

## Vet's Viewpoint - Liz



We had a thoroughly good time at the Oxfordshire Young Farmers Rally at Sheencroft Farm in Blewbury, very kindly hosted by the Allens. Blessed by good weather (although I am sure after this prolonged dry spell there was a sigh of relief from many when the rain appeared later in the week), it was lovely to see so many people enjoying the day.

We were one of the sponsors for the event, and so had a prominent stand with lots of activities, and it was great that so many clients came and said hello, and tried their hand at the sweet jar slot machine, and the buzz wire loop game. We organised a fun dog show and had some great entries for the best dressed dog/owner and the prettiest pup.

These types of events are always rewarding to be involved with, and it was so nice to see the passion and energy in the next generation of farmers. The entries for the categories in the competitions were very impressive. I particularly enjoyed the brick wall building, the pigeon spatchcocking, and the longest nettle entries! Encouraging skills from a young age builds so much confidence and a sense of achievement. At Larkmead, we don't offer many courses in junior horticulture, cookery, or metalwork, but we do run some excellent adult training courses in mastering medicines, lambing skills, cattle AI to name a few. Continue reading to see the next courses/meetings we are running and get in touch if you would like to register.



## Sheep and Goats



- Did you have ewes that aborted or were found empty at the end of lambing? We can test for the most common causes of abortion by blood sampling these ewes.
- This is also the time to start thinking about vaccinating against the common causes of abortion, as once in a lifetime vaccination is possible. As the vaccines are live, it is important to time the arrival of the vaccine with when you want to vaccinate your female replacements. Let the office know now of how many doses of Toxovax and Cevac Chlamydia you will want and when!
- 8 weeks post-lambing is a key management point- weigh your lambs & body condition score your ewes. Consider earlier weaning for ewes of BCS 2 or below, or lambs that are growing less than 2/3 target growth rate (i.e. for standard commercial lambs- are less than 17kg at 8 weeks).
- Once lambs reach 8 weeks of age it is time to start regular monitoring of worm burden. Monthly pooled

worm egg counts are a great way to do this. Please hand us 10 fresh faecal samples from each group of lambs (15 if the group is >150 lambs), and request a FWEC pooled by group. You might be surprised at who needs treating and who does not!

- Worried that your lambs are not growing as you would like- give us a call!
- Do you know how using NSAIDs, like Metacam, can benefit your flock? Come along to our meeting on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June to find out more, including information from a study performed on our clients' flocks. Contact the office to book your place. FREE, lunch included.

## Cattle - Lameness in the Beef Herd - A Hidden Challenge

Lameness in beef cattle can be overlooked, yet it can have a significant impact on herd productivity, animal welfare, and overall farm profitability. While signs may be more subtle than in dairy herds, issues such as reduced weight gain, lower conception rates, and premature culling can all result from untreated foot problems. Common causes include white line disease, foul, digital dermatitis, sole ulcers and overgrown claws – particularly in cattle that are not routinely examined and trimmed. With some studies estimating prevalence at over 10% depending on the herd, this is a challenge that may deserve a little more attention.



Tackling lameness is multifactorial and requires a proactive approach. Factors such as underfoot conditions, nutrition and genetics can play a part. Detecting lameness quickly and treating the problem effectively within 48 hours is the key to success once lameness has been established. If you would like to learn a bit more, we are running a one day 'First Aid for Feet' Lantra approved cattle foot trimming course at the end of July. This will provide the basics of assessing a foot and initiating appropriate treatment. If you would like to know more about this topic or the course please give Adelle a call. By addressing lameness early and effectively, we can improve animal welfare, reduce financial losses, and ensure a more sustainable and efficient operation on farm.

## Dairy - Heat Stress

### Is Your Herd Summer-Ready?

As temperatures rise, so does the risk of **heat stress in dairy cows**—and the impact can be serious. Even moderate heat and humidity can affect milk production, fertility, and animal welfare.

### Recognise the Early Signs

Heat stress isn't just an issue during extreme heatwaves. Cows can start to show signs when the **temperature-humidity index (THI)** climbs above 68.



#### 👁️ Watch for:

- Rapid breathing or panting (>60 breaths/min)
- Drooling or excessive salivation
- Bunching in shade or near water troughs
- Reduced feed intake
- Drop in milk yield or fertility

#### 💧 Keep Water Flowing

Cows may drink 40–50% more water during hot weather. Ensure:

- Water troughs are **cleaned regularly**
- Flow rates are **10–15 litres per minute**
- There's **at least 10 cm of trough space per cow**
- **Multiple access points** to reduce crowding

#### 🌀 Ventilation & Shade: The Front Line

In housed systems:

- Check fans and vents are working efficiently.
- **Add extra fans** if possible and aim for strong cross-ventilation.
- Consider **misting systems** (if used properly to avoid raising humidity).

For grazing herds:

- Provide access to natural or artificial shade.

## Feeding in the Heat

Heat-stressed cows eat less—but careful feeding can help:

- Feed during **cooler times** (early morning/evening).
- Avoid sorting by keeping forage fresh and palatable.
- Monitor for acidosis risk, especially if ration changes are needed.

## Don't Forget the Calves

Youngstock are just as vulnerable:

- Calf hutches need good airflow and shade.
- Keep bedding dry and clean to reduce disease risk.
- Provide fresh water and **oral electrolytes** during diarrhoea or heat episodes

Give us a call if you need any advice.

## Pigs MMA - more common in summer?

### What is MMA?

MMA (Mastitis, Metritis, Agalactia) is a common post-farrowing syndrome in sows, typically occurring within 12–48 hours after farrowing. It impacts milk production, litter growth, and sow welfare.

### Summer Spike:

Studies and farm reports often show a higher incidence of MMA during the warmer months

**Why Summer?** Heat Stress: Elevated temperatures can impair sow immunity and feed intake, both of which are risk factors for MMA



- **Bacterial Growth:** Warm, humid conditions favor bacterial proliferation (e.g., E. coli, Klebsiella), increasing infection risk.
- **Hygiene Challenges:** Maintaining hygiene in farrowing pens becomes more difficult with increased fly activity and environmental contamination.
- **Treatment:** Prompt intervention is key. Treatment typically includes anti-inflammatory drugs, antibiotics, and oxytocin to support milk letdown.

### Prevention Tips for Summer:

- Make sure ventilation / cooling systems are working effectively.
- Maintain strict hygiene in farrowing areas and outdoors, continue monitoring bedding is clean and dry.
- Monitor sows closely post-farrowing for early signs (fever, reduced milk, swollen udders).

**Conclusion:** While MMA can occur year-round, proactive management is especially crucial in summer to reduce risk and maintain herd productivity. Please give us a call to discuss any concerns.

## Gamebirds

With the gamebird season fast approaching, now is the time to get your pre-season vet visit booked in ready in time for poults arriving. These early visits are essential for spotting and preventing problems before they cost you birds, time, and money.

A pre-season vet visit in June or early July:

- Allows us to dispense medications as required – for example multivits and solulyte for after their journey
- Allows discussion of meds plans, diagnostic testing and post-mortems as required
- Discuss feed and nutrition, to look for any imbalances in starter rations before they cause a problem
- To perform health checks on early poults
- To have a biosecurity walk-through to highlight any entry points, hygiene points and minimise disease entry



Please contact the office to book your visit.

## Medicine Updates

- Alamylin LA 200 & 300 - limited stock
- Betamox RTU - limited stock
- Bulvato 50ml - pre-order
- Closamectin (all sizes) - OOS
- Dectomax 200ml - expected December
- Gletvax 10d/50ml - OOS, 20d/100ml available
- Heptavac 50/100/250 - awaiting stock
- Heptavac 500ml- limited stock
- Penstrep 100ml - OOS (consider Pentomycin)

- Lambivac 50ml - OOS (100ml available)
- Leptavoid 25d - OOS
- Noromectin Equine Paste - OOS
- Opticlox - OOS (consider Orbenin)
- Ovipast 100ml-500ml - OOS
- Ovivac P Plus (100ml/500ml) – OOS
- Spotinor 250ml- Not due back this season
- Suvaxyn MH One – Limited stock available
- Synulox LC- OOS (consider Intramar LC)
- Spirovac 25d - OOS (consider Leptavoid)
- Ultrapen - stock due June
- Zactran 100ml - 50ml available

## Upcoming Workshops

### Understanding the benefits of NSAIDs

Join us to talk all things NSAID!

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are very useful drugs that improve animal welfare, aid recovery from disease, and reduce the negative impact on productivity of disease episodes. At this discussion talk we will cover:

- What are NSAIDs and how do they work?
- What is the evidence base for NSAIDs aiding in recovery?
- The evidence base for NSAIDs restoring productivity
- Findings of a study on the use of NSAIDs by local farmers
- Attitudes to using NSAIDs along side other medications

**Thursday 26th June, 1100 - 1400 (no charge)**

Please reserve your place at this free session by contacting the office.

Lunch included (kindly sponsored by Boehringer).

### Foot Trimming Workshop - First Aid for Feet

With BCVA Accredited Foot Health Trainer Adelle Jenkins and CHCSB Approved Instructor Paul Clayton.

Join us for this one-day workshop to:

- Understand the anatomy of a normal foot
- Identify the main signs and causes of lameness Identify the lameness lesion and learn to correctly use foot trimming equipment to assess a foot and apply a block to relieve weight bearing
- Understand when to refer to a vet or foot trimmer

**Thursday 31st July, 0900 - 1700, Larkmead Vets, Cholsey**

£280 +VAT per person (limited spaces), lunch included.

To reserve your space, please contact the office.

*Please note that all bit.ly links are case sensitive*