

Black Sheep Farm Health

October 2018 Newsletter



The Field Report

The heating has been kicked into action just recently. Don't be left out the cold—see below about the best waterproof kit we source from NZ; better to be waterproof than tight...

Autumn is of course the season for mists and mellow fruitfulness. For us it's also the perfect season for selecting autumn calving heifers replacements, and for Johne's testing; more on both below.

Sign up now for BVD testing funding

- **There is funding available that covers a year's BVD testing from the BVD 'Stamp It Out' campaign.**
- **The funding is on a first-come, first-served basis.**
- **The funding covers the annual test for anyone who is already testing for BVD.**
- **BVD testing is now compulsory in Scotland and the island of Ireland.**

Cattle-keepers in Northumberland have long been proactive in managing BVD in their herds. Unfortunately this has not been the case across England.

In the interest of achieving BVD freedom in England, DEFRA has released a £5.7m pot of funding for farmers to start BVD testing, on a first-come, first-served basis.

Specifically, the funding covers two 'cluster' meetings, an on-farm visit (including lab fees) and if necessary a PI hunt. To access this funding, there a number of forms to fill in.

We appreciate that this is no one's favourite job. However consider that the visit/time/lab fees that are covered, and that BVD costs approximately £46.50 per cow per year in infected herds; on a £ per minute basis, it could be some of the most profitable time spent all year.

For those of you who we haven't had the relevant forms back from yet, we've enclosed the paperwork - just sign it and drop it at the practice when you get the chance.



BVD
STAMP
IT OUT

Card Machine

In addition to cheques and BACS payments, we can now take payments in person and over the phone using our newest piece of kit - it even does contactless!

Kiwi Kit and Kaiwaka Stormforce

We all know the sinking feeling when a pair of waterproofs turn out to not live up to the name. The winter is challenging enough without spending most of it soaking wet.

With that in mind, we can supply you with the best of New Zealand: in our experience these are the best and most durable waterproofs we've used.



Kiwikit parlour tops are great for calving as they have cuffed arms to stop seepage of various fluids up the arms. They are also long enough to cover the waistline easily.

The Kaiwaka 'Stormforce' range includes both regular fit trousers, and bib overtrousers. We have found these to be extremely durable, especially around the knees. They are also very warm!

For more details, just give us a ring on 01669 838 288. We have a couple of sizes at the practice if you would like to try some on; if we don't we can order a pair in. We can also order in other gear from Kiwikit—we have a catalogue at the practice so just ask when you're next in!

A date for your diary

AgriScot: 21st November

Held at the Highland showground, we are putting on a coach in conjunction with Scott Mitchell Associates, our closest XLVets neighbour. Kindly sponsored by Boehringer.



Spaces strictly on a first-come, first-served basis: ring the office to book yours.

Autumn Calving - Time for Selection of Heifers and Bulls

Autumn calving continues apace. Nevertheless, now is an important time to make some strategic decisions for autumn calving 2019. Due to the seasonality of grass growth, autumn calvers are traditionally harder calving than their spring counterparts. For this reason they arguably benefit more from careful selection.

Heifers can be selected exactly as spring calvers would be - based on temperament, weight (% of mature cow weight), foot quality and pelvic area. Pelvic measuring can take place at the same time as other husbandry procedures such as vaccinating for BVD or bolusing, and identifies heifers with abnormally small pelvises. By fattening instead of breeding these, the number of hard calving and caesareans should be much reduced.

For the same reason, bulls used on autumn calvers should be easy calving. Also consider putting any of last year's heifers which required a calving or caesarean to an easy calving bull. To discuss choosing bulls, EBVs or synchronisation and AI, do not hesitate to ring in on 01669 838 288.



This calf was never going to fit through the pelvis - in this case she was alive but it could easily have been a disaster.

Round up of the Open Evening - A global farm walk

We would like to thank everyone who attended the open evening on 17th September. It was fantastic to see so many of you there; thanks again to G&S Organics for the catering.

For those who couldn't make it, Joe's presentation covered travels to farms from Poland to the USA to South-East Asia. While these farms clearly had some advantages - their economies of scale, for example - they also highlighted some home advantages. Britain doesn't have any large predators, and the climate is reasonably benign (Beast from the East notwithstanding).

So what might we learn from these farmers, especially the cow-calf producers of the American West? The key points were:

- Focus on maternal excellence
- Make best use of hybrid vigour
- Aspire to produce quality red meat, rather than fat cattle

Something to think about at PD time

Spring calving herds should start thinking about PD-ing this month. This is a useful time to test for Johne's as cattle are already going through the race.

Testing represents a real opportunity to improve cow longevity and profitability, as well as increase the value of replacements. If you aren't already testing but are interested, feel free to give us a ring on 01669 838 288.