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## Vet's Viewpoint - Vikki



It was so wonderful to see so many of you come and support Julian to mark his retirement and the conclusion of a fantastic veterinary career. We shall miss him very much but wish him well in his deserved break!

As some of you may know already, I too will be leaving Larkmead at the end of the year to go down under to gain more experience in farm vetting in a different system. Having been at Larkmead since I qualified two and a half years ago, I couldn't have asked for a better, more knowledgeable and supportive team to start my career and have friends for life here. I would like to thank my colleagues, but also all of you, our lovely clients for the trust and kindness you have shown me. I will certainly miss your familiar faces and your animals, and I do hope to see you all again on farm in the future - next time with a calving season under my belt and maybe an Australian twang!

## Sheep and Goats

- With the wetter weather and lower levels of light, and after people have bought in sheep, now is the beginning of the sheep scab season! However, lice also become more common over the winter. Don't treat blindly, it wastes time, money and harms the environment. Ask us to investigate itchy sheep.
- This is also the season for lameness, as scald, footrot and CODD spread better in the wetter conditions. A lameness prevalence of 2% is achievable, good for sheep welfare and good for your productivity, profit and peace of mind. Ask us about a tailored lameness control plan for your flock.
- Get your forage analysed- and then ask us for a ration plan for your ewes in the run up to lambing. Getting nutrition correct can have all sorts of benefits, from fewer assisted lambings, to more vigorous lambs, from fewer lamb deaths to better lamb growth rates.
- Scanning results not what you would have wanted? Ask us to investigate!
- Missed out on vaccinating your ewes with CEVAC Chlamydia pre-tupping? Don't worry, you can use the inactivated vaccine Inmeva to protect them against EAE instead. Ask a vet for more details.



## Beef Cattle



As we head through December, it's a valuable time to focus on key winter health risks. Variable temperatures and high humidity significantly increase the likelihood of respiratory disease / pneumonia in housed cattle. Often we see a peak of cases in December, so along side the vaccines we have covered in previous editions try to avoid overcrowding, and keep bedding clean and dry to reduce pathogen load, clipping out backs and improving ventilation can also be very valuable.

Nutritional consistency is also crucial: cows losing condition now are more prone to metabolic issues at calving and poorer fertility later in the season, so monitor body condition closely and adjust rations where needed. Younger animals remain especially vulnerable to coccidiosis and pneumonia, so keep an eye out for early signs such as reduced feed intake, dullness, or changes in dung. Finally, wet, muddy ground can predispose stock to lameness and bacterial infections, so if you have any cattle still out be vigilant for these issues. Prioritising these health fundamentals now can prevent bigger problems as winter progresses.

## Annual Christmas Quiz!

Our annual Christmas Quiz will be on **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> of December at The George Hotel in Wallingford from 7pm**. All welcome - bring your team or join a Larkmead one! Supper provided. RSVP: [farm@larkmead.co.uk](mailto:farm@larkmead.co.uk)





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## Dairy Cattle



I recently went to a talk by Nial O'Boyle. He has been looking at milk samples from lame dairy cows and has discovered that their mitochondria have "leaky" cell membranes due to chronic inflammation. Mitochondria are the "power house" of the cell and make energy (ATP). Mitochondria don't work properly if inflammation is damaging their membranes. This explains why lame cows are so often really thin due to inflammation/pain of lameness, they also (obviously) don't stand for as long to eat, so consume less food – but now we also know that they are less able to make energy within their cells.

Therefore, even if the lame cow could stand and eat the same amount as the non-lame cow, she still wouldn't be able to make the same amount of energy as the non-lame cow. The chronic inflammation from the lameness is therefore like a circle of doom and the cows get thinner and thinner.

This is relevant to everyone, if we can reduce lameness becoming chronic inflammation by prompt and effective trimming of lame cows and also using NSAIDs (eg Kelaprogen) on lame cows we could increase healthspan and the number of lactations cows are in the herd increasing profitability.

## Pigs

Greasy Pig Disease or exudative epidermitis, remains a common and costly skin condition in pig herds, particularly affecting young weaners and growers. The disease is caused by the bacterium *Staphylococcus hyicus*, which produces toxins that damage the skin, leading to dark, greasy exudates and crusting lesions..



**Who's at Risk?** Piglets between 3 and 8 weeks old are most susceptible. The infection often follows skin abrasions which allow the bacteria to enter. Poor hygiene, high humidity, and overcrowding can all increase risk.

**Clinical Signs** Early symptoms include small, dark patches on the skin, especially around the face and neck, progressing to widespread greasy, crusted lesions. Severely affected pigs may become dehydrated and depressed, and in young piglets, mortality can be high if untreated.

**Treatment and Control** Prompt treatment with antibiotics effective against *Staph. hyicus* is crucial. Topical antiseptic washing with savlon can aid recovery and limit spread. .

Prevention hinges on good management – minimizing skin trauma, maintaining clean, dry environments, and ensuring sows have healthy skin before farrowing to reduce transmission.

**Takeaway** Greasy Pig Disease is manageable, but early recognition and good husbandry make all the difference. Regular monitoring and proactive hygiene practices remain your best defence.

## Upcoming Workshops Lambing Workshop - Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January, 10.00 - 13.00, Larkmead Vets Cholsey.

All sheep farmers and stockpersons are invited to attend this workshop on the essentials of lambing where we will cover:

- Pre lambing preparation & complications
- Discussion on lambing techniques and any problems that may arise during lambing
- Basics of normal lambing
- Timings & when to call the vet
- How to correct standard problems
- Post Lambing care of Ewe and Lambs
- Common problems with the newborn lamb

£50pp. 50% discount for Health Club Members. Book your place: [farm@larkmead.co.uk](mailto:farm@larkmead.co.uk)

## Medicine Updates

- Alamylin LA 300
- Betamox RTU - Redymox as alternative
- Bovalto Respi I/N 10d - 5d available
- Heptavac 100/250/500ml - 50ml available
- Lambivac 50ml - discontinued. 100ml available
- Synulox LC - Intramar as alternative
- Terramycin - Cyclospray available

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

