

## Coronavirus Update

This update is accurate at time of going to press on 27/03/2020. However, the situation may change. Along with farmers, farm vets are considered 'key workers' and the consensus of the authorities appears to be 'keep Britain fed' so we are continuing urgent work to protect animal welfare (e.g. calvings and sick or lame animals) and routine work that is vital for maintaining farm productivity (e.g. fertility work).

The issue on farm is maintaining 'social distancing' i.e. keeping ourselves 2m apart and where possible only having one member of the farm staff present to assist. This can be achieved with fertility work for example but is more difficult with castrating and dehorning. To this end please consider using elastrator rings for calves (these need to be applied within 7-days of birth) and delaying any non-urgent work where possible, such as dehorning, until this is over. However, we will castrate calves if they are getting big because not doing so will have animal welfare (heifer misalliance and later castrating large bull calves) and human safety implications.

Before all visits the vet will telephone to check the health status of the personnel on the farm and offer a reminder to stay 2m apart. Also we should not be conducting health planning meetings or similar on farm, instead we will do these over the phone. We believe red Tractor have suspended inspections. We have secured Judith and Laura as farm vets to replace Niall (in 'at risk' group) and Jock (unable to leave Australia) as small animal work is now sick and injured animals only. However, if one or more of us has to self-isolate we may still have a farm vet shortage so our previous notice on prioritising work would then apply.

Government decisions on statutory TB and BVD testing are that these should continue and movement restrictions will apply if tests go over their deadline. However, during this lock-down period to reduce the number of tests we are delaying tests until close to the deadline. Laboratory testing services are reduced to tests vital to manage outbreaks of disease and BVD tests where not testing will result in movement restrictions.

Medicine deliveries have been compromised due to the wholesaler having insufficient delivery drivers. They have dropped to every other day and on at least one occasion we did not get our full delivery due to lack of space in the van. If necessary we will drive to Dumfries to get medicines ourselves. This is on top of the already restricted supply of long-acting amoxycillin, local anaesthetic and intramammary lactating cow tubes for mastitis. Please bear with us with supply of medicines, we are doing our best to maintain supplies but there may be some delays. If you have any concerns about the implications of the current situation on the health and welfare of your animals or about us visiting your farm please contact the practice.

## MBM Dairy Fertility Meeting

We held our annual fertility benchmarking meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February at the Fenwick Hotel with 25 farms represented.

See figure 1 for the anonymised results which were discussed.

If you have complete and accurate fertility data from your farm that you would like to see included next year please contact us.

Benchmarking your farm against others allows you to see what you are doing well and what could be improved and also what is actually achievable in the real world.

MBM Veterinary Group Fertility Benchmarking Meeting 27<sup>th</sup> February 2020  
19 HERDS WITH COMPLETE DATA (9 Herds rejected as data incomplete)

Farm code	100d in-calf rate (%)		Conception rate (%)		18-24 day oestrus return rate (%)		Calving index (median projected)		Proxy for cull rate (%)*		Proxy for infertility cull rate (%)#	
	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate
A	27	15	32	13=	45	12	398	13=	27	6	15	9=
B	37	8	37	8	56	4=	373	2	10	1=	6	2
C	36	9=	31	15	62	1=	388	10	10	1=	9	3=
D	38	5=	33	11=	56	4=	376	4	19	5	12	5=
E	38	5=	53	1	50	8	386	6=	40	16=	28	19
F	38	5=	28	16=	38	14	398	13=	34	12=	13	7
G	33	11	53	2	20	17	404	17	47	19	16	12
H	47	3	36	9=	46	10=	377	5	10	1=	9	3=
I	32	12	48	5	46	10=	391	11	35	14=	19	14
J	36	9=	38	7	42	13	387	8=	45	18	14	8
K	58	1	52	3	57	3	363	1	12	4	5	1
L	14	19	40	6	16	18	401	15	33	9=	15	9=
M	21	18	33	11=	28	15	402	16	31	7	20	15=
N	22	17	24	19	62	1=	417	19	33	9=	20	15=
P	50	2	51	4	47	9	374	3	33	9=	12	5=
Q	40	4	32	13=	55	7	387	8=	32	8	22	17
R	26	16	28	16=	56	6	412	18	34	12=	25	18
T	30	13	36	9=	58	2	386	6=	35	14=	17	13
U	29	14	28	16=	26	16	392	12	40	16=	15	9=

\* Percentage of all cows not in calf by 300 days in-milk

# Percentage of all cows receiving a first service that are not in-calf by 300 days in milk



**Natasha McCappin** has recently gained her Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP) from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). Well done Natasha! This is achieved through a modular course of study over at least 2-years and is hard work! Natasha joins our other CertAVP (Cattle) holder and Advanced Practitioner Michael Fallon and Mark Crawshaw (RCVS Specialist in Cattle Health and Production) as the MBM farm vets with post graduate qualifications and enhanced clinical skills status recognised by the RCVS. We are always keen to improve the clinical and professional skills of our farm vets and there are likely to be more achieving these qualifications in the future.

## Lambing Courses

This year Jennifer ran 3 lambing courses at the Kilmarnock practice. Best management of lambing ewes and optimal care of lambs after delivery were discussed. Attendees also learnt tips and techniques for difficult lambings and got to practice them on the lambing simulator. Feedback has been positive, with many enjoying the afternoon, and most importantly, reports of several successful lambings with their news skills!



## Spring Emergencies – Top tips

### **Calvings**

If malpresented and you cannot correct after 10 minutes, call the vet.

- Overworking and bruising the cervix and vagina increases the risks of tears, held cleansing and metritis. Delays also risk the lives of both calf and cow, so call us early so we can get to you in good time.

If correct presentation, but you cannot pull the calf's foot out past the ankle/fetlock without excessive force, there is a high chance the calf is too big – call the vet.

Once you call us, **STEP AWAY FROM THE COW!** Continuing will increase calf stress and reduce oxygen delivery, reducing chances of survival. Instead prepare 2 clean buckets of warm water and restrain the cow. In case we need to do a caesarean, having a wind-free and undercover area with decent light and something to act as a table would be handy. As would an extra pair of hands!

### **Uterine/calf-bed prolapses**

Call the vet immediately!

- Keep the cow quiet and still (ideally in a clean area) to prevent damage to the uterus. If she is down, cover the uterus with a clean damp sheet, to minimise contamination. If standing, restrain her where possible.
- Prolapsed calf beds can be caused by several reasons, most commonly milk fever or difficult calvings. If you suspect the cow has milk fever, give 1 bottle of calcium under the skin whilst you wait (if it doesn't upset her!).
- Prepare 1 bucket of warm water, 1 large clean sheet/ /split feed bag, decent lighting, extra help and good restraint.



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