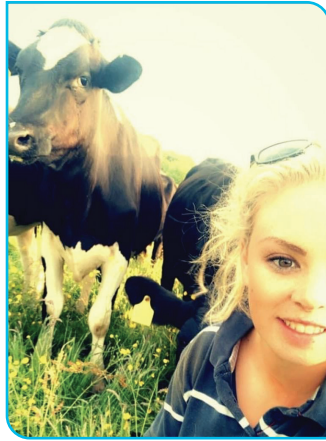


Welcome to Emily!

A big welcome goes to Emily who is starting with us this month as a new ATT (approved TB tester). This is the same role as Laura for those who know her. Emily has been farming all her life (virtually growing up on her grandparents farm in Sutton) when she left school she went to reaseheath college completing a diploma in agriculture. After leaving college Emily has been a full time dairy farmer and has a (very) mini herd of dairy shorthorns and is very passionate about the breed. She also has her own flock of 180 texel sheep and 3 sheep dogs (Nel, Ted and pip). We hope you will all extend a very warm welcome to Emily when you meet her.



Red tractor updates for medicines use

From January 2024 Red Tractor will require farms to upload medicines data onto the AHDB medicines hub. This applies to dairy and beef/sheep Red Tractor approved farms and has already been added as a recommendation ahead of the full rollout. The reason this standard is coming into effect is to allow us as an industry to have a better overall understanding of how much antibiotic is being used and which ones are being used. The online system allows everything to be collated in one place for anonymised data collection to occur.

For those who are not yet familiar with the medicines hub it is a system designed by AHDB and is able to be used either in place of your traditional medicines records book or as a place to collate all medicines purchased for the farm. Farmers and vets are able to upload and see the data provided the correct permissions are granted.



This means we can help you to get prepared for your Red Tractor inspections by uploading data directly on your behalf. For those who prefer electronic medicines records books anyway this will provide a great solution to combine multiple requirements.

Getting started is very simple with some great guides on the AHDB website under the medicine hub section. Registration will allow you to set up a new enterprise and allow you to manage enterprises if multiple are created (ie beef and sheep). Before starting you will need:

- Your CPH number
- Herd/flock number
- CTS ID and password if using for cattle
- Details of medicines used in the last year – this is a section that can be completed by us
- Animal population numbers

Vet permissions can be granted in the third party permissions section and can be edited or revoked at any time. Vets can be allowed to view, view and enter or view, enter and submit depending on your preferences. We can help you to benchmark your farm against other similar enterprises as well.

MEDICINE + HUB

Flystrike warning



Over the past month or so we have attended multiple flystrike cases in sheep. It is important to remember that despite the cooler temperature we have experienced this summer, the warm and wet weather has provided prime conditions for flystrike to develop. Checking sheep daily for signs of irritation and regularly applying fly products will help to minimise any risk of flystrike in your flock.

Start thinking about pneumonia

Some of you may have been experiencing issues with pneumonia earlier in the season than expected with the very changeable weather we have been having. For those who normally only vaccinate against pneumonia in winter, September is a good time to start considering it. Keep a close eye on long term forecasts and don't forget night time temperatures can have a huge impact.



We are now able to offer a calf lung scanning service as well. Scanning a few calves lungs whilst vets are on farm for other reasons can help to identify whether you are suffering from subclinical pneumonia already. The procedure only takes a couple of minutes per calf and can help greatly in stopping widespread outbreaks and allowing treatment at the earliest possible stage. If you have a surplus of heifer calves and are thinking about breeding decisions, using lung scanning can add to your decision making process. Calves with damaged lungs will not grow as quickly and will be more prone to pneumonia as older animals, so may not make the best breeding stock. Give us a call at the practice if you want to discuss monitoring your calves in this way.

How to approach gutworms in lambs

Worming lambs used to be something done by the dates on a calendar, weeks of the year, and even phases of the moon. Luckily, we now have a fairly detailed understanding of the lifecycle of each worm species and some pretty handy diagnostic tests to enable us to only treat when required.

We're sure many of you can remember conversations with vets in the last 15-20 years where you were recommended to 'dose and move', amongst other strategies. We now know that strategies involving whole-group treatment and moving to 'clean' pasture are terrible from a resistance perspective. Anthelmintic Resistance (AR) is something that we absolutely do see on a regular basis now, with multi-resistant worms present on many farms. To put it bluntly, we simply can't continue to use wormers as broadly and frequently as many farms still are, or we could end up in a very unpleasant situation where the ability to keep sheep is compromised. You may have seen in the farming press and heard from the vets the phrase, 'Test, Don't Guess'. This is an initiative trying to encourage the uptake of faecal egg counts (FECs). In a nutshell, it aims to get you to think – Do I actually need to worm those lambs? Just because you have always wormed them the week before weaning, or when shearing, how do you know you actually need to treat then?



Faecal egg counting, whilst an extra job to do, requires very little input and if done at the right time – can actually save you money in a number of ways. On one hand, the lambs may not need treating – that's the easy way because you don't need to spend time gathering and treating them. The other way is less visible. If you utilise FECs regularly to monitor a worm burden in a group of lambs, you will almost certainly pick up a burden requiring treatment before lambs present with mucky backsides. In those few days you might gain by treating earlier, you reduce the number of days lambs spend at less than ideal growth rates, or worse still, losing weight.

This summer we have transitioned to FECPAK, an automated, cloud-based FEC package which has allowed us to get a standardised process and more accurate results. We also gain the advantage of collecting some useful data. Provided you give us the relevant info when submitting samples, we will be able to record FEC results against groups of lambs and field ID. In the long term, as we build monitoring samples, we can gain an insight into which groups have suffered most (has the fastest increase in FEC), and which field parcels appear to have the highest levels on the ground. This can help implement management changes to avoid the exposure of susceptible lambs to high-risk fields.

To get the best value for money from your FECs, we need a good quality sample. Unfortunately, we can't give you a lot of information without some key bits from you at the time of submission – some examples being: species, age, worming history, reason for sampling. We also can't give you solid evidence-based advice if we don't have representative samples. The absolute gold-standard sampling would be to collect 15-25 samples from 15-25 lambs into individual zip-lock bags. We know that is a lot to ask. FECPAK uses a more user-friendly approach which generates a very similar sample quality, but with less faff. The sampling kits include a spoon, and a bag. Essentially, we need 1 level spoon full, per lamb. Samples should be taken from 15-25 FRESH lamb droppings – generally, if it's warm to touch, it's fresh. These all go into the same bag, but as each lamb contributes the same amount of muck (1 level spoon full), the sample isn't skewed towards any individual. All the air then needs removed from the bag, before bringing straight to us, or refrigerating until you can if not possible straight away. In no circumstances should animals of mixed ages be contained in the same sample and the same goes for mixing different groups. A group of lambs in one field could have a dramatically different count to those in the next



Give any of the vets a call and we can help formulate a plan for approaching monitoring and control worm burdens in sheep and cattle. This is likely to include some recommendations for avoiding infection, managing pasture burdens and how infections can be monitored successfully to ensure the correct treatments are given at the right time.



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