

A partial goodbye to Matt

"Most of you will have heard by now that I've decided to move back to Northumberland to take a more active role at the family farm. It's been a great 8.5 years at Wright & Morten and you have all been brilliant to work with. Whilst I won't be around day to day, I won't be completely disappearing and I'll be sure to catch up with many of you in the future. Over the last few years I've completed my Certificate of Advanced Veterinary Practice in Sheep and joined the NSA's Register of Sheep Advisers. Both have allowed me to build on my knowledge to cover more than the veterinary aspects of sheep farming. To build on the services the practice can offer, I will be staying on and coming back once a month to provide a sheep advisory service. The focus of this service will be efficiency and productivity of the sheep farming business. Every farm will differ in their priorities and aims, but getting to those efficiently is, at the end of the day, how we make money. Whether it's grazing management, parasite control, integrating stock with subsidies, or anything else you can think of, we're here for advice and help."

We are all really sad to see Matt disappear from the day to day Wright and Morten team but are very happy he has decided to stay on in an advisory role. We can't wait to welcome Matt and his brownie's back to the office soon!

Welcoming Mel

With Matt leaving we are very lucky to be welcoming Mel Bexon to the team as Senior Vet! Read on to find out more about her! We look forward to welcoming Mel to Wright & Morten later this month.

"I'm Mel and I'm very excited to be joining the team at Wright and Morten! I graduated from Nottingham in 2016 and worked two years in a mixed practice in Staffordshire, before deciding farm was the only option for me and have worked in Derbyshire for the last six years. I enjoy all aspects of farm practice but have a keen interest in anything sheep and am currently one module away from completing my certificate in sheep health and production. At home I spend most of my time helping out on my partner's sheep and beef farm or am busy knitting or crocheting something. I'm really looking forward to meeting you all soon!"



Crufts Hero of the Year

One of our clients, Niamh Darcy, and her search and rescue dog, Vesper, have been nominated for Crufts Hero Dog of the Year. We would love to see this very well deserving pair get plenty of votes so please follow the link to vote for them! Read more about their story below:

"Please vote for them if you'd like too! You can vote at <https://crufts.org.uk/whats-on/the-kennel-club-hero-dog-award/?fbclid=IwAR1PMzbAYjdZRgp5cFhf0zNKnSyqss77WnBDUmHOtpDaN9tyswy0FZ21J6M> or search for Kennel Club Hero Dog Award to be taken to the voting page.

"Vesper, originally named Venom, a four-year-old Belgian Malinois, was deemed unsuitable to become a police dog. While she excelled in all other aspects, running at criminals for a cuddle is not the expectation of a police dog!

Niamh Darcy, a dog handler from Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, took a chance on Vesper in 2020 when she was 18 months old. After a 48 hour trial under arduous selection conditions, Vesper performed flawlessly and their bond as a team was solid - and Vesper joined Niamh as her canine search partner. They went from strength to strength, achieving their qualified status as a search team; an asset available to be mobilised to searches of structural collapse across the UK. In 2023, Niamh and Vesper were part of the chosen UK International Search and Rescue Team and were deployed by the Government to aid in the rescue mission following the horrific earthquakes in both Turkey and Morocco, where they worked tirelessly to locate survivors.

Vesper quickly became an integral part of this brave and dedicated team, working around the clock, using her nose to locate survivors trapped under the rubble.

Lambing course

Well done to the seven participants on our 2024 lambing course! They all had a go at lambing sheep using our simulator, using rubber rings to castrate and tail dock lambs, stomach tube colostrum & do glucose injections. These are all crucial skills around lambing time and everyone did a great job and has left more confident to tackle the upcoming season.

If you are interested in another course this week give us a call on 01477 571000 to register your interest.

Accounts reminder

Thank you to all those who meet our payment terms for monthly invoicing it is much appreciated. We would like to remind everyone that all invoices issued are due for payment within 28 days. If you are unable to meet these payment terms then we would ask that you contact the office to discuss this with us as early as possible.

From next month we will be trialling text message reminders for overdue accounts - these will come through to your mobile phone from W&M Vets and will include a link to pay your invoice online. We are letting all clients know about this change so that you know that the message has legitimately come from us and isn't a phishing scam.

Thank you for working with us and if you do have any feedback then please contact Hollie Edwards on 07733 121545 or by email to hollieedwards@wmvets.co.uk

New website on the way!

We are currently updating our website and would love to include reviews and testimonials from current clients. These can be as long or as short as you like, telling us why you would recommend Wright and Morten Farm Vets. If you would like to submit a review then these can be sent to Hollie Edwards at hollieedwards@wmvets.co.uk or via WhatsApp to 07733 121545. Thank you in advance for your help!

TB meeting success

On Wednesday 28th February we ran another very successful TB meeting with over 50 farmers attending. We discussed the plans going forward now that the cull is ending and had a good amount of healthy debate regarding how the TB situation is being handled. Thank you to our speakers Zara Gerrard & David Brown from DEFRA, Elaine Alexander from the Cheshire Badger Vaccination Project and Ray Brown from Bidlea Dairy and a huge thank you to Nixons for the fabulous hotpot!

We hope everyone took something away from the meeting and we are more than happy to answer any questions that may have arisen.





Abortions in cattle and sheep

With the start of the 2024 lambing and calving season we wanted to focus on abortions in cattle and sheep. What causes them, when to contact the vet and what can be done in the middle of an outbreak or to prevent future abortions. It is a complicated topic with a whole range of causes both infectious and non-infectious in both species.

What causes abortions?

Infectious causes are definitely seen the most often across both species with the main causes changing slightly year on year but in sheep it seems to be fairly stable with enzootic abortion, toxoplasmosis and campylobacter being the main issues. Depending on the year Schmallenberg can have a large impact too as is the case this year! Non-infectious causes can be much harder to pinpoint but certainly should not be overlooked.

Causes of abortion – most common in England in 2023		
Non-infectious	Trauma & stress to dam	
	Pyrexia	
	Twins (in cattle)	
	Iodine deficiency	
	Plant toxicities	
	Genetic mutations	
Infectious	Cattle	Sheep
	Salmonella species	Campylobacter species
	Trueperella pyogenes	Toxoplasma gondii
	Neospora caninum (Protozoa)	Chlamydia abortus (Enzootic Abortion)
	Bacillus licheniformis	Listeria species
	Fungi (e.g. Aspergillus species)	Salmonella species
	Listeria monocytogenes	Trueperella pyogenes
	Bovine Viral Diarrhoea virus	Yersinia species
	E. coli	Bacillus licheniformis
	Q Fever	Fungi
	Campylobacter species	
	IBR	

What we will need from you

It is always worth having a detailed discussion with your vet prior to having a visit as this will help to narrow down potential causes. The type of information we will normally request is:

- Age of dam
- Expected calving date
- Date of first abortion (and dates of any others)
- Total number of normal calvings this season/ last few months
- Whether the animals are housed or at grass
- What ration/diet is being fed and whether any changes have occurred
- If there is any signs of illness in the dams/other animals
- Vaccination history and abortion history
- Recent additions to the herd/flock
- Expected lambing / calving date
- Total number of normal lambings / calvings.

It is important to keep the placenta and foetus protected so that we can get the best samples possible to send off. This can easily be done by placing them inside old feed bags and ensuring they are kept away from other animals (including badgers) if being kept overnight. These should be as fresh as possible as well so please ring us as soon as you notice abortions happening. Sometimes we will blood sample the dam to assess her immunity as well. Results can take a few weeks to come back which is why it is so important to call us early in large abortion outbreaks. Unfortunately we don't always get to the bottom of why a cow has aborted but by sampling we can rule out a lot of potentially large issues within the herd.



When to investigate?

Often clients choose not to investigate every case of abortion but it is still worth discussing with your vet to see if there are any obvious causes. It is extremely important to keep good records as if abortions reach too high a level (usually over 2%) it is advised to start investigations. We may decide to start investigations sooner if there is an abortion storm or if the dams are extremely unwell with the abortions. Brucellosis is a notifiable disease meaning all cases of abortion should be reported to APHA to continue UK wide surveillance. APHA will not always require testing but it will depend on their decision making tree. The UK has been officially Brucellosis free since 1985 so it is important for us to continue to keep it that way. If testing is required by APHA they will cover the vet visit, time and lab fees.

Schmallenberg survey

Nottingham University have launched a survey to better understand the impact and scale of the Schmallenberg outbreak to hopefully help farmers better prepare in future potential outbreak years. Holdings that have seen Schmallenberg may be at an increased risk of seeing bluetongue virus due to the spread for both diseases being via midges.

The survey which is to be completed by farmers can be accessed at <https://forms.office.com/e/9wpX6iEydv> or via the QR code.



What samples we will take

Sample required	What it tests for
Placenta with cotyledons	Bacterial culture
Foetal stomach fluid	Bacterial culture
Foetal liver/lung	Bacterial culture
Foetal thoracic fluid	Neospora/BVD (cattle)
Thymus	BVD (cattle)
Thyroid glands	Iodine deficiency
Kidney	Leptospirosis
Spleen	
Heart	Neospora (cattle)
Brain/brain stem	Schmallenberg/listeria

FARM OFFICES Lower Withington

The Barn, Holly Tree Farm, Holmes Chapel Road, Lower Withington, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 9DT

Tel: 01477 571900 Email: hollytree@wrmvets.co.uk

Whaley Bridge Farm Branch

Block B, Ringstones Industrial Estate, Whaley Bridge, High Peak, Derbyshire, SK23 7PD

Tel: 01663 732564

Like us on Facebook for up-to-date news and the latest events! Search 'Wright & Morten Farm Animal Services'

