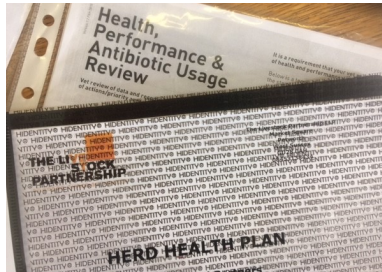


August went by quite uneventful. The welcome rain made sure that grass continued to grow nicely. However this fresh grass is a risk for the autumn calving herds as it can cause sub clinical milkfever that is a risk factor for slow calvings, retained afterbirths and endometritis. Apart from keeping them tight, adequate magnesium supplementation and even a barometer bale with long fibre all help to reduce the risk of milkfever.

In September we will see some changes in our team but more on that from Ben later in this newsletter. September is also used to update people's health plans. So if your annual review is

due please do not leave it until the day before the inspection to contact us as it is unlikely that we can do it at such short notice. **(Maarten)**



Laura's PhD project

After a very fun year at TLP, I'll be leaving at the beginning of September to start a PhD looking into Ovine Johne's disease. The project builds on preliminary work done by AHDB which Sarah presented at the Flock Health Club 'Iceberg Diseases' meeting last month and will hopefully provide some explanations to the Johne's questions asked by the audience, which as yet we don't have many answers to.

This preliminary work carried out on 50 farms showed that Johne's is present on at least 64% of commercial UK sheep farms and that infected flocks suffer a significant reduction in the longevity of the ewe flock. This data indicates the underestimated magnitude of the problem and the extent to which the disease has been overlooked in the UK due to its insidious subclinical nature and the tendency to attribute the subtle clinical signs to other common diseases.

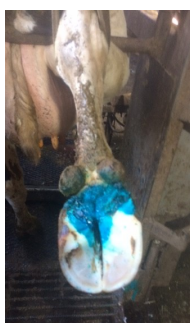
The PhD project aims to describe the true extent of the economic impact of the disease in UK sheep farming, looking at both ewe longevity and also lamb production efficiency and trying to identify management/husbandry risk factors that predispose to higher risk of infection. Understanding the prevalence and repercussions will help to predict the probable cost-benefit of using *Gudair*, the ovine Johne's vaccine.

We're also aiming to quantify the risk posed by cattle to sheep for Johne's infection and conversely quantify the risk of sheep as a reservoir source of infection for cattle herds engaged in Johne's control.

I'm hoping to recruit approximately 200 farms (both mixed cattle and sheep farms and sheep only farms) through AHDB and an open invitation through NSA and NBA. If any of you are potentially interested in getting involved and would like some further information, please feel free to contact me on 07764455628. **(Laura)**

Laura embarks on her PhD

We have been really lucky to have had Laura with us to cover Claire's maternity leave over the past year or so. With Claire returning this autumn Laura has taken up an opportunity to study for her PhD based at the University of Liverpool. She is studying certain aspects of Johnes disease in sheep and will be investigating the disease over the next 3 years. It has been great having Laura around in the practice in Claire's absence and we wish her all the best for the next stage in her career.



Foot First aid course

If you are keen on coming along or sending one of your staff on this course we will be running one on the Western side of the practice in September. Attendees will build up confidence in dealing with lame cows and learn the techniques to apply first aid measures to get cows walking better. Cost of the course is £75 and will run from 10-2pm. Please call the practice if you would like to book a place.

(Ben)

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Acorns



Image from Google

Beware those tasty acorn treats that cows and sheep get a taste for. Animals may look sunken eyed with an initial constipation followed by diarrhea. It tends to only be a few that develop a taste for them. Fence off areas where a lot of acorns fall to avoid it. *(Megan)*

Survey into Liver Fluke and potential resistance to treatments

The Liver Fluke research team at Liverpool University are doing a survey to better understand the awareness of liver fluke and the potential for resistance to treatments amongst the sheep farming industry. They believe the survey will be of great benefit in improving how information is provided for farmers in the future and for further research into the better control of liver fluke.

The link to the survey may be found here: <https://liverpool.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/national-sheep-association-liver-fluke-survey>. It will be open from the 19th August until 30th September, and should only take about 5 – 10 minutes.

Make the most of your Shearlings



With margins tighter than ever, we must make the most of every ewe and our ewe lambs/shearlings are often not considered enough in the lead up to tugging. Low bodyweight and poor condition delay cycling and onset of breeding season, particularly in ewe lambs. Liveweight determines the onset of puberty, so ewe lambs should be at 70% of their mature bodyweight by tugging. Eg Target weight for tugging = 70% of 70kg adult weight = 49kg. If you weigh a few of your ewes this will help you to get this more accurately for your own flocks.

So assuming an average 4kg birthweight, ewe lambs have to gain 45kg from birth to tugging at about 7 months of age. This means she has to gain an average of 215g/day to achieve this. Improved nutrition is needed for at least one cycle (2–3 weeks) prior to mating to influence ovaries to release more eggs. Ideal BCS for lowland ewes at tugging is 3.5.

If you are buying in your replacements they will need to enter your flock vaccination plan, and also hopefully go through your quarantine protocol that you should have as part of your flock health plan. *(Sarah)*

Abortion investigation



A 150 cow herd in Devon had some abortions also with calves born small and weak or dead. Samples were taken from the calf but tests for the usual causes of abortion were negative. The placenta was sent off and fungal abortion was diagnosed. After discussion with the vet it became clear that it was common for animals to be buffer fed in the summer with last years grass silage. This silage was looked at with the vet and it had mould on it. The unseasonably cool spring followed by the hot dry summer lead to poor quality forage production across the UK. These weather conditions may have been a contributing factor to this case and highlights the importance of giving the vet a clean fresh placenta with any abortion investigation and not feeding spoiled silage to cows in late pregnancy. *(Megan)*