

Well what a difference a year makes: The Beast from the East 2018 seems like a very distant memory in this unseasonal but very welcome sunshine and warmer temperatures. Time will tell if we're being lulled into a false sense of security and hope for a glorious spring but fingers crossed it's the real deal.

On the topic of new spring life, we're delighted to share Claire and Jo's wonderful news of the safe arrival of Beatrix ("Trixie") Isla Jane Walker. In typical textbook Claire fashion, Trixie arrived at 3.30am and was home a few hours later in time to meet her two older brothers over breakfast. We look forward to meeting the newest addition to the Walker clan soon.

You'll remember that for Christmas the practice donated £750 a piece to both the Macmillan Cancer Support group and The Farming Community Network (FCN). Whilst you'll all be aware of the amazing work the Macmillan group do, FCN might not be so familiar. FCN is a voluntary organisation and charity that supports farmers and families within the farming community through difficult times. They have a network of over 400 volunteers across England and Wales, many of whom are involved in farming, or have close links with agriculture, and therefore have a great understanding of the issues farm workers and farming families regularly face. There is a confidential, national helpline (03000 111 999) and e-

helpline ([chris@fcn.org.uk](mailto:chris@fcn.org.uk)) which is open every day of the year from 7am-11pm through which their volunteers provide free, confidential, pastoral and practical support to anyone who seeks help, whether it be financial difficulties, animal disease, mental health or family disputes, for as long as it's needed. As a random bit of trivia the Welsh rugby referee Nigel Owens has been involved with FCN's mental health campaigns, speaking very candidly about his own personal experience of tackling mental illness in a small rural community (his desert island disc's podcast is well worth a listen- hankies at the ready).

(Laura)



A farm in Cornwall where Ben has been doing some Embryo Transfer

### BVD Stamp It Out (Megan)



The first of our BVD cluster meetings was a success with over 20 of you signing up. We enjoyed a tasty lunch at The Cricketers before learning about BVD. Many of you have now undergone your first on farm meetings and done some testing. It has been great to have a catch up with you much like we do when we sit down and do herd health planning. I have enjoyed hearing about where you aim to be in terms of BVD control and eradication over the coming months and the initiative provides the tools to enable us to do this with you. We

have managed to attain some more funding to sign up more farms so if you think this project is for you then do please get in touch with me. Once you have had your first on farm meeting and received the test results it's time for your next on farm meeting where we discuss the plan going forward with the results of the tests in mind. I am very much looking forward to the final cluster meeting in the Autumn where we compare notes and see how far we have come! So, keep up the good work, get your meetings booked in and let's "Break free from BVD!"

### To everyone at The Livestock Partnership Ltd, we can't say thank you enough (Macmillan Cancer Support)

Thank you so much for supporting the work we do at Macmillan Cancer Support! Thank you for raising a fantastic £750.00 for us in lieu of sending Christmas gifts to your clients. We really are very grateful to everybody at Livestock for your dedication, time and enthusiasm you've collectively put in to fundraising for us. It is thanks to your generosity and support that we'll be able to reach more people living with cancer in the UK.



£750.00, for example, could help our Lead Volunteer Services to support one person living with cancer for approximately 12 weeks. Our Lead Volunteer Services are volunteer-led schemes which help people and families affected by cancer with their emotional and practical support needs. Volunteers help in a variety of ways - from one-off support through gardening, clothes, wig banks or signposting to other cancer support services, to regular befriending or buddying. They can also help with other tasks, such as shopping or travelling to and from hospital. Thanks again for being such an important part of the Macmillan team. Without your help, we wouldn't be able to keep providing our vital services. Together we are all Macmillan Cancer Support.

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SUCCESS THROUGH HEALTH

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### Thank you on behalf of The Farming Community Network

On behalf of The Farming Community Network, I am writing to express our gratitude to all at The Livestock Partnership, for kindly supporting FCN with a wonderful donation of £750, collected in lieu of Christmas gifts for your clients. It is so kind of you to support our work in this way, please do pass on our sincere thanks to all concerned.

It is also reassuring to us that you chose FCN to be a beneficiary of your fundraising, as it gives us confidence that we are beginning to further increase awareness, both of the issues that are impacting our farming community and also of the support which is available. However, this would not be possible were it not for the generosity of people such as yourselves. With renewed thanks and good wishes from us all.

**FCN**  
THE FARMING  
COMMUNITY  
NETWORK

### Spastic paresis (Claire)

**Congratulations to Claire on becoming a Mum once again. We can't wait to meet baby Trixie. Here is Claire in action just before she went on maternity leave.**



Spastic paresis (or Elso heel) is a progressive condition in one or both of the hind limbs in cattle, that is due to increased muscular tone of the gastrocnemius muscle due to over stimulation from the nerve. There is a hereditary component to this disease and it is normally seen in calves between 2 and 9 months old. The back leg or legs affected appear over extended or very straight, and sometimes the tail head can be raised. The animal appears stiff, but the leg can be bent with no pain. The animal often spends increased periods lying down and growth rates may be affected subsequently. Due to the hereditary component these animals should not be bred from. To improve quality of life and potentially improve growth rates the only treatment choice is surgery. There are two options; to cut the nerve or cut the tendon to improve the animal's gait. This is done under an anaesthetic. If the animal is suffering both sides then both legs will need



### Cattle Foot First Aid Course (Ben)



Four of our younger herdspeople came on the most recent Foot First Aid course this month. Foot trimming is a tricky thing. The best trimmers use a blend of experience and the latest techniques and research to do a good job and need to practice a lot to get good. Ideally, everyone would go on a 4-day trimming course, and then spend loads of time trimming but practically there are also other priorities for training. With our Foot First Aid course we aim to give those people that have limited experience with footcare the confidence to examine the feet of lame cows. In part the course is designed to allow people to recognise the limitations of their skills and understand the risks of bad trimming, but also it is vitally important to realise that prompt attention for lame cows can make an enormous difference and can massively reduce the long term impact of a case of lameness. If you want any

of your less experienced members of staff to get more competent with feet then please drop me a line and once we have enough interested we will run another one.

### Flock Health Club Lamb Post Mortem Meeting (Sarah)

We held our first flock health club meeting of the year last week on how to know where your lambing losses are coming from by looking at lamb post mortems. Thank you to all who attended, and for the help and permission of all the team at Hawkins for making it such a good meeting. It was a really good chance to demonstrate why some of the advice and best practice we all strive to follow is so important. We could physically see the tiny 'starter packs' of brown fat that lambs are born with and enables them to keep warm and get up and find their all important colostrum. Hopefully it inspired some members to have a look as to where their lambs are being lost, and train up their armies of vet students to get involved with this too. To think this time last year, we were battling *The Beast from the East* and this year we are basking in record breaking temperatures! I really hope March is a kind month to all of you about to start lambing your flocks. Please don't be afraid to pick up the phone if things seem to not be going to plan, or you just want advice at any time. Good luck!