

Black Sheep Farm Health

September 2018 Newsletter



The Field Report

It is now feeling decidedly autumnal, and the new season heralds some changes at BSFH HQ. Autumn calving has begun in earnest, with all the associated entertainment. Tup testing is also keeping us busy as the new sheep year gets underway.

Our first cohort of vet students has started, so be prepared to see some bright-eyed and bushy-tailed assistants. Finally, Joe is returning to work full-time - details of our open evening to welcome him back are below...

Cataracts in Cattle - don't turn a blind eye

- Eye problems in cattle occur, often in clusters.
- Most causes are infectious, and prompt treatment is key to maintaining a viable eye.
- One cause of cloudy eyes in new-born calves is BVD.
- Treatment is often an injection of antibiotic just above the eye.
- Prevention varies according to the specific condition e.g. fly control for New Forest Eye.

Cloudy eyes in cattle can be caused by a number of factors and, although relatively uncommon, are worth further investigation.



A 'cataract' can refer to any kind of opacity in the eye. Even severe cases can be reversible with treatment.

A common cause of cloudy eyes in **New Forest eye** (pink eye), which is more commonly seen in young stock during the summer. It is caused by a bacteria transmitted by flies, but is also associated with dust. Clinical signs will include watery eyes that may be swollen or closed and pain when exposed to sunlight. Treatment will involve either topical ointment into the eye or long acting injections into the eyelid, but may require multiple treatments. Prevention relies on good fly control and care when introducing new stock as there is an association with the introduction of new animals into the herd.

Bovine iritis, or **silage eye**, is a common cause of uveitis (inflammation of the pigmented area of the eye) in cattle fed baled haylage/ silage, especially when fed in ring feeders. *(continued overleaf)*

Open evening to welcome our newest vet Joe Henry

17th September

Food from 18:00, Talk from 19:00



All are welcome to join us in welcoming **our new vet Joe Henry** BVM&S Cert SHP MRCVS to the practice. Joe has previously worked in the area so may be a familiar face to some of you.

Joe has recently been on a working tour of the USA and East Asia, including some large cow-calf operations. On the night he will give us **an introduction to some of the farming practices he encountered whilst on his travels.**

In addition, we will be covering:

- The **new round of BVD funding** available through the 'BVD: Stamp it out' campaign.
- The future of **sheep lameness control.**

Hot beef rolls will be provided by G&S Organics, with Black Sheep beer to wash it down.

For catering purposes, please RSVP Hazel on 01669 838 288. Non-clients of BSFH are also welcome. The evening is kindly supported by MSD.

(cont) It is characterised by an initial weeping and closure of the eye, but will develop into a blue discolouration over the eye that may become yellow.

Treatment involves injections into the eyelid. This condition is difficult to prevent, but good silage/haylage making can help prevent contamination with soil which is associated with the condition, or rolling out bales rather than placing in ring feeders - often an impractical solution. Avoid blowing silage with a straw blower as this is a common cause of silage eye.

Infection with BVD virus during gestation can result in calves being born with cataracts and other skeletal or neurological abnormalities. This is an indicator that it is worth investigating the BVD status of the herd.



A BVD PI Calf - eye abnormalities are rare but possible manifestations of BVD infection in pregnancy.

Calves can also acquire a cloudy eye if they suffer a period of **septicaemia** e.g following navel ill.

Cloudy eyes in calves **can be inherited**, with certain breeds more predisposed than others (Beef Shorthorn, Herefords and Holsteins). Cataracts in calves have even been linked to proximity to telephone masts, although no concrete evidence exists to support this claim!

Kathrine Muller Jones, final year student at Liverpool Vet School.

Myth-busting: What has the hot dry summer meant for worm control?

Guest article from Matt Colston BVM&S from Elanco

1) The hot dry weather has killed off all the worms

Partly true. The hot dry conditions are likely to have killed off most of the larval stages of parasitic nematodes on pasture. However, the worm eggs deposited by grazing animals over the last few months are unlikely to have hatched because the weather conditions have been hot and dry. BUT, a lot of these eggs will still be viable and will hatch when the conditions become more favourable.

2) As it has been very hot and dry, there will be no parasite problems this summer.

Not true. Even in the extreme conditions we've seen this summer, there will be areas in some fields on most farms where there has been enough moisture and shelter for parasites to 'behave normally'. We have seen some high worm egg counts in lambs this summer, and SRUC in Dumfries have reported cases of fatal lung worm infections in calves.

3) It will take months for the pasture parasite population to proliferate.

Not true. As detailed above there are some areas on many farms where the parasites are going through their lifecycles as normal, and there will be many, many worm eggs everywhere else, just waiting for suitable conditions to hatch.

4) What do the 'eggs in waiting' need to allow them to hatch?

Just a little bit of moisture – and we have all had some rain recently. This will allow the eggs to develop, and as it is still warm enough, the development to infective L3 will happen quickly, so that around 2 weeks after rainfall, there will be infective larvae on the pasture.

5) I won't need to treat lambs yet because the worm challenge will take time to build.

Not true. After a hot dry spell, the 'eggs in waiting' could mostly develop and hatch together (a bit like the mass hatch of *Nematodirus* in the spring) giving a sudden high challenge. Be on the lookout, as worm levels in lambs could reach damaging levels with little or no warning.

Adult sheep will maintain their immunity to worms through the summer, so are unlikely to need any treatment. Deciding on how best to tackle this challenge in lambs will depend to some extent on previous treatments, and the number of worms surviving in the lambs after those treatments.

It may be time for your mid/late season break dose for lambs. SCOPS recommends the use of an orange group wormer (e.g 'Zolvix') for the mid/late season break dose for lambs, to remove the resistant worms that have survived previous treatments that could be limiting performance.

