

## Farm news

Sally leaves us for 6 months from mid-July to head off on sabbatical to New Zealand – she will be working hard rearing calves while she is away and then spending some time travelling around Australia before coming back to join us in January.

We have 2 new graduates joining us in the coming months - Jordan starts with us in August and Hannah in September. Both are looking forward to getting stuck in with all aspects of farm work – please say hi if you see them out and about!

As always, we have several training courses occurring – if you would like more information about our next Foot Trimming, AI, or Medicines Course then please contact the practice for details!

*Calweton farm team*

## Animal Health and Welfare Pathway

The much-anticipated Animal Health & Welfare Pathway (AHWP) launched in the Spring. Applications are now being approved and the number of visits our practice has been carrying out is picking up momentum. If you haven't yet applied, it isn't too late to get involved!

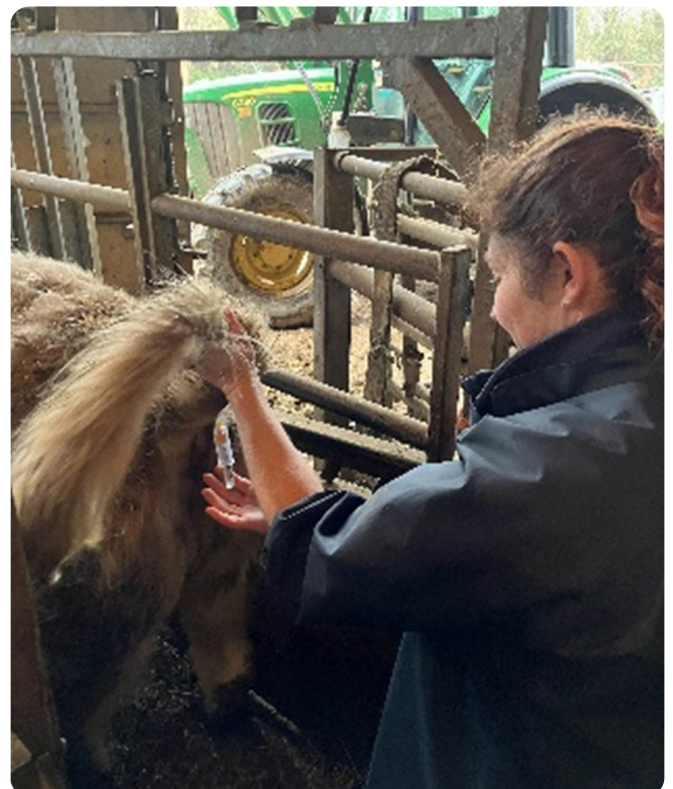
The funding is available for all Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) eligible farms with at least 11 cattle or 21 sheep. Initially the funding will be for a single species: £436 for sheep, £522 for beef or £372 for dairy herds.

To register, type "ahwp application gov.uk" into Google (or other search engine) and go to the government website. It is up to you as a farmer to apply – this is not something that your vet practice can do on your behalf. When applying, you will need to provide:

- your customer reference number (CRN)
- the SBI number of the business registering for the review
- the business email address linked to the business registering for the review

Once you have applied you will receive approval and a link to sign up; once approval has been given the work must be completed within 6 months.

This 6-month timeframe is important as on many farms the required endemic disease testing may only be possible at certain times of year.



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### What do the visits involve?

For all species, in order to receive your payment a portion of the funding must be spent on surveillance for the specific endemic diseases recognised to most limit productivity in the national herd and flock, as outlined below.

The most significant cost to sheep production has been identified as wormer resistance. This is assessed by submitting dung samples for a worm egg count – counting microscopic worm eggs in faeces to give an indication of the level of worm burden present in the animal. If the level is high enough to warrant worming, a second sample is collected 7-14 days after treatment. The difference between the two counts gives an indication of how effective the wormer has been. This knowledge can help you manage worms more effectively in your flock.

Worm burdens tend to be most significant in grazing lambs, so the main period for testing is typically May to November.

For cattle, BVD testing is required. In beef herds, bloods will be taken from 9-15 month old homebred animals (six animals per separately managed group) to screen for antibodies, which if present indicate exposure to disease. In dairy herds, virus testing is carried out on a bulk milk sample. Exposure of your herd to the BVD virus is likely to have a significant negative effect on both calf health and cow fertility.



The main period for testing in beef herds will depend on when you calve, particularly if you sell stores. Block calving herds may need to take calving pattern into account when sampling.

In addition to endemic disease testing, the funding can be used for whatever you feel is appropriate. If you are unsure what would be most useful for your herd/flock, we are happy to guide you, and a good starting point will be talking about what you would most like to achieve, do more of – or less of! Some ideas include fertility examination (rams, bulls), pelvimetry (heifers), refining liver fluke and worm control, ewe metabolic profiling and nutrition planning, calf health monitoring, thin ewe investigation, pneumonia and scour investigation and control planning... the list is almost endless.

### How do I get the payment?

Once the work has been completed, your vet will provide a visit report and lab results along with their RCVS number. You will need to submit this alongside the Calweton invoice raised against your account. You will then receive the payment.

The driving force behind this scheme is that by working with your vet, the health of your flock / herd can be maximised – with the knock-on effect that productivity is as good as it can be. We very much hope that this will be your experience!



### In this edition...

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## Adder bites in livestock

On a warm Friday morning in July, a 5-year-old Simmental cow was presented with a sudden, dramatic swelling of the right face, extending from the eye down to the lower jaw. The animal was depressed, not feeding and had a high fever. She was out on grass with her calf, and was fine the day before. Clinical examination revealed two bleeding puncture wounds in the upper eyelid, indicative of an adder bite.

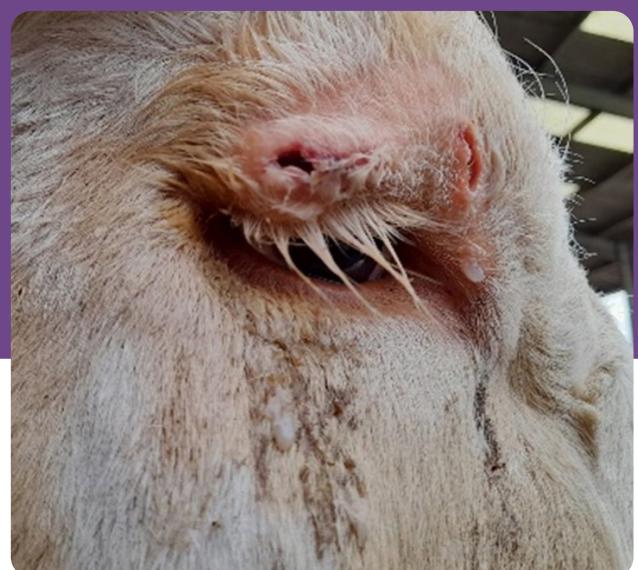
Adders (*Viper berus*) are the only venomous snake found at heathland, moorland and woodland edges across Britain. Non-aggressive and well camouflaged, adders are clearly recognisable by a dark zigzagging line down their back, and a 'V' or 'X' shaped marking on the head.

Although rare, several cases of adder bites in livestock are seen each year between April and October, with a marked peak in July and August. In ruminants, most bites occur in the face when the snake is accidentally disturbed, but they are also seen on the udder, tongue, or limbs.

In most cases, animals only develop a minor or local reaction. However, adder bites can potentially lead to severe clinical signs, requiring immediate veterinary attention. Adder venom is a mixture of toxins, that is delivered deep into the tissue by needle-like fangs. This causes enormous damage to blood vessels, with subsequent swelling and loss of skin and underlying tissue. When this occurs in the face, rapid breathing and drooling occur. The sudden and extensive reaction to the bite can cause fever and depression in the animal. In exceptional cases, an anaphylactic shock to the venom leads to death.

Treatment needs to be prompt and is targeted at limiting the damage caused by the venomous toxins. Anti-inflammatories are given to reduce swelling and pain, and antibiotics can cure any secondary bacterial infections caused by tissue necrosis.

Due to quick action of the farmer, the Simmental cow made a full recovery. It is worth keeping an extra close eye on grazing livestock at risk during the summer months.



## A quarter of UK dairy farms sampled are responsible for 49% of the sector's total antimicrobial use.

The latest Antimicrobial Focus Report from Kingshay shows a quarter of UK dairy farmers from those sampled are responsible for 49% of total antibiotic usage in the sector.

The report, which is now in its second year, draws on data from 1,044 dairy herds across the UK in the 12 months to March 2022.

It shows that individual herd antimicrobial use ranged from 0.26 to 87.17 mg/kg PCU, however average total antimicrobial usage for the year was 15.9 mg/kg PCU.

This is up slightly on the previous year's figure of 15.5 mg/kg PCU, but down from 21.7 mg/kg PCU in 2018.

Encouragingly the report shows more than two-thirds of herds – 69% – were using less antimicrobials than Kingshay's benchmarking target of 17.9 mg/kg PCU.

The target has been calculated by Kingshay based on a 15% reduction of RUMA's (Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance) 2020 target of 21 mg/kg PCU.

According to the report, if the highest 25% of antimicrobial users cut their usage by one third, overall average herd usage across the board would reduce to 13.3 mg/kg PCU and 79% of herds would then fall below the 2024 usage target of 17.9 mg/kg PCU. These findings highlight the need for a more

bespoke approach to reducing antimicrobial use on farms with a high usage. Early wins have been made in terms of refining antimicrobial usage on the majority of farms but continued effort and further changes are required to reduce the usage further. We can do this by targeting specific high use areas on farm such as drying off and mastitis intervention – this can be an area we can address during your Animal Health and Welfare Review.

The report also highlights that injectables remain the most used antimicrobial route of administration on dairy farms – highlighting an area for improvement going forward. They account for between 70 and 76% of usage, irrespective of whether the farm is a high or low users of antimicrobials.

In general, these are used for sick cow management so there's real value in regularly reviewing treatment protocols with your vet. Regular reviews can help identify potential management changes such as improvements to buildings, disinfection protocols and nutrition or the introduction of vaccination programmes that could help reduce the need for antimicrobial treatments in the first place.

The 2022 annual Antimicrobial Focus Report can be accessed via the Kingshay website: <https://www.kingshay.com/news/kingshay-antimicrobial-focus-report-2022/>



If you would like more information on what we've discussed in this month's newsletter, please speak to any of our farm veterinary team.

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