



Newsletter

May 2023

This month we are bringing to your attention a new scheme from the Government which can provide payments for some veterinary interventions on farm. Alberto is looking for volunteers to be involved in a research study being run by the University of Liverpool and David summarises a recent case that was seen in the hospital.

Preparing for Sustainable Farming

The Scottish government has launched new funding for the next 2 years to help cattle and sheep farmers and crofters "Prepare for Sustainable Farming". This will help them get ready for the new payment system in 2025 and builds on funding already available for conducting carbon audits and soil analysis.

How much can you claim?

Participating sheep and cattle farmers and crofters can claim back a standard cost of **£250 per intervention**.

- Each intervention is made up of a completed investigation plus expert advice given based on results.
- Each keeper can do a maximum of **two interventions this year** and **two (same or different) next year**.
- In the first year of claiming, an **additional £250** will be paid to cover learning and development.
- Those who leave it until next year before participating will only be eligible for a maximum of £750 in 2024.

Overall, each farmer can claim back a maximum of **£750 in 2023**. Those who continue to participate next year can claim back a maximum of **£500 in 2024**.

Which interventions can you do?

There are a total of seven interventions, four for cattle farmers and five for sheep farmers.

Cattle interventions:

- Bull pre-breeding examination to British Cattle Veterinary Association standard.
- Calf respiratory investigation +/- virus screen.
- Liver fluke: Faecal Egg Count on sentinel animals and flukicide efficacy testing.
- Gastrointestinal parasite (worm) investigation: Faecal Egg Count and wormer efficacy testing.

Sheep interventions:

- Sheep scab: Screen 12 animals per management group to determine sheep scab status of whole flock.

- Iceberg disease investigation (Maedi Visna, Johnes, Border Disease, Contagious Lymphadenitis, lung scanning for OPA). Screen cull ewes prior to sale.
- Flock lameness assessment by vet: identify conditions and their prevalence within the flock.
- Liver fluke: Faecal Egg Count on sentinel animals and flukicide efficacy testing
- Gastrointestinal parasite (worm) investigation: Faecal Egg Count and wormer efficacy testing.

Start and finish dates

Any intervention completed **between 1 January and 31 December 2023** is eligible for payment. Farmers/crofters have until 29 February 2024 to claim. The same start and finish times apply for the 2024 claim year, with claims being made by 28 February 2025.

For more information, please contact the Farm Animal Practice or consult the government website:

<https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/preparing-for-sustainable-farming--psf-/preparing-for-sustainable-farming--psf--full-guidance/>

Sustainable control of gastro-intestinal nematodes in sheep

The University of Liverpool is undertaking a project that aims to improve the sustainability of roundworm control. They are interested in finding out about sheep roundworm control from the farmer's perspective. To achieve this, they will be holding eight farmer focus groups during 2023, two in each country of the UK. In these meetings, the group will be asked to reflect on specific questions about current practices and challenges, particularly about sustainability and resistance.

Each person will have the opportunity to share their experiences and opinions with the group if they wish to. This should result in an interesting and enjoyable

discussion. All comments will be treated in total confidence and will be compiled and anonymised before being shared beyond the group.

How can you contribute?

They are looking for **8-10 sheep clients of the FAP** to take part on the study. All level of experience and farm systems are eligible.

The meeting will be hold at a local pub during an evening (time and date agreed with the participants). Refreshments will be provided and the session will last 1-1.5 hours (according to participants' engagement).

A £25 Amazon voucher will be given to each participant as a Thank You for their time.

If you are willing to take part or would like to know more about it, please contact the FAP (0131 445 4468) or Alberto (s2272436@ed.ac.uk). You will be given further information and the chance to ask any questions before you commit to anything.

Spastic paresis in cattle

Spastic paresis is a sporadic, neuromuscular disease of cattle affecting one or both hind limbs with a degree of heritability suspected. Clinical cases along with their dam and sire should be removed from the breeding programme due to the related heritable risk.

Clinical signs usually develop between two and nine months of age and are due to hyper-extension of the hock and stifle due to spastic contractions, affecting the animal's posture and gait. The most affected hind limb is held in a backwards position in comparison to the opposite hind leg when standing giving a shortened leg appearance.

Due to the disease's progressive nature, affected animals often deteriorate with poor growth, muscle wastage and increased recumbency commonly seen leading to euthanasia in chronically affected cases. Tibial neurectomy is the main method used for the treatment of spastic paresis, with the aim to surgically cut the tibial nerve innervating the contracting gastrocnemius muscle and hence disconnect the stimulus causing spastic contractions. Surgical tenectomy can provide an alternative treatment option to a tibial neurectomy, particularly in heavier

animals where tibial neurectomy surgery can be more complicated with the increased muscle depth at the surgical site. A success rate of 80% has been reported following tibial neurectomy surgeries, with tenectomy surgeries also reported to have a high success rate.

Take home messages

1. Tenectomy can be used to improve the welfare and performance of cattle with spastic paresis
2. Tenectomy can be a useful alternative to a tibial neurectomy especially in older, larger animals



Figure 1 above: Bullock with the left hind leg held in a backwards position in comparison to the opposite hind leg when standing giving a shortened leg appearance

Scabiguard (Scabivax)

We have had an update on the availability of Scabiguard, the new name for Scabivax, for this year which is not good news. We have virtually no allocated stock this year from Zoetis. This is to do with manufacturing difficulties with the vaccine unfortunately.

To try and get an allocation for next year we would ask you to let reception know how many doses you expect to need so that we can let Zoetis know in the hope that this will be honoured.