

Newsletter

October 2026

www.penbodevets.co.uk/farm



Penbode Farm Vets
Since 1840

Welcome to the team

We're excited to announce that three new members have joined the Penbode Farm Vets team. Please join us in welcoming Harriet, Sam and Logan.

Harriet

TB and Farm Administrator



Harriet is originally from the Oxfordshire area and graduated from Aberystwyth University in 2016 with a BSc (Hons) degree. She has worked in veterinary practices ever since, gaining experience across a range of roles and settings. Harriet also gained her Equine Artificial Insemination qualification before moving to Devon in 2018.

She has previously worked in both farm and equine practices, including team management roles, giving her a strong understanding of the day-to-day needs and demands of a large animal veterinary practice. She is also currently working towards her certificate in veterinary practice management. Having previously worked for Penbode a few years ago, Harriet is delighted to have returned in August 2026 as the Farm and TB Administrator.

Outside of work, Harriet enjoys riding and caring for her three horses, walking her Cocker Spaniel, Bailey, and spending time helping out on her partner's family dairy farm.

Sam

Veterinary Surgeon
BVSc MRCVS

Sam graduated from the University of Bristol in 2026. After seeing practice and working on farms all over the UK, he came to Penbode on placement and decided this was the place to be a farm vet. Sam particularly enjoys the variety of production systems around the Devon and Cornwall border, each with its own unique set of challenges and opportunities.



Logan

Veterinary Surgeon
BVSc MRCVS

Originally from South Wales Logan graduated from the University of Bristol in 2026. After seeing a range of different farm animal practices as a student he was keen to work in a busy practice. Following a placement at Penbode during university he was keen to move down from Wales to the South West to get stuck into a big farming community.



BARBER'S POLE WORM IS RECEIVING INCREASED ATTENTION ACROSS THE SOUTHWEST, BUT WHY?

BY VICTORIA PYNE MERCIER

Veterinary Surgeon
BVetMed MRCVS

Barber's Pole worm is receiving increased attention across the Southwest, but why?

As we are all aware, this summer has been unusually hot and dry. Now that we are slowly making our way into autumn, the recent rain mixed with warmer temperatures creates the perfect conditions for producing infectious *Haemonchus contortus* larvae.

H. contortus is a blood feeding roundworm that lives in the abomasum of sheep. It is commonly known as "Barber's Pole" worm because of the distinctive red-and-white stripe seen in feeding worms. Unlike other roundworms, *H. contortus* can cause severe anaemia, pale mucous membranes, weakness, low body condition, bottle jaw, and in severe cases sudden death. Because of where it lives in the sheep's gastrointestinal tract, we may not always see infected animals scour, and acutely infected animals may appear in good condition before they die.

So what can we do about it? It is important to remember that while we may be seeing an increase in *Haemonchus* cases, we should not assume that every thin ewe is infected. Blanket worming treatments will lead to eventual resistance and problems for treating flocks in the future.

Diagnosis of haemonchus can be supported by:

- 1. Faecal Egg Counts**
- 2. Assessing animals for anaemia using the FAMACHA scoring method**
- 3. Monitoring flock performance and body condition**
- 4. Post-Mortem Examination**

A short 2 hour, time-flexible online course for farmers on “all things Barber’s Pole worm” is now being offered by the University of Edinburgh. It features short training videos which discuss:

- The issues surrounding infection (how sheep become infected, what clinical signs to look out for)
- How to investigate if your farm is infected using the FAMACHA card system
- How to control infections through sustainable control strategies and targeted treatments

The course can be accessed anytime over a 60 day period, and once completed, you’ll receive a certificate and the official FAMACHA card to use on farm (only available to trained individuals).

The FAMACHA card system has been used successfully in other parts of the world for many years now, with animals identified as being infected with *Haemonchus* based on their eye colour (anaemia level). This simple system allows for individual treating of animals, thus reducing the use of drenches and slowing the development of worm resistance.

The course is available here:



If you are concerned you may have Barber's Pole worm in your flock, please give your local Penbode Sheep Team member a call, who will be more than happy to discuss sustainable parasite control strategies with you.



SCOPS <https://www.scops.org.uk/internal-parasites/worms/haemonchus-contortus/>



INVEST ONE DAY, IMPROVE FERTILITY ALL YEAR



Whether you've just finished your autumn calving block or calve all year round, you will soon be serving cows again. Why not review your technique and come to our AI refresher course to help optimise your conception rates?

The course is on **Friday 16th October 2026 and costs £175pp**. When you consider the cost of £7.08 per cow per day of an extended calving interval (Kingshay dairy costing focus: 2026), it's definitely worth your time and effort. An Australian study has shown that, in 45% of cases, the technique could be improved sufficiently to increase conception rates by at least 5%. Think of the savings that could potentially be made!

The course is a day long, and as well as practising our AI technique, we will review the following:

Oestrus detection

Both automated and manual, and the cow environment, plus frequency of observation. We will also review the hormonal control of the oestrus cycle.



Storage and the flask

Removing straws from a flask and the thawing process.

Loading the straws is a major 'pinch-point' in success. Semen quality is easily reduced by poor handling when removing the straw from the flask to effectively thawing, loading the gun and getting cow-side. It is easy to fall into bad habits at this stage and sometimes a 'second' pair of eyes will pick up a glaringly obvious mistake.

We will also review correct storage and record keeping.

Location for AI

The chances of success are greatest when a cow is well restrained, stress-free, and standing close to where the semen is stored. So we will look at how best to achieve this.



The vast majority of the time will be spent practising the two step process of AI

With clean overalls, a fresh glove, some lube and a paper towel to clean the vulva, the next hurdle is to catheterise the cervix. Common pit-falls at this stage include difficulties locating the cervix and confusion over the fornix (or blind vaginal pouches) located around the cervix.



Once engaged and through the cervix, we will practice the positioning of semen deposition and check this using a placebo staw and ultra-sound examination. This is often the most valuable part of the day, as it gives all the confidence to know that with a semen filled straw, the cow has the best chance to hold.

To book your place, please call your local branch or email jay.waylen@penbodevets.co.uk

FIRST AID FOR FEET ONE DAY COURSE



On **22nd October 2026** farm vet, Andy Stokes and Dave Rowe from Total Hoof Care will be running a **first aid for feet one day course**.

We will be covering the following:

- When to trim, identifying lame cows/mobility scoring.
- Examination of the foot, identification of major causes of lameness.
- Equipment and restraint.
- Preventative trimming and the 5-step method.
- Treatment of different lesions and application of blocks.

After attending the course, candidates will be confident in identifying and dealing with common on farm foot problems. The cost of the course is **£150pp (ex VAT)**.

You may be eligible for funding from The DART Trust. For more information, please visit their website or speak with Jay

For more details or to book your space, please email jay.waylen@penbodevets.co.uk or call your local branch.



Join Farm Vet Jemma on Thursday, 19th November 2026, at the Holsworthy Market for our next Mastering Meds Course.

Starting at 10:30am at Holsworthy Market £35pp exc VAT

One of the Red Tractor standards recommends that at least one member of staff has undertaken training on a veterinary-run medicines course and holds a certificate of competence.

As of February 2025, Red Tractor standards now state that this training must be completed every 5 years for the dairy sector.

What will be covered:

- Appropriate use of medicines
- Correct administration of medicines
- Correct medicine storage and record keeping

Attendees will receive a Certificate of Competence.

If you would like to attend, please contact your local branch to book your space or email jay.waylen@penbodevets.co.uk



**Stay connected with
Penbode Farm Vets**

Join our email list and you'll receive updates on upcoming courses

MEET FARM VET MATILDA

Veterinary Surgeon
BVetMed MRCVS



Matilda has been working at Penbode Holsworthy branch for almost three years since graduating from the Royal Veterinary College in 2023. Since joining the team, she has developed some varied clinical interests.

What is your favourite type of visit?

My favourite visit to do would be a routine visit for our dairy clients. I really enjoy working with farmers over time to improve the health and productivity of the herd. Plus, the practical aspect of scanning and seeing the foetus and ovaries I find really satisfying.

What is your favourite surgical procedure to perform?

That would have to be a ewe caesarean. I really enjoy lambing, but in those instances where we are unable to get the lambs out performing a caesarean is a lifesaver. When you're able to pull out two, three maybe even four healthy happy lambs and have them already trying to make their first steps whilst stitching up is really rewarding.





What is your area of special interest?

I have a particular passion for pathology and diagnostic testing. When confronted with a more unusual or complex case I love to dive right in and try to figure out what is going on. In these situations, it is sometimes a case of making the best of a bad situation and I like to try my best to get as many answers as possible to work our way through a problem. I am also the main vet involved with the Smallholders Club which allows me to indulge my love of some of our less common species such as goats and pigs and work with our smallholder clients.

What are you looking forward to developing throughout this coming year?

I am looking forward to developing the Smallholders Club and doing my best to engage more and more people in our training days and talks. I really enjoy putting on talks and trying to put on events that are going to be as practical and beneficial as possible. Our pre-lambing Ewe Nutrition talk with Forte Health, the Oral Fluids for Cattle talk plus demo with Nimrod and our lambing course being particular highlights of this year already.





LIVER FLUKE -TO TREAT OR NOT TO TREAT?

**You are invited to join us for our beef
and sheep autumn meeting:**

Tuesday 13th October 2026

At Penbode Vets, Holsworthy, EX22 6HB

7pm start

Pasty dinner

Free for Flock Health Club and Beef Scheme members or £5 per person

- After a warm, dry summer - should we be treating for liver fluke this autumn?
- We will have examples of both healthy and unhealthy livers, that we will be examining and discussing
- The benefits of benchmarking for your herd and flock

Sponsored by:



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**To book your place, please call your
local branch or email**

jay.waylen@penbodevets.co.uk

