-noticed. For cattle keepers, the program can be linked to CTS, meaning stock numbers will automatically be imported.

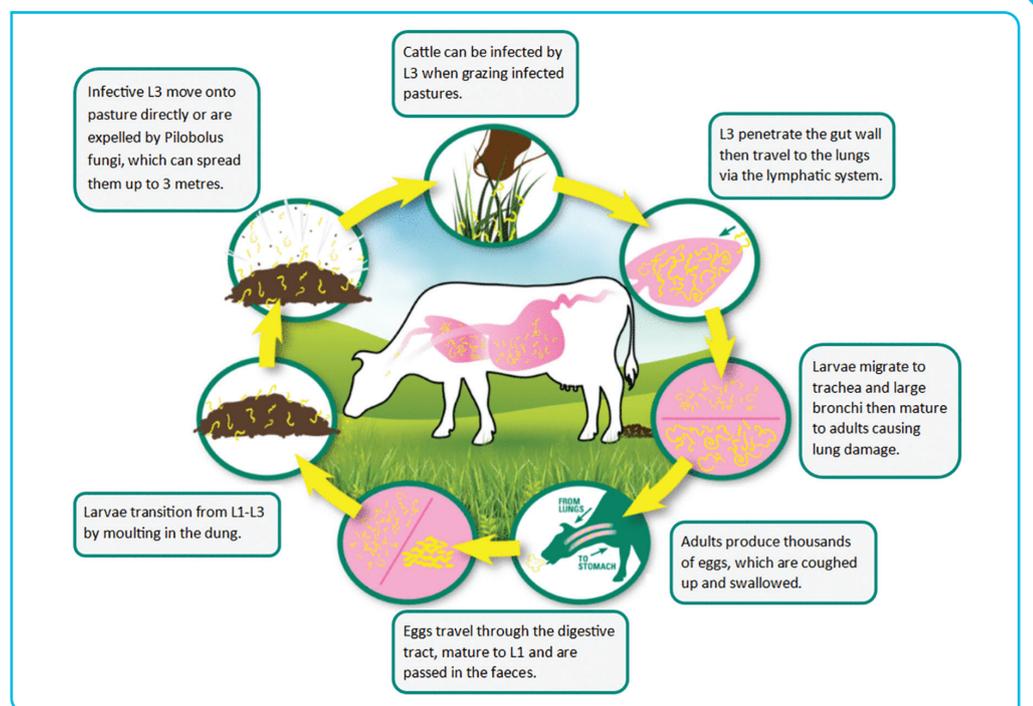
On the dairy side, some of the dairies are making use of this platform a requirement for their providers. We are happy to give you a demonstration/walkthrough of how to use the program if you wish. The data it can produce can also be very useful for your records, on-farm monitoring and also for farm assurance. We will also be able to benchmark your usage against other similar farms. The website can be accessed via <https://medicinehub.ahdb.org.uk/>

## Huskvac! Yes, it's really that time of year already!

We are once again on the home straight towards turnout (and some of you have already taken the plunge given the kind weather we had during January. If you heard your cattle coughing at grass last autumn, they could have been harbouring lungworm burdens that compromise growth rates and lifetime milking performance. Most lungworm cases are reported at the back end of the grazing season.

Lungworm larvae can overwinter on pasture and in carrier cattle to pass infection year to year, which means cattle can pick up infection as soon as they are turned out in the spring. If they do, it could be very costly.

In the dairy herd, lungworm infection could easily cost you £140 per cow with lost milk production averaging 4kg per cow per day – and that's a conservative estimate – because you can also lose cattle to lungworm. It isn't just dairy cattle that get affected either. In severe lungworm outbreaks, growing cattle losses can average at £50-£100 per head. For beef suckler herds, calves are generally exposed to a continuous low-level challenge from adult cattle, who will be immunologically competent. However, if the herd immunity declines, there is an increased risk of disease.



Bovilis® Huskvac is a live vaccine, made from irradiated lungworm larvae, which are incapable of causing disease. Vaccination should be completed at least two weeks before the herd is turned out to grass. Wormers should not be given until two weeks after the final dose of vaccine. As heifers are often wormed with long-acting products through their first and sometimes second grazing seasons, they lack the immunity that comes from exposure to the lungworm. This makes them very susceptible to infection.

The vaccine allows a small number of lungworms to complete their lifecycle, meaning there is a continued development of natural immunity throughout the grazing season. Over-reliance on wormers does not allow this natural boosting to occur.

Please contact the practice to plan your lungworm control strategies for this season and to order Bovilis® Huskvac.

## Milksure Training

For those of you who need to complete the milksure training covering medicine use on farm, we will be running a course on the 3rd of March. Please contact the office for more information or book your place.

## Feeding your pre-weaned calves for optimal growth

### Milk

Whether you use bulk tank milk (NOT dump milk) or milk replacer the key to good practice is consistency. Ideally one person should be in charge of feeding calves and this should allow any problems to be identified early.

- **Temperature** – If using milk replacer it is important to check the instructions carefully as just a few degrees colder or warmer can lead to problems with nutritional scour and acidosis. Don't be tempted to feed warmer or cooler milk dependent on the weather.
- **Volume** – Calves should be fed 15% of their bodyweight twice daily in milk/milk replacer. Weighing out milk replacement powder is important to ensure the correct concentration is achieved. Too much milk powder will result in acidosis and too little will result in the clot in the abomasum not forming correctly. It is important to note that in cold temperatures more feed should be available to ensure growth rates are maintained. The table below details the requirement for extra milk powder (ensuring the same concentration) or extra whole milk.
- **Time** – Feeding at the same times of day ensures the best uptake of nutrients and ensures calves don't have empty stomachs for long periods.



Environmental Temperature °C	g/d of additional milk replacer*		l/d of additional whole milk *	
	Birth to 3wk	3wk to weaning	Birth to 3wk	>3wk
20	0	0	0	0
15	0	0	0	0
10	50	0	0.33	0
5	100	50	0.67	0.33
0	150	100	1.00	0.67
-5	200	150	1.33	1.01
-10	250	200	1.67	1.33



### Forage

Forage is one of the most important factors for good rumen development. It can take many forms such as straw, hay, haylage or silage but the most important thing is to offer it in an appealing way. Even if calves are bedded on straw bedding they still need roughage offered in a trough, hay rack or ring feeder to encourage uptake. Generally 'fluffed up' roughage will encourage more uptake than tight bales.

### Water!

Water is an often forgotten component of calf feeding regimes. It should be offered from birth and be available at all times of day and night. The water should be fully refreshed at least daily and the buckets kept clean. Water is often seen as the key component of rumen development as it supports rumen microbial development and function. It also increases the uptake of starter pellet by up to 30%. During winter in particular providing warmer water may encourage further uptake.



### Starter pellet

Starter pellet should be offered from birth to encourage rumen development and allow a smooth transition to weaning. It is important to offer fresh creep feed regularly and at least daily to encourage calves to eat as they will likely turn up their noses if it is just topped up. By the target weaning age calves should be consuming 2kg of creep feed a day and if not weaning should be delayed until this happens.

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