

**FEBRUARY
2022**



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UPCOMING COURSES: REGISTER YOUR INTEREST!

After reduced meetings due to COVID, we hope to run the following meetings and courses over the next few months. **Further info will be made available nearer the time but please register your interest with the office.**

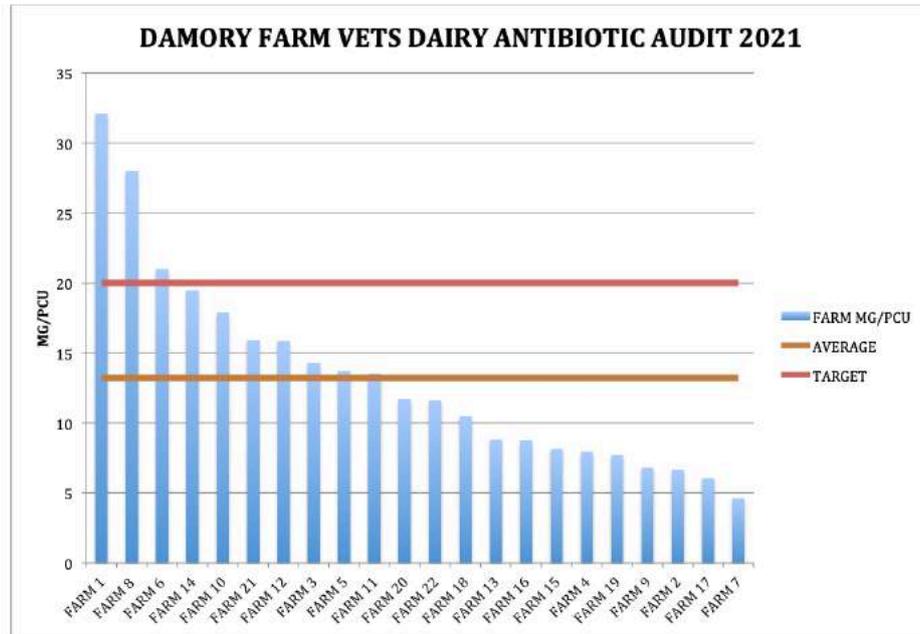
- **CALVING COURSE with Matt** – including practical session.
- **LAMENESS MEETING with Ian** – theory + on-farm session.
- **UDDER HEALTH & DRYING OFF TECHNIQUE** – interactive meeting.
- **SHEEP DISCUSSION MEETING with Laura** (after lambing) - benchmarking, improving lambing success + maximising lamb growth.

Ongoing training available on request:

- **MILKSURE with Matt, Ian or Abi** – required for some dairies.
- **MEDICINES COURSE (online) with Laura** – will run again once sufficient numbers are registered. Required for Red Tractor assured farms.
- **AI & FOOT TRIMMING with Ian** – for small groups/individual farms.

DAIRY ANTIBIOTIC AUDIT

We are pleased to say that once again, the average annual antibiotic usage on our dairy farms has fallen. In 2021 this was 13.23mg/PCU, well below government targets of 21mg/PCU and a 13% reduction from 2020. We have also used NO critical antibiotics for over 3 years.



Individual reports are being produced for each farm.

HUSKVAC REMINDER

Turnout may still feel like a long time away, but remember that Huskvac (lungworm vaccine) needs advance planning!

When you call to place your order, please let us know when you plan to administer the Huskvac – it usually has very short expiry dates so we need to order accordingly.



SPECTAM

Spectam, the licensed oral antibiotic for watery mouth in lambs, is no longer available. This leaves us with limited antibiotic options for treatment & prevention of this condition.

Other prevention methods include focusing on colostrum quality & intakes, lambing pen hygiene and oral probiotics (some farms have found this very successful).

Treatment of lambs who do get watery mouth will involve injectable antibiotics, the best medicine choice for this can vary between farms as antibiotic resistance is common. Lambs should also receive plenty of TLC, warmth, feeding and glucose injections as appropriate.

If a lamb dies of watery mouth, we would highly recommend sending it for testing to check which antibiotics will be effective on your farm.



Speak to one of the vets for farm-specific advice.

EWE METABOLIC PROFILING OFFER

What is it? Taking blood samples to check ewe energy & protein levels. If results are poor, nutrition can be changed to reduce the risk of twin lamb disease & increase colostrum quality.

What's involved? A vet will take bloods from 6 ewes from each group of singles/twins/ triplets, **3-4 weeks before lambing.**



★ CURRENT OFFER: LAB FEES FREE FOR FIRST 6 EWES! Give us a call for more info & costs. ★

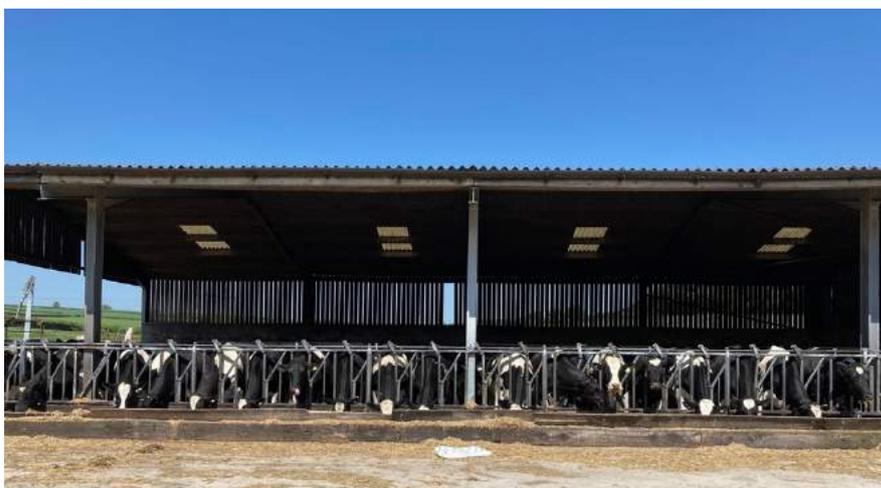
TOP TIPS FOR TRANSITION COW NUTRITION

There are strong links between dry cow nutrition and subsequent milk yields/fertility, as well as costly diseases including milk fever, ketosis, LDA, retained cleansings and metritis.

Calcium management is vital to avoid the dreaded milk fevers and associated conditions (retained cleansings/LDA). Common approaches include a low calcium “calcium capture” strategy using concentrates, or acidification (DCAD) which must be monitored closely. We can test urine pH in-house to check DCAD diets.

Body condition scoring (BCS) is a common (and very useful) tool. Overconditioned cows, or dramatic BCS changes around calving, can cause ketosis and LDAs. Target BCS 3 at drying off and calving. Regular scoring is required by some milk buyers but if not, informal scoring of dry and fresh cows can really help identify any problems – and monitor the solutions.

Good fibre intake reduces LDA and acidosis. Ensure the diet has sufficient NDF, and that Dry Matter Intakes are good to get this NDF in – aim for >0.85% bodyweight in NDF daily (this is a lot of fibre!)



Feed delivery can massively impact DMI. **Remember there are 3 diets: the one advised by the nutritionist, the one put in front of the cows and the one the cow actually eats!**

- Sufficient feedspace? Target 75cm per cow
- Is feed pushed up, clean, dry? Is there any heating-up or stale feed?
- Are submissive cows/heifers bullied away from the feed space? Dominant cows can gorge on concentrates and get overfat too. Can you sub-divide the group?
- Do cows sort the diet and leave fibre with longer chop length? (reduced fibre intake)
- Are there 2 or more water troughs, easily accessible and clean? Reduced water intake also reduces feed intake.

We offer BCS/rumen scoring, urine pH testing and blood sampling for energy balance. We are always happy to work with nutritionists to optimise transition management.

LEPTOSPIROSIS TESTING FOR CATTLE

Leptospirosis (“Lepto”) is a bacterial disease found in cattle which most commonly affects fertility, e.g. poor PD results and/or abortion. It can be transmitted via breeding, watercourses, abortion material and sheep; it can also cause severe disease in people.

For farms who DO NOT currently vaccinate and would like to check their Lepto status, we are able to offer FREE lab fees for five youngstock blood samples (e.g. at your next TB test). Bulk milk screening is also available for dairies.



If you used to vaccinate but lapsed a few years ago, you are also eligible for free testing.

RED TRACTOR UPDATE REMINDER

For any beef & sheep farms who have previously done their own health plans: since November 2021, Red Tractor standards state that plans must be **reviewed and signed annually by a vet**, in addition to the usual vet review document.

The changes also put focus on BVD & colostrum policies (documented in the health plan).

Updated templates for health plans and performance reviews are available on the Red Tractor website: <https://assurance.redtractor.org.uk/templates/>

Sheep farms must be visited at least once yearly for Red Tractor assurance (and to allow us to prescribe medicines).



SMALLHOLDER NEWS



TOP TIPS AS LAMBING APPROACHES!

Stock up on essentials including gloves, lubricant, iodine and castration/tail docking rings.

Give ewes Heptavac booster 4-6 weeks before lambing starts

We stock individual sachets of Lamaid colostrum replacement, if you have a lamb who can't get a good supply from the ewe. Colostrum is vitally important to protect lambs from disease in the first days and weeks of life.



RESTRAINING ANIMALS FOR THE VET

When attending calls on smaller holdings, we occasionally find a "sick" animal loose in a large field and feeling well enough to run away – especially when needles are involved!

If animals are not properly restrained it can be very difficult (and in some situations, dangerous to the animal and/or humans involved) to examine and treat them.

Many animals, however friendly, are wary of unfamiliar people - so containing an animal in a small area before our arrival is often a good idea.



Sheep & goats: can you keep them in a stable, or a small temporary pen made of sheep hurdles? Having a halter on hand can also help, and many will follow a bucket of feed!

Pigs: pig boards are essential. These can also be used to trap the animal against a solid fence/wall to administer injections; hurdles can also work. Some farms have even made their own miniature "pig crushes" from solid wood/metal.

Alpacas are easily stressed and often dislike human contact. Halter training and regular gentle handling can help prepare them for vet visits and other husbandry tasks.

By planning ahead, you can help ensure your animal receives proper treatment if they ever need veterinary care.