

It's been a while since the last newsletter, but here we are again and with a double edition! What a time it has been. Covid has certainly changed a lot! Even our team has changed. We said goodbye to Theo and Toni and welcomed in Isabel, Sara and Will, who are introducing themselves below. And even though it took a bit of getting used to the lockdown rules, we have tried to keep providing the same service as always. And it's nice to say that our equine and small animal colleagues are back at full capacity as well. Ok, in a slightly different way, as you will have noticed when picking up medicines and having to navigate the outdoor consult room! Which leads me to say a huge thank you to you all for being patient with us with all the Covid regulations and in keeping us, and yourselves, all safe and well!



Isabel Field

I've recently graduated from the Royal Veterinary College during all this COVID madness. My current areas of interest include fertility and calf health, and in the future I'd like to learn more about the potential for carbon neutral farming. When not at work you'll find me riding my horses, at the beach or baking. I'm a PADI scuba diver and in the future would love to travel more to go diving.

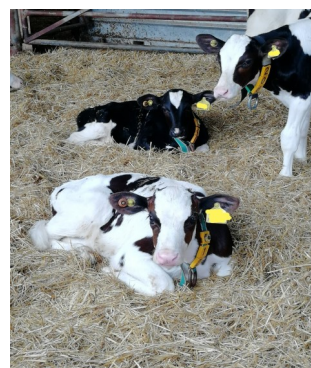
Will James

I have recently moved to the area after working in Cambridge for a year, after graduating from the RVC. My area of passion is in sheep and beef cattle work maybe stemming from growing up on a sheep farm in Cornwall! I enjoy playing lots of sport, mainly hockey, and getting out and about in the countryside. I am really excited to move to this part of the world and look forward to meeting you all in due course!



Sara Perez

Originally from Castille and Leon I graduated from León university (Spain) in 2015. I worked in mixed practices in Spain and France, then I moved to the UK in 2016 where I got a qualification as Official Veterinarian and Animal Welfare Officer and worked as a team leader for the Meat Hygiene Inspectors team in red meat abattoirs in Cornwall and as Ex-port Official Veterinarian in several cold stores in the UK exporting meat, cheese and other POAO all over the world. Afterwards I carried on pursuing the interest that moved me to study general medicine in farm animals so I came to Sussex this summer to join Cliffe Vets. Outside of work I enjoy exploring the English countryside, open-air sports and any other activities in nature. I also like traveling and meeting new people and cultures.



AUTUMN FLOCK CLUB MEETING

Cliffe Vets organized the first social distanced flock club on the 1st September 2020. We were hosted on a farm with a super smooth yarding system and an extra long handling race, perfect for assessing cull ewes whilst keeping our distances from our peers! A selection of cull ewes had been drawn for our scrutiny and discussion. We were all in agreement over the lumpy udders, poor feet and broken mouths, however, as it turns out, none of us are in agreement over body condition (even the vets)! We debated hints and tips as how to become more universal in our technique and discussed the relevance of breeds. Our take home message was to ensure we are consistent amongst ourselves, keeping the same scorer through-out the year or ensuring to calibrate staff beforehand. How we manage to identify and record our poor mothers and prolapse ewes was also an interesting talking point. We finished by discussing the basic ram MOT and what to assess prior to tupping – don't forget you want to leave enough time before tupping to treat any problems or source replacements. Due to concerns regarding welfare of electroejaculation in rams, only rams which fail or show abnormalities on a gross examination are now subject to semen evaluation.



BOVINE RESPIRATORY DISEASE –BRD-TIP OF THE ICEBERG

In a recent poll, 68% of farmers acknowledged they had calves suffering from BRD and 48% have fatalities from this.

But what is BRD?

Disease is when the body fails to maintain health in the face of challenge. In this case, this is against respiratory pathogens such as viruses and bacteria. We are looking at the hosts/ calf's response to the infection and the pathogen challenge. Each individual has a different response to infection, for example COVID-19 has affected millions of people in different ways, some get loss of taste and smell, some get a cough, some aren't affected etc... this is exactly the same in BRD.

Some calves with BRD are clinical and have severe respiratory effort, fever, death some have mild upper respiratory signs such as a cough or conjunctivitis and others are subclinical and show no signs at all!

Now, take into account that 68% of farmers say they have BRD. How many more animals are they missing due to the subclinical cases?

What are the costs of BRD?

All off this adds up and there have been studies calculating costs of BRD.

Short-term costs of BRD have been calculated at around £30-80 per clinical case of BRD rising to over £500 if the animal dies.

This is due to the:

- Reduced liveweight gain of up to 0.2kg per day.
- Cost of medicines, treatment and labour
- Calf losses and cost of disposal
- Extra feed, time, bedding to bring animals to slaughter weight

Chronic long-term costs are hard to calculate but pneumonia in a heifer calf will affect long-term fertility, productivity (milk yields) and it is more likely to be culled earlier.

Therefore, this is a major disease in the production and profitability in youngstock production.

BRD is a multifactorial disease involving:

- Environment (housing, stocking densities, mixed airspace)
- Pathogen (virulence of pathogen, type- bacteria or viruses, infectiousness)
- Host (stress, immunity- colostrum + vaccination)

Therefore there are many things to look at to prevent the disease occurring rather than just treating. Please speak to us about management changes that can be made on the above options.

Diagnosing BRD

Clinical- BRD normally occurs with a primary virus (PI3, BRSV, IBR, BVDV) then with a secondary bacterial infection (some bacteria can be primary as well) after the initial damage.

These pathogens can be diagnosed by blood tests or swabs from the nose or from the lungs. Post mortems can be very useful for this.

Subclinical- Thoracic ultrasound is the only way to spot subclinical BRD by looking at the lungs for consolidation, abscesses etc... our vets can help you with this.

Treatment

Prompt treatment and isolation is critical in controlling BRD. Temperature (>39.5) is one of the earliest signs of infection. In groups of calves with over 10% affected with respiratory signs and high temperatures, it is worth considering treating all animals as a prophylactic treatment.

- 1) Antibiotics to prevent secondary bacterial infection, with the first line choice of Alamylin, (IM 1ml/10kg).
- 2) Anti-inflammatories, such as metacam (SC, 1ml/40kg) to reduce inflammation inside the lungs.

Prevention of BRD

As mentioned above, BRD is multifactorial but we will concentrate on the hosts' side of the disease for this section. Immunity is the main way we can help calves fight off the infection. Colostrum is the best way we can do this. Therefore good quality and clean colostrum, at the correct quantity (10% of bodyweight), quickly after birth (within 2-4hrs) and quietly, without stressing the calf, is essential.

Checking colostrum with a brix refractometer before giving to calves is important and checking, whether it has worked by blood sampling calves older than 24hrs but under 5 days old, to assess failure of passive transfer, will also give information on your colostrum management.

Other ways we can boost immunity is vaccination. There are many different vaccines available and it is worth talking to us about which ones would be most useful for your setup.

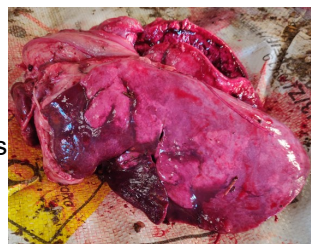




POST-MORTEMS

I recently attended a farm animal pathology course in County Durham run by Ben Strugnell of Farm Post-Mortems LTD. Ben specialises in farm animal post-mortems and has done since 2007- there isn't much he hasn't seen! The caseload was plentiful, often involving 5 adult cattle, 5 yearling cattle and anywhere between 10 and 15 lambs or sheep per day. The experience was invaluable as we look to launch our own similar post-mortem service in the new year.

Post-mortems provide a valuable insight into underlying herd/flock health problems, and particularly with the seasonal nature of beef, lamb and dairy production in this area, they allow for an outbreak to be identified early and control measures to be implemented. One such example is a pneumonia outbreak seen in fat lambs over a 2 week period where a post-mortem revealed the problem and allowed for a vaccination schedule to be implemented (see photo).



It's essential we make the most of all stock- whether it be livestock or deadstock! Watch this space for more information regarding the post-mortem service. Chris

THIS SEASON LET US TAKE THE STRESS OUT OF DISBUDDING

The last two seasons we have been performing "batch disbudding with sedation" on groups of dairy calves on a small number of farms. This is widespread in New Zealand and Australia and is considered the gold standard for welfare.

The procedure involves sedating the calves in batches of 10-20 before disbudding and means that it is far quicker, far less stressful for the calf and far less stressful for you!

Less pain and stress means better feeding and improved growth rates in the 2 weeks following disbudding.

Veterinary disbudding with sedation and local anaesthetic, results in an average of 1.4kg greater growth over the 2 week period following disbudding (this is a 17% increase in growth rate over the period).

Bates AJ, Eder P, Laven RA. Effect of analgesia and anti-inflammatory treatment on weight gain and milk intake of dairy calves after disbudding. N Z Vet J. 2015;63(3):153-157. doi:10.1080/00480169.2014.982739

We anticipate being able to disbud around 40 calves per hour with two operators



*Calves recovering from disbudding.
Less stress.
Less pain.
Better welfare.*

We are offering this as a per head fee including all meds, prices below. On the basis of doing 40 per hour this is a significant discount on the on-farm hourly rate and factors in discounted medicines too.

First 10 animals	£7+vat each
11-20	£6+vat each
21+	£5+vat each

Minimum requirement is that you provide at least 2 members of staff.

So for 30 calves in one hit, it would cost £180+vat (£6 per head) or for 50 calves £280+vat (£5.50 per head)

This includes vet time, gas, sedative, local anaesthetic, Cyclopray and Metacam.

Once you have done it, you won't go back!!

ON FARM CLINICAL MASTITIS CULTURE TEST

With antibiotic use remaining to be under scrutiny we are constantly looking at ways to reduce it. One area where antibiotics are still used in significant amounts is in mastitis cases.

We can now easily source an on farm mastitis culture test called Mastdecide.

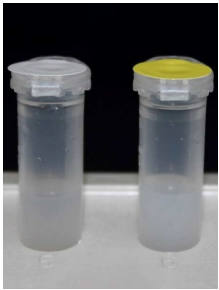
This is a culture test that can be done on farm, all you need for it is an egg incubator.

It is important to say this test does not replace a milk culture done in the laboratory which will tell you which organism you are dealing with and also gives you a sensitivity spectrum. These tests still remain important in the prevention and treatment plans for mastitis.

The idea of the Masdecide test is that it detects whether a cow needs treatment with antibiotics by diagnosing if an infection is present and whether it is gram positive or gram negative. It takes 5 minutes of preparation and then 8-14 hours of incubation.

Only if a gram-positive organism is detected, is there a need for antibiotic treatment. Potentially saving antibiotic use in up to 50 % of clinical mastitis cases and helping you achieve responsible use of antibiotics.

The test comes with a testing protocol and a mastitis grade chart. Each mastitis case should always be treated with an NSAID when mastitis is first detected. This is preferably one with a zero milk withhold so mastitis cases not receiving antibiotic will not need a prolonged medicine withdrawal period. All grade 3 cows, meaning sick cows, are treated with antibiotics as well. Grade 1 and 2 cases will await results before further treatment is decided.



This will lead to less antibiotic treatment, less antimicrobial resistance risk and the potential to return the milk to the tank quicker. MastDecide is therefore an exciting new and progressive mastitis treatment decision aid. We can source the test from Vale vets, a vet practice and recognised mastitis lab that have trialed this for a while now and have got several of their dairy clients using it successfully.

If you would like to know more about the test and whether it is suitable for use on your farm please contact us!



SEXED SHEEP SEMEN SERVICE LAUNCHED

Breeding company, AB Europe, has teamed up and collaborated with bovine genetic specialists Cogent for a UK first, offering sexed semen for UK sheep producers.

Sexed semen has previously been limited commercially to the cattle sector and has evolved to become a major part of cattle genetics. It has allowed farmers to reduce the surplus of uneconomical dairy bull calves and enabled a greater genetic gain and generation of heifers for herd replacements. This has been revolutionary in the dairy sector and will now be available to sheep producers.

A spokesperson from AB Europe has quoted "their new service will help farmers to speed up the rate of genetic gain in their flock, increase the proportion of female or male lambs born and subsequently improve flock efficiency and profitability."

Due to the price mismatch between sexes, with females usually being in greater demand and fetching higher prices, excluding the high-priced male individual, this sexed semen will allow the farmer to choose with a 90% gender accuracy.

AB Europe says they also see a huge future for sexed semen within the dairy sheep and goat sector. Goats will milk for two to three years on a single lactation, so getting replacements is an issue. After their first kidding they are not getting pregnant again for a long time, so farmers need to be sure they are producing the female replacement they require.

The service will be available on semen collected from the customer's own rams and it is possible for it to be processed in favour of either female or male sperm cells. There will also be the choice of a low concentration of two million cells per ml for commercial artificial insemination (AI) or four million cells per ml for AI for embryo transfer.

In one of their trials, out of 400ewes they showed a conception rate of 77% with a scanning percentage of 199% and 97% of the lambs were born female.

If you are interested in using advanced breeding techniques, such as this, in your flock, please call the practice and one of the vets will discuss the options with you.