

NOVEMBER 2023

NEWSLETTER



Swedes, Skiing, and the South Island: A Year in New Zealand

Thursday 2nd November

Longframlington Memorial Hall, NE65 8AH

Arrive from 6.30pm for hot beef rolls and drink, ahead of a 7.30pm start.

Kindly Sponsored by Elanco

AHDB Monitor Farm Meeting: Winter Bale Grazing

Tuesday 21st November

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM,

Alnham, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 4TJ

Join AHDB, Pasture for Life and Innovative Farmers, for an on-farm discussion about bale grazing, its role in reducing wintering costs and how to manage bale grazing throughout the winter.

Make sure to book your place online:

<https://ahdb.org.uk/events/northumberland-beef-and-lamb-monitor-farm-winter-bale-grazing>

Christmas Opening Hours

Please make sure you are aware of our Christmas office opening hours:

Friday 22nd December– 8:30am-4pm

Monday 25th December– Closed

Tuesday 26th December– Closed

Wednesday 27th - Friday 29th December– Open as normal

Monday 1st January– Closed



As always, while the office is closed, vets will remain on call for emergencies.

Vet Attestation or Animal Health & Welfare Pathway for Non Red Tractor Approved Farms

A vet attestation will be required by December for any farm that is not Red Tractor Assured.

Farms without an attestation will not be able to send animals to slaughter, including cull ewes.

The animal health and welfare review (AHWR) is sufficient, in place of farm assurance or vet attestation, to send animals to slaughter, but only for the species in which it has been carried out.

Please get in touch if you are not red tractor assured and we can arrange the attestation for you or assist with Animal Health and Welfare Pathway applications.

Borrow Our Scales!

Weaning weights, as a percentage of cow weight, should be used in suckler herds to quantify how well the cows are rearing beef. This KPI is a good way of understanding the efficiency of a herd.

A weaning percentage of 40% should be a min. target. If weaning percentage is under this:

- Look at individual producing below average and consider why– is it age, breed, or bull?
- Can fertility be improved? Target is weaning 95 calves for every 100 cows put to the bull.
- Are the calves suffering from a worm burden or other disease challenge?
- Look at above-average cows and use this as part of your selection criteria for breeding replacements.

Winter is coming– Is your working dog pack ready?

The four year 'Teammate' study into working dogs in New Zealand generated some eye-catching headlines – and raised pertinent questions.

Unlike our ruminant livestock, dogs don't have the in-built furnace of the rumen to keep warm in the colder months. In 'the wild', the pack would spend the night sleeping in the pile for warmth. In contrast, we mostly house dogs singly in outdoor kennels. The Teammate study found that the vast majority (86%) of kennels were uninsulated, and less than half (44%) of kennels had any form of bedding. This is compounded as working dogs are so lean – they carry little insulation or padding; 16% of dogs were found to have obvious pressure sores. Furthermore, the breeds we use often have smooth and short coats.

Related studies using activity monitors have shown that cold kennelled dogs spend less time resting – and far more time shivering or moving around to keep warm. The lack of rest not only impairs their recovery and increases feed requirement, but also begs the question – are we fulfilling our duty of care?

The Teammate study found the average working dog travelled 20km a day; to recover and perform they need to be able to rest in warmth. The ideal temperature is between 10-26°C – obviously kennels in Northumberland will dip below this range in the winter, so you can:

- Provide bedding for warmth and comfort
- Provide a coat for extra insulation
- Insulate kennels – what better job for all those low value fleeces?

Scab Testing Tips

Through tugging time, your tups will have contacted every ewe on the farm, and so, can prove very useful for monitoring for scab within your flock.

Blood testing your tup group for scab antibodies 2 weeks after they have come in from the ewes can tell us if they have been exposed to scab and inform us about whether whole flock scab treatments are required.

Due to concerns about both scab and gut worms resistant to injectable ivermectins, as well as the environmental effects of ivermectin products, it is important that we use these products only when necessary and we would encourage blood testing to determine if treatment is required.

Dyslexia & Newsletter Changes

October was Dyslexia Awareness month.

In the general population, 1 in 10 people are dyslexic, but many figures suggest that this figure is much higher in rural and farming communities; this is certainly the case at Black Sheep, with 50% of our vets being dyslexic!

SRUC report that 25% of their agriculture students show dyslexic tendencies. In response to this, we have made some small format changes to the BSFH newsletter to make it more 'dyslexia friendly'- please let us know what you think!

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