

At last month's South Sheep Event in Wiltshire, Alex Olphert, who is also an NSA Next Generation Ambassador, won the Shepherd of the Future competition. Contestants had to compete in tasks like quadbike riding, grading lambs, electric fencing (plenty of practice at home!), shearing and a written test on flock management and health issues. He will now go on to the national finals in July for which we wish him the best of luck. At the same event he came with 4<sup>th</sup> place in the Clean Shear Competition, but again he has had plenty of practice of this at home! You are probably well aware of the existence of two newer worming drench groups (4-AD orange and 5-SI purple). To avoid creating re-

sistance to these anthelmintics we need to be careful when using them. Appropriate use would be as a quarantine drench to clear bought-in animals of any resistant worms, and of course when resistance to the other three groups (white, yellow and clear) is present. However by using the newer groups once a year as a mid-season drench this can delay the build up of resistance to other groups. If lambs are dosed within a month of weaning, worms will be killed that have survived previous doses of other wormer groups. Please speak to one of the vets to discuss sustainable parasite control on your farm. *Maarten*

#### Dry cow therapy—good technique is important (Amy)

The dry period is an important period where a cow can rest and recover from infections picked up in the previous lactation. However it is also a high risk time for picking up new infections if the process is not managed correctly. For those of you using selective dry cow therapy and therefore only using teat sealant in some animals, then your dry off technique must be excellent to avoid problems after treatment.

Some pointers to follow in order to prevent introducing bacteria into the teat at dry off:

Cows should be dried-off abruptly when they are producing less than 15 litres.

Cows must be removed from the milking herd so that they do not experience the milk let-down stimuli.

Clean disposable gloves should be worn and kept clean.

Clean towels/wipes/cotton wool must be used for wiping and drying.

There are different methods out there for how to correctly disinfect teats and insert tubes, but one I have used many times and am confident works well is as follows:

Firstly mark the animal to be treated prior to doing anything (eg tail tape, red paint etc)

Choose a teat order which you will repeat for every cow however this must start with the furthest away teats being done first. Eg FL, FR, BL, BR

Each teat will be cleaned and have the required tubes inserted all in one go without ever letting go of that teat until the final tube is inserted.

For the first teat, support it with one hand and then repeatedly clean the teat end with fresh cotton wool soaked in surgical spirit until the cotton wool comes away completely clean.

Then, without letting go of the teat, insert the tip of your tube into the teat. **Only 1-2mm needs to be inserted**, anymore will damage/widen the teat canal leaving it susceptible to bacteria entering. Once you have squeezed in the tube, if it is antibiotic, massage the contents up the teat canal.

If you are using teat seal as well you can immediately insert this. If there has been any risk of contamination between the tubes then re-clean the end with the cotton wool. Teat seal must not be massaged up the teat, you can hold the teat base when inserting to prevent teat seal going into the udder.

After all 4 teats have been treated thoroughly post dip them all, then stand the cows in a clean, dry area for 30 minutes before moving. Cows should be kept away from milking cow areas so they do not experience let down stimuli.

Remember it is not appropriate to administer dry cow antibiotic to individual quarters that were dried off during lactation (eg '3-teaters') as this may result in antibiotic residues when they come in to milk.

#### Tupping preparation (Amy)

Don't forget to get your Ram MOT's booked in and vasectomies done if you need more teasers this year. Teasers must be vasectomised at least 6 weeks ahead of use to ensure they are infertile when you put them out.

The ram is the most important member of the flock, yet often the most neglected. Each ram should manage to get 85% of a group of 60 ewes in lamb in the first 17 day cycle. When the rams are removed after 6 weeks your empty rate should be less than 2%. If they are not achieving this then you should have a think why this might be. Rams need to be good condition at the start of tupping (score 3-4) because they will likely lose 15% body fat during tupping. They should be started on the diet that they will be consuming during breeding 2 to 4 weeks prior to breeding and be included in the flock vaccination program. Ideally Ram MOT's should be part of all flock health plans. This is where we clinically examine rams and also measure and visually examine external genitalia. In some circumstances semen assessment may also be appropriate by electroejaculation.

Bluetongue vaccine should be available from mid-July. We recommend you vaccinate your rams because if they get bluetongue the impact could be large. Please do bear in mind that the safety and efficacy of this vaccine has not been established in breeding males, therefore if you are vaccinating please do it at least 6 weeks prior to tupping.



## NOTICE BOARD

**THE LIVESTOCK PARTNERSHIP**  
SUCCESS THROUGH HEALTH  
the liVeStock  
partnership Ltd  
Market Square,  
Petworth

Tel: 01798 343538

### Name Change!!

Sally has now officially changed her name!! So if you don't recognise a Mrs Sally Baker contacting you it is the former Miss Munday!

### BVD free england (Amy)

BVD is estimated to cost the UK cattle industry £50M each year. Losses are associated with reproductive disorders and PI animals, and also outbreaks of BVDV simultaneously with other infections. BVD is a notifiable disease in nine European countries, Scotland has an eradication program and the Netherlands plan to launch a compulsory control program in 2017. The OIE (world organisation for animal health) lists BVD as a priority disease in terms of trade. 70 plus organisations (some of which include AHDB, NFU, BCVA, Holstein UK, LLA and NBA) have now signed the BVD statement of intent to back the eradication of BVD from our national cattle herd. There are numerous schemes already in place in the UK to monitor and control BVD and the majority follow CHECS principles. This is a sound base from which to build BVD Free. The launch is set to take place on 1<sup>st</sup> July this year. The core of the scheme is the BVDFree charter, which is the terms and conditions of membership to BVDFree. It requires members to actively engage in BVD control to eliminate this disease from their herd. By working together we can achieve much more in the longer term and it should reduce costs associated with prevention of this disease in the future. Members also commit:

- To report all BVD testing results from their herd to the national database
- To allow herd status and/or individual animal statuses to be openly available through the BVDFree database (without any specific details of farm name or keepers name shown)
- Not to move Persistently Infected (PI) animals anywhere other than directly to slaughter (or directly through a red meat slaughter market)

There is mutual recognition of the scheme throughout England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland. It should mean if you are looking at an animal at market you will be able to look up its BVD status on your phone by typing in its number. Unless you are already accredited free it will take 2 years for your herd to have BVDFree herd status on the scheme.

There have been limited funds to set this program up. Therefore to upload results initially will be FREE until 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016 but after this there will be a fee for the data handling of 25p/test for antigen and 50p/test for antibody results. It is a program owned and run by farmers. Please do involve yourself in this and help our country eradicate BVD as it will benefit everyone in the end. If you already have screening results for BVD then sign up now and get your results on the database ASAP. If you would like more information on controlling BVD on your farm please do contact us and we will be only too happy to help.

### Photosensitisation (Sally)

Photosensitisation is a condition we see at this time of year mainly in cattle but it can affect sheep and horses. It classically presents as thickening and peeling of the white areas of skin but will often start with reddening of the skin and irritation of the udder, face and ears and occasionally swelling around the face before crusting and plaque formation and skin peeling.

There are two causes 1) Ingestion of plants containing photodynamic agents such as St John's Wort, some clovers 2) Liver damage/bile duct damage (abscess, liver fluke, toxins)

Diagnosis is generally based on clinical signs and blood tests can be used to check liver function. Treatment is generally supportive – The affected animal must be housed and kept away from sunlight and if they are housed as soon as the first signs are noticed the level of damage to the skin can be reduced. The use of NSAIDs may be helpful in the early stages and topical treatments if the skin becomes sore where it is peeling off.



*Started as irritation and reddening of the skin on the udder only – progressed to all white areas forming plaques and peeling.*



It is frequently only single animals affected but checking pasture for possible toxic plants is advisable. Prognosis is normally favourable, skin lesions clear up but this can take a few months. Liver damage needs to be assessed as to the cause of the damage (eg liver fluke, abscess) to determine likely prognosis.