

Here we are in January with all the festivities already behind us. Hey ho, we have passed Winter solstice and days are getting longer again. Onwards and upwards!

The prolonged wet weather is taking its toll as we are starting to see more and more environmental mastitis but also lameness so please keep up the footbath routine. We hope that soon the relentless rain will stop as it does affect dry matter intakes in sheep. In particular it can have an effect on pregnant ewes as it increases the risk of hypocalcaemia and later twin-lamb disease.

So please keep monitoring the body condition of ewes running up to lambing.

For some years we have sent Christmas cards and little presents to our clients as a way of saying thank you to them. This year we have decided to save some trees and not send cards but make a donation to a relevant charity. The two charities that we have chosen this year are the British Heart Foundation and The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (R.A.B.I).

*Maarten*

### Weight Watchers! (Sarah)

I seem to have come across a bit of a theme recently on farm. It involves the classic game of guess my patients weight! Or weight bingo, as many of you know I like to ask everyone in the vicinity of the patient I'm about to treat for their 'estimation'. Some of you, particularly those of you it would seem that select and send things for kill and own scales seem to be pretty confident and pretty accurate! I assume the kill sheets and seeing scales is calibrating you, and you are much more practised at making guesses. Then there are a lot of us who exclaim we have 'no idea' or trust my opinion entirely! A recently reported study quoted that it 'asked 15 farm vets in practices across South West England to estimate the average weight of a UK 'Holstein-Friesian milking cow', resulting in a range of 525–775 kg and a mean of 678 kg.'

This has always troubled me, and is something I think we should all be thinking more about. One of our dairies has recently gone to robots and the cows are now routinely weighed. Some of the biggest Holstein cows were around the 900kg mark!! Others more commonly around the 700kg. This is considerably heavier than our '600 kg average Holstein' weight many of us were working too! This is changing how cows are treated, and potentially even how rations are calculated more efficiently and targets for animal growth are made.

Weighing can give a great indicator to how animals at pasture are performing, if nutrition or parasites are hitting growth rates. It is also vital to know how big our adults cattle and sheep are so we can set targets for rearing our youngstock to ensure we are breeding from them at the optimum size. Another farmer told me he had weighed his 'chunky' shearlings and they were pushing 100kg?! I did ask if his scales needed calibrating! My point is that the more and more precise we are becoming in our farming practices, and more responsible in our use of drugs; weighing our livestock has got to become more common place. The technology is becoming cheaper, and many of you have fantastic crushes now; the best addition has got to be a set of scales to go with them?!

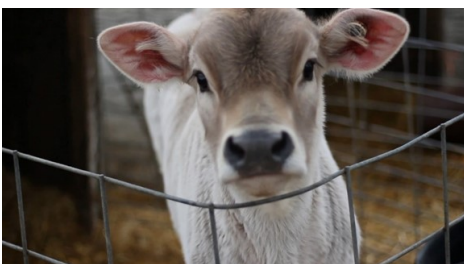
The same goes for the sheep farmers!



*Image from Google*

### Young stock Meeting (Claire)

We had a successful young stock meeting at the beginning of December looking at disease processes in our calves and what we can do early in their lives to prevent them; a 'backwards' approach! It is always a shocking statistic that 58% of heifers do not make it to their 3rd lactation.



Navel ill, pneumonia, scours, Johnes & BVD were looked at and the prevention areas we focussed on were calf immunity, biosecurity, stress, environment, protocols & management plans and measuring & monitoring.

Thanks to all that came and contributed to the discussion and to Boehringer for sponsoring lunch.

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### What3words

I think we have already been evangelizing to a few of you about this app as it has revolutionized us finding you in remote TB testing spots! This app helps you to find, share and navigate to any 3m x 3m location and is used by the emergency services to locate people. It is a lot more accurate than postcodes when put into google maps etc., and Ben has even used it to help an ambulance locate someone! We have figured out the 3 words for most of you, but if you have any locations away from your main holding it would be great to have the 3 words for those too! **Claire**

### Upcoming Events...

Here is a year planner looking at the events coming up in 2020.

Please let us know if you are interested in any events by emailing info@livestockvets.co.uk

- Foot first aid course (*cattle*)—9th January, Location TBC

Late lambers meeting (sheep)

- 'Where lesions come from' - Lameness with Nick Bell & AHDB (*cattle*) — 10th March, Matterley Estate

- Handling & Administration of Medicines—(*dairy/beef/sheep*) - please let us know if you are interested—date TBC

- MilkSure—(*dairy*) - April 2020—please let us know if you are interested—date TBC

- Grasslands meeting—(*beef*) - 20th April—Hampshire

- Full Artificial Insemination Course - (*cattle*) - 27, 28th April & 1st May—location TBC

- Cow Signals (*cattle*)—April/May TBC

- Summer Sheep event (*sheep*)—June/July TBC

### Repeat Breeder Embryos...

From the beginning of January we will have Angus x Black & white embryos back in stock. Let us know if we can be of assistance in any of those Autumn calving animals that are now 2 plus services in...

### MilkSure & Medicines courses (Claire & Sarah)

We have now been running milk sure courses for over a year which means it will soon be time for some of you to register for your top up to make sure your accreditation stays up to date.

Farms completing MilkSure before 1st October 2018 should register by 1st January 2020 for Top Up (our 1st meeting was the 9th October 2018). Otherwise, they must do so within 15 months of becoming accredited. Saputo farms must be Topped Up by 31st March 2020 irrespective of when they first became accredited.

Don't forget that under red tractor recommendations a member of staff needs to attend a handling and administration of medicines course.

Please let us know if you require one of these.

### Current Affairs... (Anna)

It's definitely been an interesting and challenging year with climate change and sustainability being two areas of focus in the media and therefore the farming industry. An ever-increasing proportion of consumers are now considering welfare standards and sustainability when purchasing food products. I recently read an article that highlighted the importance of livestock health, disease control and the impact disease can have on increasing greenhouse gas emissions on farm.

As we all know healthy animals are more productive and we are all striving to work together to improve the health and therefore profitability of our animals. The research in this article estimated that in beef animals green house gases (GHG) emissions/kg of beef are increased by 13% due to BVD, 20% by IBR and 40% by Johnes disease, while in the dairy sector it is estimated mastitis in dairy cattle increases the GHG emissions of producing a litre of milk by 5%, IBR by 8% and Johnes disease by 13%. This increase is due to increased time and resources required for the same level of production compared to a healthy animal.

Health planning, improving data collection, management, genetics and nutrition are all areas that we can work with you to help reduce the incidence of clinical disease, improve overall animal health and welfare and potentially improve the sustainability of your farms. Considering the current spotlight on reducing antibiotic usage implementing disease control and prevention strategies can also tie into reducing overall antibiotic use as there will be fewer sick animals to require treating.

As such it is important to realise the value of regularly updating health plans so we can discuss where we can help you; they can be much more than a box ticking exercise for your audits!

The Livestock Partnership is a trading name of The Livestock Partnership Ltd (7785579) registered in England and Wales

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