



# Newsletter

# December 2017

With Christmas fast approaching, we hope that your calves are settling in well with minimal pneumonia. In this newsletter, Rachel discusses a project she is about to embark on which we hope will be of interest to a number of you, and Andy tells us about a recent visitor to the practice.

We will be open as usual for routine work over the festive period - aside from 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> December and 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> January, during which time we will be providing our normal service for out of hours emergencies.

Wishing you all the best for the festive season, and a happy and healthy 2018 from all of us at the practice.

## Spring Calving Project

Calves are born without any antibodies of their own. They rely solely on absorbing antibodies from their mother's colostrum within the first few hours after birth. After this time the gut closes, and no more antibodies can get across. Passive transfer relates to this process, and failure of passive transfer (FPT) is when insufficient antibodies have been absorbed from the colostrum. Studies carried out predominantly in dairy calves have shown this can lead to increased susceptibility to disease, and overall decreased lifetime production. However there are few studies out there on beef calves.

This project aims to look into how prevalent failure of passive transfer is in beef calves, and what the risk factors on farm may be.

We are looking to recruit 25 Farm Animal Practice spring calving beef farms to the study. It will involve multiple visits around calving to blood sample cows in late pregnancy and calves within the first few days of life.

### Whats involved:

- Visit pre-calving (within the last month of pregnancy) to blood sample 6 cows for metabolic profiles and collect feed data for forage analysis.
- Visit(s) during calving to collect a total of up to 15 blood samples from calves, between 48 hours and 5 days old, for assessment of FPT.

- Second group of 6 cows to be blood sampled during the calving block (later calvers within their last month of pregnancy).
- A short questionnaire will be sent out regarding background information on the farm

**Confidentiality: All data collected will used anonymously as part of a wider research project**

Calf blood test results will most likely be fed back at the end of the calving season as a retrospective look at failure of passive transfer, allowing for potential changes and improvements to be made before the next calving season.

All visits would be free of charge, and reports will be sent back to you regarding the results from blood samples.

If this is something you may be interested in or would like to get more information on, then please get in touch with Rachel or Ali at the practice on 0131 445 4468 or email [rachel.bragg@ed.ac.uk](mailto:rachel.bragg@ed.ac.uk)



## Dr. Pandey's visit

Last week the Farm Animal Practice was lucky enough to welcome a visitor from India, Dr Naveen Pandey, Chief Veterinary Officer and Deputy Director of The Corbett Foundation (TCF). TCF is an NGO working with farmers living in and around Tiger Reserves in India.

Farmers around the Kaziranga National Park, where Naveen is based, generally lose between 20% and 50% of their crops to raiding by wild animals such as elephants and wild boar. TCF help by studying patterns of animal movement, and providing human wildlife conflict mitigation strategies such as watchtowers, solar powered torches and solar electric fences.

Attacks on livestock by tigers and leopards are also common. In Kanha National Park, it is estimated approximately 500 cattle and goats are attacked annually. TCF provide veterinary treatment, organise vaccination programmes, alternative livelihood training and human health programmes, all with the aim of reducing conflict between people and wildlife and improving the prosperity of rural people.

Andy Hopker from the Farm Animal Practice works closely with TCF on a number of these projects in India. During his stay Naveen visited some of our farms to learn about farming in Scotland, gave a talk about his work to a packed lecture theatre of R(D)SVS students and staff (a record crowd for an evening talk!) and graduated from the R(D)SVS with an MSc in Conservation Medicine via distance learning.



Watchtower for guarding crops at night in Kaziranga, Assam



Naveen visiting a dairy farm in Midlothian

## FARM ANIMAL PRACTICE FARMERS MEETING

Please see enclosed information about the FAP Farmers meeting on **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December**, starting at 7pm at Easter Bush on medicines use, sponsored by Zoetis. We look forward to seeing you then.

We are always interested to hear of cases that you think would be useful for the Farm Animal Hospital, e.g. think barren ewes post scanning or poor doing calves. We can collect these animals for free, and any diagnostic test or post-mortem results will be reported back to you.

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