Farm News
July 2019
Livestock health. Lifetime productivity.

- Understanding selective dry cow therapy
- All about the good flies
- VetPartners - one year on
- Sheep news
- Meet your ATT

www.penbodevets.co.uk
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A year ago this month Penbode Vets entered a brave new world and became part of a young and forward looking group of vets called VetPartners. Since then VetPartners has bolstered its farm veterinary credentials by adding eminent farm only practices such as Origin (WestPoint and Farmacy are part of this group) and the North West’s Lambert Leonard and May (LLM), amongst others. Penbode are still the largest group in the South West but we have been joined by Rosevean in Penzance and Calweton in Callington.

It’s worth noting that VetPartners is not your typical corporate group. Like most companies, it can count a variety of investors on its books. Apart from being operated by vets, the company is still 30% owned by vets - which may surprise many of you!

Here at Penbode, all of our Farm Partners are now Clinical Directors and have been joined by Tamsin Harris-Bryant. The farm team is continually growing and by the end of the year will consist of two dozen vets, two ATTs (lay TB Testers) and two or three VetTechs, ensuring you receive the best prompt day to day service as well as the best Out of Hours service in the area.

Our brand new building in Stratton is due for completion this summer (no more ducking into a bungalow!), and most of the farm team have new vehicles - making their mobile lives more comfortable! We have purchased new kit including two new Easi-Scanners for bovine fertility work.

VetPartners are committed to staff development through the improvement of veterinary knowledge, so our veterinary CPD (Continuous Professional Development) budget has also been increased. We have three excellent new farm graduates joining us in the summer who will be mentored and supported by senior members of the team and will be participating in the best farm new grad training scheme in the country.

We hope that the investment we’ve made into our team’s working lives has improved the service we offer you.

We are participating in nationwide health programmes - BVD: Stamp It Out and MilkSure - to name but two. TB testing is still being carried out by as we’re committed to testing for our clients, plus our vets are qualified to deliver a TB Advisory Service. We continue to support the younger generation. We sponsor as many of the counties’ young handler classes that are available; we’ve launched the Senior Young Handler Series for Young Shepherds and we’re working with Duchy College to deliver agricultural apprenticeships to the next generation of farmers.

We will continue to bring you updates on staff, investment, kit and other news...watch this space!
**In Focus**

**The good flies**

By Tomás James  MVB MRCVS

Flies on farm cause considerable nuisance to both cows and farmers during the summer months, as well as causing and spreading issues such as summer mastitis and New Forest eye.

Penbode Farm Vets are now offering a new, novel, natural approach to aid control of nuisance flies using ‘fly parasite’ species which in conjunction with traditional fly control methods can reduce fly numbers and in the long term cut down on usage of insecticides and treatments.

Fly parasite species parasitise fly pupae in breeding grounds on farm, thus reducing flies at source. These parasites are native UK species which live for between 10-30 days depending on weather and conditions, so we recommend topping up numbers approximately every fortnight.

Each bag contains c.50,000 parasitised fly pupae. The aim of the program is to spread these pupae around known or suspected fly breeding areas on farm such as dung heaps, unscraped areas along shed edges or on top of slats or slurry pits. Once hatched the parasites actively search out biting and nuisance fly pupa to breed and carry on their own life cycle. The number of bags required will depend on herd size, fly numbers and amount of fly breeding areas on farm, with fewer bags required long term as fly population decreases.
Controlling parasites in young stock (cont’d)

Our team will assess problem areas on farm and spread flies accordingly. This service is included in the cost of buying the fly larvae.

Fly parasites have been used successfully in other parts of the UK for some years, with farmers reporting marked decreases in fly numbers and cow stress having used parasites for a number of years.

"Tackling the population at the start of the season is a very simple solution as it keeps the numbers low and at a level that will not cause undue stress or disease transfer within the herd. Fly parasites do not have an instant effect on the number of flies, but with persistence and regular fortnightly use, you will see the benefits, as we have done.”

Cheshire farmer

"The process of using the flies was really simple and over the years we have reaped the benefits of a reduced fly population. The stress level of the cows (and workers!) has reduced, we have a better working environment and in my opinion the cows are happier and this can only contribute to better milk yield and immune function during the summer months”

160 cow organic farm, Chester

Penbode Farm Vets have vets and VetTechs trained in fly parasite usage. If you are interested or have any queries regarding the service please contact us.
Name: Hayley Falconer
Age: 26
Hometown: Bradworthy

How do you usually start your day? It depends what day of the week it is. Monday to Friday I milk cows from 5-7:30am and go straight to work at 8! Sometimes I do a personal training session too!

What does ATT mean? Approved Tuberculin Tester. There are only 10 of us in the UK (it’s a pilot scheme) and DEFRA are hoping to increase the numbers by the end of the year.

What are your plans for your next holiday? We’re planning on going ‘somewhere’ hot in Europe (where I’m not milking cows or TB Testing!) and then we’re ski-ing next winter.

What do you do in your spare time? I am a keen member of the Bradworthy YFC and I enjoy personal fitness.

What are you not permitted to do on farm? Farmers need to remember I’m not a vet - however I am a Part Time VetTech (on a Wednesday) and so I am able to carry out VetTech services such as mobility scoring, dehorning, CalfTracker amongst other things.

What is involved in your role as an ATT? After four months of theory and practical work, which included testing 500 cattle, I am now permitted to test independently. If I find an IR or a Reactor I have to call a Penbode supervisor (Dan Forrester, Phil Leighton or Sarah Phillpot) and then proceed with the test.

Main arguments in favour of Selective Dry Cow Therapy

- Asking ourselves the question: Why are we treating uninfected cows with antibiotics?
- Research has proven that use of antibiotics on low SCC cows increases the risk of coliform mastitis on the next lactation
- Reduced cost and labour involved for treatment
- Prudent use of antibiotics shows off as a responsible user
- Going with current or future government legislation
- Following milk buyer directives (e.g. Tesco, Arla etc)

Decision making before starting Selective Dry Cow Therapy (SDCT)

1. Is your herd suitable for SDCT?
   SDCT should only be considered for herds whose 3-month geometric mean Somatic Cell Count (SCC) (or in other words your payment average) is under 200,000. If the herd’s SCC is above this threshold, a mastitis plan should be devised alongside your vet, in order to reduce the count and improve udder health and management on farm.

2. What about SCC trends?
   Milk recording platforms like Herd Companion can be used to access milk buyer’s test results’ history. That history can reveal trends on the SCC which would make the herd unsuitable for SDCT. For example, rising SCC during the last few months or some high results on the last 6 months would deem the herd more suitable for a mastitis plan to level the cell count trends and then have them falling.

3. Which cow receives which treatment regime?
   Around the world where SDCT is being performed, there are a number of thresholds used to select cows for treatment and vice versa. In the UK, the SDCT protocols are formed alongside your vet, thresholds are dynamic and flexible and even treatment options will vary between cows, groups and herd populations. For example, a herd with a SCC of 100,000, will probably have a different individual cow SCC (ICSCC) threshold for Antibiotic Dry Cow Therapy (aDCT) than a herd with SCC of 200,000.
   Data-wise, the more information a herd has on ICSCC throughout the lactation period, the easier it is to construct a SDCT strategy on farm, and also the thresholds for treatment can be set higher with more confidence, thus reducing antibiotic use, reducing cost and labour of treatment and prevent new IMI (intra-mammary infections). Using these data, culling decisions can be discussed and made with extra confidence and evidence.
4. What bacteria are present on farm, causing mastitis cases?
Revealing the bacterial burden and specifying the pathogen(s) is a key step to mastitis planning and SDCT. That can be done alongside your vet, by performing a bacteriological culture and sensitivity test or a PCR, to find the specific bug causing mastitis cases. The cows to be sampled can be selected based on mastitis cases, individual high SCC or CMT tests (never CMT alone).

5. Which treatment options and administration techniques exist?
Obviously this is the main thing a farmer and their staff want to be clear on, as it is one of the main practicalities.

a. **ITS alone**: on cows with no evidence of current infection (Graph 1).

![Graph 1](image1.png) - A cow for which selective dry cow therapy may be appropriate. Low cell count and no cases of mastitis.

b. **ITS plus broad spectrum dry cow tube**: for cows with evidence of mastitis at dry-off. (Graph 2)

![Graph 2](image2.png) - A cow that requires antibiotic dry cow therapy as she suffered a case of mastitis and a high cell count ever since.

c. **ITS plus antibiotic Dry Cow Tube plus a systemic antibiotic (eg Tylan)**: although disputed and only offering a 5-8% extra cure rate - offered only as a last resort.

6. How do I monitor my SDCT strategy?
The obvious answer would be to monitor your herd’s SCC averages for any obvious changes. For more precise monitoring, more data are required. Those would be a monthly ICSCC especially pre dry-off and post dry off, in order to calculate cure rates, new IMI rates, recurrent infection rates etc.

We use the very simple terms, HIGHs and LOWs to label cows based on their ICSCC. So the percentage of cows being HIGH to LOW would be the cure rate on farm; the LOW to HIGH the new IMI rate; and the HIGH to HIGH the recurrent IMI rate. Obviously the LOW to LOW would be the percentage of the herd we would strive to improve as well as the HIGH to LOW percentage. These rates can be thoroughly discussed and investigated with your vet as part of your mastitis plan and SDCT strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested targets for monitoring SCCT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High to Low</td>
<td>&gt;80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low to Low</td>
<td>&gt;90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>New IMI 30 days post calving</td>
<td>&lt;8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low to High</td>
<td>&lt;10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>High to High</td>
<td>&lt;5%</td>
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Dry-off hygiene

All is well in theory and planning but, one of the most crucial procedures where mistakes are made, are the steps involved in the dry-off protocol on farm. Your vet can arrange on-farm training of your staff and demonstrate the golden standard of dry-off technique. Some simple principles to follow, as described in various resources are:

- **Dry-off after milking**, following a thorough cleaning of the parlour.
- **Pre-dip all four teats** working from front teats to the back teats.
- **Dry wipe all four teats** in the same order as pre dip.
- **Wipe the teat thoroughly** with swabs soaked in surgical spirit working in the same order.
- **Infuse the product** working from the back teats to the front teats.
- Consider whether the product is required in the udder (Antibiotics) or at the teat end (sealant) in order to hold or not hold the teat base firmly.
- **Post dip all cows**
- **Ensure cows return to a clean area** and monitor closely for 48-72 hours.

What to watch out for

- **Part or inaccurate records available**
  This is the main pitfall a farmer and their vet will face when discussing SDCT. Insufficient records is a relative term for farms as it can mean that ICSCC records are missing but mastitis is recorded and vice versa, or SCC and mastitis is not recorded at all. For herds aiming at a more robust approach, records can be produced for individual quarter SCC, so that treatment can be tailored per quarter.

- **No records at all**
  For herds with no records at all available, it is advisable to either join a recording scheme or take individual samples at late lactation and pre dry-off and have them tested using Penbode’s QScout machine (same day results) to obtain some decision making data.

- **CMT use only**
  While the CMT can detect subclinical mastitis and aid in treatment as well as management options, its results vary per user and it is not considered accurate enough as a decision making tool for DCT.

- **On farm cell count devices**
  Some farmers may choose to invest in such a device and it can prove really beneficial, as long as its accuracy meets the standards of a milk recording scheme or a Q-scout machine for example. In order to ascertain a device's accuracy, you should regularly check duplicate milk samples from high and low SCC at an approved lab or your vet’s lab.

- **Black spot defect in cheese**
  This used to be an issue when ITS were introduced, as the substance would cause BSD on cheese, which was totally safe but aesthetically undesirable. This can be prevented by correct infusion of ITS while pinching the base of the teat so that none of it gets into the udder during application.
The sale of all medicines including antibiotic tubes and sprays has to be pre-authorised by a vet. We are grateful to all those who call in advance to discuss their order.

However if a vet is not available to pre-authorise your medicines we are pleased to inform you that our Suitably Qualified Person (SQP) / VetTech Meg Brooking is qualified to prescribe all POM-VPS products including some vaccines and all wormers.

So if you require wormers, drenches, nutritional supplements or certain vaccines, then contact your local Penbode Farm Vets branch to see what our SQP can prescribe without needing to speak to a vet.

Please note - if you do want to speak to a vet, emergency permitting we aim to have at least two vets available for you to speak to by phone between 8 -10am and 12-2pm.
Penbode Farm Vets were delighted to have been invited to judge the NSA SW Young Shepherd Competition held at Southcott Farm near Umberleigh, by kind invitation of Bryan and Liz Griffiths. The young shepherds, aged between 17 and 26, competed for the top prize of £350! There were six stations - health / veterinary, ATV, shearing, lamb judging, EID knowledge and a generic sheep questionnaire. Congratulations to everyone who took part. Supporting such associations is so important for Penbode Farm Vets in our ongoing strategy to support the young farmers of tomorrow, today.

Protect your herd and flock

- Ensure imported animals have the correct paperwork and are vaccinated against BTV-4 and BTV-8. Speak to your vet or APHA if uncertain.
- A vaccine is available for import and is the best way to protect your livestock from becoming infected. If interested, please speak to your vet.
- Be vigilant and report to your vet if you are concerned.
  - Clinical signs include:
    - Fever
    - Nasal discharge
    - Swelling of the head and neck
    - Conjunctivitis
    - Swelling in and ulceration of the mouth
    - Drooling
    - Abortion

Sheep South West

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PENBODE FLOCK HEALTH CLUB

Be Red Tractor Compliant!
Annual Membership includes:

- **Flock Health Plan and Annual Review**
  Specifically tailored for your flock

- **6 monthly Flock Prescription Check**
  Allows us to continue to prescribe veterinary products for your flock. Usually £26.25* each

- **Unlimited mob Faecal Egg Counting (FEC)**
  Can be used throughout the year to assess the parasite burden of groups of lambs or ewes. Treatment and management decisions can then be made using the results. Usually £15.61* per sample.

**Annual Membership for just £10*/month** for clients who pay their bill via Direct Debit. Other benefits for DD payment include 15% discount off drug sales#

Alternatively membership can be purchased by a one off payment of £135*. Contact your usual branch to join the Penbode Flock Health Club or for more information on switching to a Direct Debit account.

*Ex Vat  # Terms and conditions apply
We really enjoy attending our local country shows and seeing our impressive local livestock in the ring. Especially when it’s an animal we helped to bring into the world, raise or cure!

One of the key areas in which we take most pride and pleasure is our continued support of the young handlers classes. We’re really keen to encourage as many young farmers to get involved as possible and so this year we’re giving away an exclusive show tshirt to each child who enters a class we’re sponsoring.

There are seven colours to collect (so no green bottle nightmare this year!). Why not encourage the next generation on your farm to get involved and see if they can ‘collect the set’!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Show</th>
<th>Penbode Sponsorship</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 6 to Saturday 8 June</td>
<td>Royal Cornwall Show</td>
<td>Sponsors of the Young Handler Cattle and Sheep Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 13 July</td>
<td>Liskeard Show</td>
<td>Sponsors of the Young Handler Cattle Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 25 July</td>
<td>Launceston Show</td>
<td>Sponsors of the Young Handler Cattle Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 7 August</td>
<td>North Devon Show</td>
<td>Sponsors of the Young Handler Cattle Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 8 August</td>
<td>Okehampton Show</td>
<td>Sponsors of the Young Handler Cattle Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 14 August</td>
<td>Camelford Show</td>
<td>Sponsors of Young Handler Cattle Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 22 August</td>
<td>Holsworthy &amp; Stratton Show</td>
<td>Sponsors of the Young Handler Cattle and Sheep Classes</td>
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