



# Newsletter

# February 2024

Hopefully we've seen the last of the storms for a while, think we've had enough rain to last a good while! This month we'd like to introduce our newest vet joining the team, Fergus Neish. Fergus will be our new cattle resident, replacing David who will now be focusing on his dissertation and studying for exams. Tom reminds us about some important components of our upcoming final year rotations and Jeanne reminds us about the risk of sheep scab.

## New Vet Joining the team



Hi there, I'm Fergus, the new Vet joining the practice in March. I am originally from the South-West of England where we have a family beef suckler and arable farm. However, I am just coming back from a stint working out in New Zealand. I am really looking forward to getting started and to meeting everyone. I have a particular interest in nutrition and fertility. Outside of work, I enjoy playing racquet sports, hiking and I am an avid rugby fan so I'm quite nervous about the upcoming Calcutta Cup!

## Final Year Teaching

It is coming up to the time of year again where our final year students start their selected rotations where they choose seven rotations that they want to repeat at a higher level. Every **Tuesday** morning as part of the farm rotation, we have the students carry out a herd or flock health investigation on a farm. This is often taking blood samples for metabolic profiles to assess

the nutritional status of animals pre-calving/lambing, but can be anything from abortion investigations to housing assessments. These visits are student-led and as such, the visits and work will be free of charge. In addition, any metabolic blood samples run in-house by the DHHPS are also offered at no cost (worth up to £350). Performing a nutritional assessment on your herd/flock in the 3-4 weeks leading up to calving/lambing is an ideal way of ensuring there are no underlying deficiencies and allows you to make any changes required. **If you would be interested in having us carry out one of these visits on your farm, please get in touch Ali on reception to book or with one of the vets if you wish to discuss further.**



## Sheep Scab

Cases of sheep scab seem to be on the rise again of late. Mainly, cases seem to have been bought in from purchased stock. It is worth thinking about what steps you are currently taking to prevent introducing it to your flock.

A lot of clients feel that they are covering themselves against scab by giving an injection of a clear drench to bought in animals on arrival or after mixing with other stock. We have increasing amounts of failure to respond to treatment to these drugs being reported (mites are becoming resistant). Additionally, this is a waste of wormer and is likely to contribute to gut worm resistance issues on farm. Bear in mind that for a clear drench to work against scab, most products would need two shots 14 days apart, not a single animal could be missed in the treatment AND many products do not last for long enough, so you'd need to ensure they didn't pick scab up again from the environment.

Top tips for stopping sheep scab at the farm gate:

- As far as possible, prevent contact with neighbours sheep/unclean equipment used on other flocks (trailers. Shearing equipment). If you have an obvious boundary with a neighbour, how is the fencing, will it prevent nose to nose contact?
- If you have lots of in contact neighbours, it's a great idea to be aligned on your approach to sheep scab, eg if one person is dipping at scanning time, everyone does the same.
- For bought in animals: Quarantine, quarantine, quarantine!
  - It's recommended to quarantine for 4 weeks, 2/3 weeks is better than none.
  - After animals have been on your farm for 2 weeks, we can come and blood sample 12 sheep to check if they have been exposed to scab. For less than £300 (ex vat) we can give you some peace of mind. If that sounds like an expense, tot up the cost of clear drench for the whole group or how costly it would be to have to keep and feed a group of lambs that are close to finishing, but are stuck with lengthy treatment withholding period - most products are 50 days meat withhold.

If you have any questions on sheep scab prevention or have noticed itchy sheep recently and want to double check its just lice, give us a bell at the practice.



*Psoroptes ovis* (Sheep Scab) mite