

# Farm news



**Rob Howard**  
BVMS MRCVS

**Did you know?**

There are now carcase trait EBVs that will help you choose a bull based on the things you get paid for

## Registering sire details on passports

In January, we focused on the new beef EBVs from AHDB. These new EBVs are calculated using data from the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS), abattoirs and breed societies, giving high accuracy figures for bulls that have had progeny slaughtered. The abattoir data currently covers 40% of the national kill and more than two million carcase records for both purebred and crossbred animals have been used to develop these EBVs. However, there were a further two million abattoir records that could not be used to generate EBVs. This was because the sire details of the finished animal were not recorded when registering their calves. In order for a bull to have these EBVs available, their sire details must be registered with BCMS on the passports of their calves. Without this information, any data relating to the bull is meaningless.

You can help to drive the industry forward by making sure you register the sire whenever it is known. Keeping a list of ear tag numbers by the side of your computer will make it easier and quicker when registering calves. If using artificial insemination (AI), a simple way to keep track is to make sure all semen delivery cards are kept safe as these will have the sire ear tag number on them.

AHDB Beef & Lamb has produced a Suckler Breeding Plan to help farmers record sires used on groups of animals. This can be found at [beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk/returns](http://beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk/returns)

The new carcase trait EBVs for bulls that have them can be found at [egenes.co.uk/carcassdata](http://egenes.co.uk/carcassdata). You can search by pedigree name or ear tag number.

### Lambing Courses

Join us for one of our practical lambing courses which will cover:

- Repositioning incorrectly presented lambs
- Treating ewe diseases associated with lambing
- Injecting and stomach tubing lambs
- How to use a head rope

Monday 11 March and Monday 18 March  
To book or for more information 01332 294929



## How essential are trace elements? Getting the balance right

**Rose Jackson**  
BVSc DBR CertVBM MRCVS

Supplementing minerals at grass can be tricky; for example, buckets and licks are out of the question because they are very attractive to badgers!

There are a variety of trace element and vitamin supplements on the market but only a quality bolus can ensure a steady daily intake of the minerals required. Thanks to its 40 years of expertise, the Oligovet range of boluses from Vetalis provides a continuous and controlled release of trace elements and vitamins.



#### Grazing period

Oligovet Super Grazing bolus provides the main trace elements (Copper, Zinc, Iodine, Cobalt and

Selenium) required throughout the grazing period. These boluses are unique in that they offer 8 months (250 days) of controlled trace elements supply from a single bolus administration (animals > 400 kg) to give you peace of mind for the rest of the season! A Super Grazing bolus for heifers (200kg to 400kg) with a 180-day length of action is also available.



#### Pre-calving period

Oligovet have a Dry Cow bolus suitable for beef and dairy cows with 90 days duration of action

to cover the dry period and early lactation, which should be administered two months before calving. Using this bolus will help you:

- Reinforce the calf's vitality
- Decrease the risk of disease for the cow
- Improve milk quality
- Ensure a smooth transition period

**Special Turnout offer!**  
Get 12 FREE Super Grazing boluses & Bolus gun when you buy 100 Super Grazing boluses & 40 heifer boluses



# Update on digital dermatitis

Jess Reynolds BVM BVS MRCVS

Digital dermatitis (DD) has been present in the UK for at least 30 years and many herds still struggle to control the disease. The annual cost per average farm is estimated at £3000 per 100 cows.

## What new things have we learnt so far?

- Affected **carrier** cows, especially those with active lesions on the foot, are the main reservoir for infection.
- There are fewer bacteria in the **environment** than we previously thought, so slurry is less important as a source of infection but it is implicated as a way of damaging the skin so bacteria are more likely to invade.
- DD infection on top of sole ulcers or white line disease can cause these to become **non-healing**.
- DD may also be involved in **mammary dermatitis** and **teat necrosis**.

## What can we do to reduce digital dermatitis?

### Four control principles:

1. Reduce infection pressure by treating carrier cows with lesions to reduce the level of infection.
  - Use **mobility scoring** to detect infection early – catch those score 2s!
  - **Segregate** affected cows and pick up their feet: good equipment is necessary to do this quickly, safely and easily – “1 cow, 1 person, 1 minute!”
  - **Effective treatment** – this is a topic that is still surrounded by lots of debate!
    - Cleaning/hygienic drying and inspection of the foot.
    - Oxytetracycline/chlortetracycline spray (Cyclo Spray<sup>®</sup>) of the lesion.
    - Use of systemic, injectable antibiotics in more difficult cases.
    - Use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (pain killers), where indicated.
2. **Keep foot skin healthy** – slurry management; keeping feet dry/reducing slurry pooling, cubicle comfort; increase lying times.
3. **Boost immunity** – keep up good transition management/nutrition and control other infectious diseases (such as BVD).
4. **Watch biosecurity** – if there is DD on the farm, have strict quarantine periods, equipment disinfection and consider a closed herd. Although, if there is no DD on farm, be just as cautious in case a different strain is brought in.

## Foot-bathing and bandaging

Non-antibiotic foot-bathing is certainly part of control on many farms and can reduce infection pressure. However, it must be done well if it is to be useful, otherwise it can dampen and damage the skin, increasing the risk of DD infection. There are no licensed products for antibiotic footbaths and very little evidence that they are even effective, so these should be avoided as part of our strategy for responsible use of antibiotics.

Bandaging is not required and can create wet, oxygen-lacking conditions that the bacteria that causes DD to thrive in (alongside causing significant skin damage). It is easy to leave bandages on for too long which can make skin conditions much worse.

References: NADIS website and ‘Update on treating digital dermatitis’ Owen Atkinson (Veterinary Times).



## Introducing Jon, our new Nottingham Farm resident!

Having graduated from Nottingham in 2016, Jon worked for a brief spell in Somerset before heading home to the family dairy farm in Shropshire. Here, he divided his time between working on the farm and as a large animal vet.

Jon started his Intern/Residency programme at Nottingham in 2018. His areas of clinical interest lie in calf health, lameness and communication. During his free time, Jon is a keen cyclist, climber and walker having recently cycled the length of France.

## Mastering Medicines Course

A one-stop run through of all things veterinary medicines related. This course will take place at our Markeaton Lane practice, with separate sessions for dairy farmers and for beef and sheep farmers.

**Monday 11 March**  
**Dairy: 10am – 12:30pm**  
**Beef & Sheep: 2pm – 4:30pm**  
To book, call **01332 294929**

## New practices opening soon!

We are excited to announce the opening of three brand new practices for pet owners in the Alfreton, Wollaton and Langley Mill areas!

For more information visit: [bit.ly/2SW8RXc](http://bit.ly/2SW8RXc)



**Farm and Equine Centre**  
Markeaton Lane, Markeaton, Derby DE22 4NH  
01332 294929

Alfreton  
01773 304900

Pride Veterinary Centre  
01332 678333

Allestree  
01332 554422

Shelton Lock  
01332 700321

Hilton  
01283 732999

Stapenhill  
01283 568162

Langley Mill  
01773 304914

Stretton  
01283 565333

Mickleover  
01332 518585

Wollaton  
0115 697 6586

Oakwood  
01332 666500