

### Happy New Year!

So sit tight here goes my reflections on the year, and what I think is the most important things to set our sights on in 2019.

I was lucky enough to travel around much of our little island last year on the quest to increase my veterinary knowledge and skill set (plus take holiday as I hate flying so it works well!). I got stranded in Edinburgh on the Bull fertility course in the 'beast from the east'; drove through Wales to Aberystwyth for the Sheep Veterinary Society conference (it was the driest spring conditions they had experienced on the Innovis farms) and visited the Dales for the AHDB Beef Expertise course; where they are still managing the feed shortages caused by our heatwave summer. This made me appreciate the diversity of our landscapes, communities and farming systems. The struggles of the upland hill farmer may be different to those of us living in the lush lowlands; but we all face challenges, and increasing uncertainty. Meeting vets that work in different areas made me realise how lucky we are to have clients who I believe to be some of the best educated and willing to work with us in a partnership that aims to benefit all. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we came together, as country of farmers and worked to achieve a nation of world class beef, dairy and lamb production; with animal health as one of the key pillars to this? In the press are continual references to 'global food production', 'global trade', and being a 'global leader'; these seem impossible ambitions if we cannot co-

ordinate disease control and best farming practice at the national level. The BVD free initiative is again trying to get a concerted country wide effort to get on top of a disease that can easily be controlled and eradicated. Other countries have tackled the big infectious diseases proving it can be done and we know the benefits it would bring across industry to cattle health and production. Our welfare standards are often cited as being some of the highest in the world, but the health status has perhaps taken a back seat. We know health and welfare go hand in hand, and it is our job as vets to try and make sure we work with you to educate and motivate you to ensure animal health in this country becomes something else that we can say is 'proudly British' with recognised value to the audiences we need to engage with. I think our practice has a head start on this with clients like you all, let's see what other challenges 2019 will bring for us all! **Sarah**



### Antibiotics are not the devil



Image from google

Thank you to everyone who attended the sheep, beef or dairy medicine masterclasses we ran last year. The meetings were a great success and initiated a lot of chatter in the room.

We want to be clear that whilst we are committed to reducing, replacing and refining antibiotic use within the practice; antibiotics are not the devil. They have their place and at no point do we want to discourage their targeted use at the expense of animal welfare. Focus on reducing the need for them in the first place with good management. In many cases the use of an antibiotic can be replaced with an anti-inflammatory or a vaccine but at times antibiotics are what is needed. The following motto rings true 'As little as possible but as much as necessary'. **Megan**

### BVD Stamp It Out meeting in January

Who should attend?

Farms who do nothing for BVD; farms who wish to claim back some of the money for their annual CheCS accreditation testing; farms who have done some BVD testing within 6 months of 24th January 2019.

The first BVD cluster meeting will be 1pm to 4pm 24th January at The Cricketers in Duncton, near Petworth with myself and Maarten. Hot lunch provided. The meeting will outline the disease, its costs both nationally and at farm level, and what sort of control strategies farmers can implement. The meeting will outline what we as vets can deliver for you; including how much testing budget is available. Please contact Megan to book your place— 20 places available ONLY— first come first served.

[megan@livestockvets.co.uk](mailto:megan@livestockvets.co.uk)

To gain access to the money available for testing and the visits to discuss risks on your own farm you must attend this meeting and sign the paperwork. Please have your CPH and SBI number to hand. Once you have attended the meeting you will qualify for 2 one to one farm visits, some testing and a final group meeting — all paid for. We look forward to seeing you. **Megan**



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### Charity donations

For Christmas 2018 we donated money to MacMillan Cancer Support and The Farming Community Network. Thank you for being great clients to work with. Here's to another year!

### Caption competition

Send your amusing captions to [megan@livestockvets.co.uk](mailto:megan@livestockvets.co.uk) and we will print the winning caption in next month's newsletter



### Private Interferon-Gamma (IFNG) Blood TB testing



Image from google

We have recently acquired a special temperature-controlled box which enables us to offer private gamma testing as an additional option for clients seeking assurance as to the TB-free status of their herd. The cost of the test is at the owner's own expense and still requires APHA approval prior to being carried out.

Private gamma testing can be used:

To supplement pre- or post-movement testing of animals that are not subject to, or have passed a compulsory skin test (e.g. post-movement test bought-in animals from high-risk

areas whilst still in quarantine). For rapid retesting of inconclusive skin test reactors (before or after the skin re-test) where no government funded IFNG blood test is planned (e.g. to be able to sell IR animals which would otherwise be committed to the holding for life). To screen animals joining high-value herds. As a marketing tool to add value to herds/animals intended for sale

Cattle **NOT** eligible for private gamma testing include reactors and other cattle awaiting slaughter for TB control purposes, cattle from TB breakdown herds undergoing government-funded gamma testing and herds under restrictions for overdue skin testing. It's important to note that despite the private nature of the test, if an animal tests positive the owner is obliged to comply with APHA regulations and the positive animal(s) will most likely be compulsorily slaughtered with compensation paid. The herd would be placed under movement restrictions and normal breakdown procedures followed. In specific circumstances some low-risk animals giving a positive result may be re-tested at government discretion and expense.

Costs for the test depends on the number of animals to be tested with lab prices varying from £15- £28 plus vet costs. Please don't hesitate to contact us for more information. **Laura**

### Sheep Flock Health group visit to ABP, Yetminster

11 members of the Sheep Flock Health group embarked on a "Live to Dead Day" run by ABP Yetminster in conjunction with MLC. On arrival we were given a very informative talk by Stephen from the MLC on lamb selection and grading. We were shown a selection of 10 live lambs for us to grade individually and estimate their dead weights. From there we were given a thorough guided tour of the abattoir from the lambs leaving the lairage, to the stunning and bleeding area; following the whole process through to the cutting plant. It was an extremely fascinating and interesting visit with an enormous amount of lambs being processed (430 -450 to an hour) very humanely and efficiently. We eventually caught up with our 10 lambs that had gone through to the cold store and we were then told what their actual grades and weights were and compared them to our own estimates. We would like to thank James Dickson from ABP for organising the day and giving us lunch. Please do get in contact if you are interested in attending another Live to Dead day as ABP are quite willing to re run it in 2019. **Lucie**

