

Autumn / Winter 2022

Practice Updates – New and Returning Faces!

There have been several changes to the team recently to enable us to provide an efficient and proactive service for you, our clients. Here is a quick update on changes within the team.

Stuart will be returning to his role in the farm department in November following his 12-month sabbatical. He is looking forward to getting back to work and catching up with you all when out on farm!



Lucie has taken up the position of Junior Farm Clinical Director from October and will be working alongside Stuart when he returns to ensure the smooth running of the farm department moving forwards.



John has recently joined the Farm Admin team as the Farm Office Manager and will be working alongside Sheila and Charlotte at Callington – you will likely have already spoken to him over the phone when booking in a visit or ordering drugs!



Chrissie has now taken up a new role as Lead ATT, helping to develop our ATT service and ensure your cattle are TB tested in a well organised and proficient manner.



Charlotte has completed her ATT training and is out testing on farm as part of our team of ATTs.

Rochelle, a trainee ATT, will be joining us from November and will be out on farm training to TB test with several of our vets. Please say hello if you meet Rochelle out on farm!



Dates for Your Diary

DIY AI Course, 9th – 11th November 2022

- Suitable for all cattle farmers (10% discount for YFC Members!)
- Location Mid-Cornwall

Mastering Medicines Course, 16th November 2022

- 11am – 1pm @ Dupath Farm, Callington

Please contact the St Columb office on 01637 889231
or email stcolumbfarm@calwetonvets.co.uk
if you would like to attend these courses!

We will be attending both the Pedigree Calf Show on Saturday 22nd October and the Cornish Winter Fair on Saturday 19th November both at The Royal Cornwall showground.

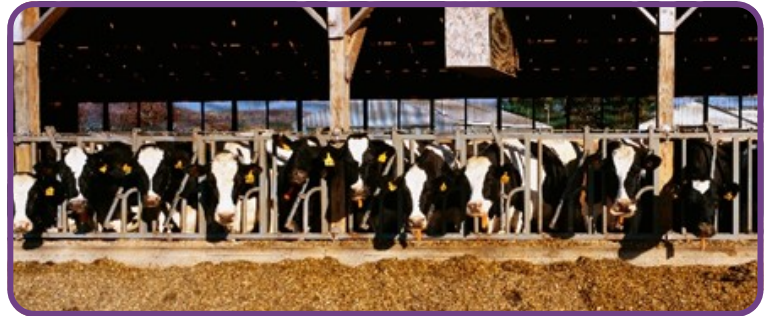
Preparing your Winter Housing for (Dairy) Cattle

With the days starting to draw in, it won't be long before thoughts turn to bringing the cows in for winter. If we get the cow's environment right, she will be more confident, comfortable and productive. But issues with housing can cause many problems including increased lameness, mastitis, metritis, ketosis, displaced abomasum (DAs) and reduced fertility.

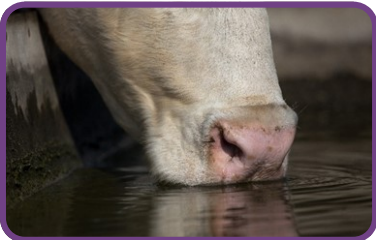
Feed space

To maximise output, we need to maximise inputs, therefore it is important to make sure cows have free access to feed. Make sure there is enough feed space and feed is pushed up. Cows should always have access to fresh feed when returning to the shed following milking, and each cow should have a minimum of 0.6m space at the barrier.

This requirement may be higher depending on the size of cow and stage of lactation. In late pregnancy cows become wider and their feed intake reduces so every attempt should be made to give them increased access to feed and ensure we maximise their intakes at a key stage of production. Cows enjoy eating as a group so it is important to ensure feed space is adequate for the number of animals in the pen.



Water trough space



A high yielding dairy cow can drink over 200 litres per day, with most water consumed after milking and feeding. Water troughs must be accessible, with 0.1m of trough space per cow. Water should be at least 70mm deep so that the cow can submerge her muzzle. Ensure troughs refill quickly enough that cows are never left without water. Small drinkers in the corner of straw pens rarely provide adequate water supply for a lactating dairy cow.

Lying and ruminating space

It is important to make sure there are enough comfortable cubicles for the number of cows. As a minimum there needs to be at least a cubicle per cow, but ideally there should be more than 10% spare cubicles. Cubicles should be a suitable size for the size of cow on your farm. It is important to have a straw yard available to house any lame or infirm cows until they have recovered.



Having another set of eyes to assess your housing can help prevent any health issues when the cows are all in once space.

We are happy to discuss this with you so please speak to your vet at their next visit about taking a look at the sheds, or contact the practice to book in a visit!

Liver Fluke: Don't leave it to fluke!

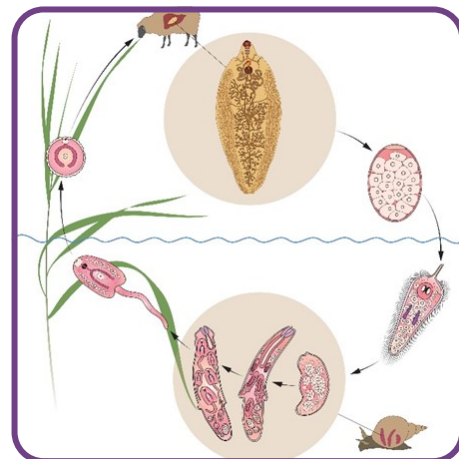


Conversations with our clients suggest that on most farms, liver fluke treatment is included in the annual sheep and cattle calendar. Fluke prevalence on farm, however, is not always known. This may mean that on some farms this treatment may be unnecessary, and on others it may be insufficient. **How does one decide what to do?**

In contrast to gut worms, cattle and sheep are both affected by the same species of liver fluke. Sheep are usually more severely affected, and can be more sensitive indicators of fluke presence than cattle. Symptoms seen depend on the number of fluke present: large quantities cause acute fluke (sudden death), medium levels lead to subacute fluke (anaemia, sudden weight loss) and lower levels result in chronic fluke (chronic weight loss, bottle jaw). Production will suffer in all scenarios.

The life cycle requires the tiny mud snail, which, as the name suggests, requires damp ground. Depending on rainfall and temperature, the level of fluke challenge can vary from one year to next and also the timing of this challenge. This is important as no flukicides have persistent action, so treatment timing makes a difference to how effective it will be.

If you know you have a liver fluke problem – from previous cases, or abattoir feedback – it can be helpful to check fluke antibody levels by analysing blood and/or faecal samples from late Summer/early Autumn. Sampling lambs will provide the most sensitive information about when to move stock away from high-risk pasture, or to treat with a product active against immature fluke.



If you are unsure whether or not you have fluke, a good starting point for monitoring is to blood sample stock in winter, to see if they have been exposed. If infection is detected, treatment of stock pre-turnout will reduce pasture load and help break the cycle of infection. This should be done with a product active against adult fluke.

Product choice is as important as timing. Although there are many trade names for Triclabendazole, this is the only active ingredient effective against immature fluke. This should be reserved for summer/autumn treatments. Late winter/early spring treatments can be done with other products. It is also worth remembering that unless you also require a worm treatment, avoid fluke-wormer combination treatments as their use accelerates wormer resistance issues. Don't forget to include fluke treatment in your quarantine drench, especially if you don't already have fluke on your farm.

Fluke: are you over-treating, or under-treating? Test, don't guess!

Caring for your Camelids over Winter

As the days are getting shorter and autumn is drawing in, we need to be thinking about starting to supplement our llamas and alpacas with vitamin D.



Camelids have evolved and have adapted to cope with the high UV levels found in their natural habitat in the South American mountainous regions. Therefore, UK camelids are prone to vitamin D deficiency, resulting in rickets due to UV levels lower than those found in their natural habitat. Rickets causes painful lameness, abnormal bone and joint formation, increased risk of early arthritis and, in younger animals, stunted growth. Crias and immature animals are particularly susceptible as they are still growing.

Early diagnosis and prompt treatment can in some cases reverse these changes, but in many cases bone and joint damage is irreversible. This can lead to abnormal conformation and chronic lameness, which is sometimes untreatable.

It is therefore important to supplement all camelids with vitamin D regularly through the autumn and winter months when UV levels are especially low. Supplementation should be started as UV levels start to fall in September and be continued through to April (depending on sunlight levels!) to prevent deficiency occurring during this overcast period.

Vitamin D can either be given as an injection or as an oral paste. Injectable forms are most easily absorbed and can be more accurately dosed, but can result in injection site abscesses if not given with clean needles in a sterile manner. They must be given every other month through the risk period. Alternatively, oral pastes can be used but may be more difficult to administer, depending on how co-operative your animals are! They tend to be absorbed less well than injectables so usually need to be given monthly over the winter.

Calweton Vets is able to supply injectable vitamin D for your camelids as we feel the injectable form is, in most cases, easier to administer and will give more reliable vitamin D levels over the risk period. If you would like further information, please contact the practice on 01579 386 132 to speak to a vet.

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