

Bovilis RSP

It turns out you can teach an old dog new tricks

Until now the earliest calves could be vaccinated against pneumonia was at 7 days of age. Bovilis Intranasal RSP Live has changed its licensing due to new research, allowing it to be given from birth, which results in full immunity within a week of age. This allows for the vaccine to fit into your on farm schedule and not become a job for another day. It is available in single dose packages so no calves have to wait to be vaccinated. If you would like more information please speak to one of our team members.



Calf and Lamb Post- Mortem Evening

Monday 5th December 2022 from 7pm with supper At Hawes Farmers Auction Mart, Burtsett Road, Hawes, DL8 3LP

Join The Farmer Network and AHDB Beef & Lamb for an opportunity to gain an insight into the internal effects of parasite damage and other illness. On the evening you will hear from:

- **Ben Strugnell of Farm Post-mortems Ltd** who will demonstrate sheep and calf post-mortems
- **Jake McRoberts of Elanco** who will talk about Anthelmintic resistance in sheep
- **Davinia Hinde of Bainbridge Vets** who will cover preventing common causes of death, such as pneumonia.

For more information or to book your FREE place, Contact The Farmer Network

Call: 01768 868615, Text "Book calf and lamb post-mortem evening" to 07714 187034 or email: admin@thefarmernetwork.co.uk

As I write this, the weather looks like it's destined for a bit of a dry spell, with temperatures dropping to nearer what we're used to at this time of year. Grass still seems to be doing its best to grow though.

We have also got through just about all of the radial TB testing assigned to us, which will total around 8,500 animals from the end of September and into December. Things have been progressing as we had hoped, with relatively few hurdles for folks to overcome at this stage. Please remember that the TB tests done are valid as pre-movement TB tests from the date the tuberculin was injected (first day of the test) until 60 days after. After that, anything other than a movement to slaughter will need to be pre-movement TB tested. If in doubt, please give us a ring as it's easy to get tied up in knots if folks aren't used to the protocols.

Now that cattle are housed, it's a good time to think about disease screening sampling. The main one would be BVD, where it's a good idea to blood sample bovine youngstock to check that there has been no exposure while they were out at grass, which could highlight gaps in the system, or hopefully act as peace-of-mind that things are going ok. We'd typically sample five animals of 9-18 months old which haven't been vaccinated against BVD. If there's more than one group of this sort on a farm then we'd do those too. It may also be a good opportunity to screen for other disease too, such as antibodies to liver fluke - this can help assess the burden on young animals and inform fluke control strategies in cattle on your farm. Milk samples for disease surveillance are also very handy in dairy herds, and can be used to assess cohorts of animals, such as the exposure to fluke of heifers after they have grazed for the summer.

Annual 'Action Johnes' disease declarations are also due by the end of December, for those who's dairy processor requires this. Testing of at least 30 animals needs to have been done within the last twelve months also, to allow us to review your Johnes control health plan and sign the declaration.

Oh, and Happy Christmas for when the time comes!

Richard Knight



Starlings



European starlings are abundant at this time of year, and are frequently found in close association with human development and agriculture.

The ability of starlings to carry and disperse pathogens of humans and domesticated livestock has received considerable attention, including studies of bacteria that cause diarrhoea, viruses, and some fungi.

Surveys of wild starlings frequently reveal a variety of *E. coli* strains, including pathogenic ones, salmonella and campylobacter. For example it has been shown that up to about 25% of starlings may carry *E. Coli* 0157.

As starlings often come into cattle housing for shelter and to eat cattle food, it follows that they can play a role in infecting cattle. In particular, night roosting aggregations can increase the incidence of transmission. The most likely mode of transmission is contamination of livestock feed and water from starling faeces. Starlings also selectively pick out high protein maize kernels to feed on from cattle feed and subsequently reduce the quality.



Starlings are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the provision to control starlings under a general licence was removed from the Act in 2005. This means it can be really difficult to control the populations that land on your farm.

This farmer's weekly article outlines methods that may be effective. <https://www.fwi.co.uk/livestock/livestock-feed-nutrition/options-to-protect-cattle-feed-from-starlings-in-the-autumn>

Rebecca Howard

Sheep news



Scanning time! - so now is the time of year we get to see how well the rams have worked and how busy the spring is likely to be. Poor scanning results can be caused by infections like Toxoplasmosis, Enzootic abortion and Border disease or mineral deficiencies, ewe condition around tupping time, parasitism and ram fertility. If your scanning results are disappointing please contact us to look at the possibilities so we can prevent any issues that might go on and affect your lambing results.

Scanning is also an important time to assess ewe condition and see whether ewes need to gain, lose or hold condition. AHDB work has shown how important ewe condition at scanning time is in terms of weight of lambs reared to weaning. It even has an impact on fertility at the subsequent tupping time.

Now is also a good time to get your forage analysed to see what you have got to work with this year. Our flock health club met last week and, as part of the wide ranging discussion, we looked at analyses of some of the member's haylages. Energy levels ranged from 9.3 to 10.6 MJME/kg DM, a variation that could have a massive impact on ewe performance and condition score over late pregnancy and into early lactation. In addition protein levels varied widely from 10.8 to 15.2%. Protein intakes can impact milk and colostrum production and ewes in late pregnancy ideally need a minimum protein level of 16% over their whole diet. With low protein haylages this can be difficult to achieve. Failure to do so can then severely affect lamb survival and performance. Poor D values hit the ewes with a 'double whammy' as lower energy levels are made worse by poorer intakes of these less digestible forages as they approach lambing. This is just when we need to pack as much energy as we can into ewes as space gets tight in their abdomens!



Just back from the Sheep Breeders Roundtable, I also wanted to discuss some of the current research work looking at how sheep farms can reduce their methane emissions per kg of meat produced. There is lots of very fancy work being done measuring methane emissions on different diets and looking at feed intakes and efficiency of growth – much of this although interesting academically is unlikely to impact farms in the near future. The biggest impacts on farms at present would be made by reducing losses due to disease and parasitism. There are also some interesting results and relevant work on hill farms in Wales looking at the massive range in ewe efficiency as measured by kgs of lambs produced per kg of ewe bodyweight. This ranged from 14kg to 66kg of lamb per ewe at weaning and it is easy to see how culling out less efficient ewes could make a big impact. Anyway lots of food for thought! *Judith Lee*