Autumn events and courses
Keeping up with the Red Tractor changes
The importance of optimum BCS in dry cows
Sheep lameness
News

Stratton branch official opening

We were delighted to see so many people at the official opening of the new Stratton surgery on Saturday 21 September. The new building is in the same location as before (at the top of the hill on the A39 by the roundabout), and here you will find ample parking and of course the lambing bay (which is now back in action.)

Many of you may remember retired Penbode vet Byron Rowlands who came and cut the ribbon for us. It was touching and inspiring to hear him talk, especially as he used to not only work, but also live in Horizon View.

Kivells autumn sales

Penbode Farm Vets were proud to sponsor the prize for the highest priced ram at the recent Kivells Hallworthy Ram Sale. This was won by a Texel Shearling ram owned by Angus Howie which sold for 470 guineas. We will also be supporting our local beef farmers at the Kivells South West Suckled Calf Association Sale on Tuesday 22 October.

Contact us

Bradworthy 01409 241241
Camelford 01840 212229
Holsworthy 01409 253418
Launceston 01566 86985
Stratton 01288 353766

farm@penbodevets.co.uk
www.penbodevets.co.uk
Find us on Facebook @penbodefarmvets
In Focus

The importance of optimum Body Condition Score in dry cows

By Nik Kakatsidis DVM MRCVS

The management of dry cows sometimes gets less attention than that of the higher maintenance milking herd. However recent research shows that some of the most common diseases such as milk fever, metritis, ketosis and displaced abomasum are linked to a poorly managed dry period.

An area receiving even less attention is Body Condition Scoring (BCS) at drying off. The ideal BCS in cows at drying off is **2.5 to 3.5** (Scores range from 1 to 5 in increments of 0.25.)

![BCS Images](image)

This target should be maintained throughout the dry period because any attempt to make overweight cows lose weight or make thin cows put on weight is risky and can lead to metabolic disorders such as ketosis in early lactation.


(cont'd)
Optimum body condition score in dry cows (cont’d)

A well-managed herd should aim for a target of no more than 10% of dry cows to be outside the target mentioned before. In reality though there will be some outliers and then some action needs to be taken:

Thin cows at drying off (<2.5)
- Cow may be carrying twins so check records
- Cow may be lame so feet ought to be checked as soon as possible
- Thin cows can be moved to the transition group earlier
- Monensin bolus (Kexxtone) treatment can be used

Fat cows at drying off (>3.5)
- Monensin bolus (Kexxtone) treatment is advised
- Post calving drenches of propylene glycol (Keto Aid) will help to prevent ketosis
- Quick milk test to check for ketosis can be used few days after calving
- Make sure cows get sufficient Dry Matter Intake (check feed space)
- Avoid making cows lose weight at this stage (risky thing to do)

Tips for successful Body Condition Scoring
- **Be consistent**: Make sure the same person scores the cows or if this isn’t possible everyone involved has the same training/guidelines
- **Be timely #1**: Score cows 100 days before drying them off so that there is time to reach the target at drying off
- **Be timely #2**: Score cows at calving, 60 days after calving, 100 days before drying off and at drying off
- **Score on the right**: Avoid using the left side of the cow because rumen fill can give misleading scores
- **Remember**: If you don’t measure it you can’t manage it!

Dry cow management is multifactorial and can be very challenging. If you have the impression that your dry cows have some outliers or there are more than 10% of the dry cows outside the optimal range, Penbode Farm Vets can provide a dry cow risk assessment visit and offer more farm specific solutions and recommendations.

For more information call one of our branches or speak to your vet.
In your vet’s wellies for a day

Name: Kerri McBride
Age: 23
Hometown: Originally from Didcot, Oxfordshire, but now living in Littleham.

How do you usually start your day?
Coffee and porridge; or bread baked by my boyfriend if I’m lucky!

What are your favourite aspects of the job?
My favourite things are sheep work, preventative health and sustainability! I am still pretty new to the job though, so at the moment, I’ve just been finding it really rewarding hearing about animals that I’ve successfully treated. Everyone’s been really lovely and welcoming so far.

Anything you’re not so fond of?
Not being able to do everything on my own yet!

What do you do in your spare time?
Surfing, climbing, running, yoga and growing veg.

What is your greatest achievement?
I’ve run a 50km trail race and a few mountain marathons but, more recently, my biggest achievement has been surfing a 6ft wave at Westward Ho!

What are your plans for your next holiday?
I’m off to Malta for a hen party long weekend this month (eek!).

Describe yourself in 3 words
Caring. Determined. Enthusiastic.

Trail running in the Alps
Four steps to improving sheep mobility

By Jessica Pitt-Pitts BVSc MRCVS

Lameness is one of the biggest health and welfare concerns in sheep farming, as well as a major source of production loss. The main causes of lameness are scald, foot rot and contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD) - all of which are contagious.

Here are four steps to follow to help reduce lameness and improve mobility in your flock.

Step 1: What is it?
Working out the cause of the problem is vital. Catch up affected animals, tip them and carefully clean debris from the foot. This should allow for visual identification of the issue. Below is a handy visual guide for identifying what it is you’ve got. If in doubt take a picture and show it to your vet.

**Left to right:** Scald (pinkness between toes), Footrot (scald+under running of hoof) and COOD (starts at coronary band and works down under hoof wall)

Step 2: How do you treat?
Once the problem is identified prompt and appropriate treatment needs to be implemented. There are multiple options for treatment, the basics of which are outlined on the next page.
The foot rot vaccine, Footvax, can also be used in the face of an outbreak to help manage and reduce symptoms and spread.

Trimming should never be used as a treatment. It increases damage, reduces healing and clippers can act as a source of infection. The only time to trim is to carefully remove extreme overgrowth to allow lesions to ‘breathe’.

**Step 3: How do you manage an on-going issue?**
A strict culling policy, combined with regular foot bathing (approximately five times/year) and strategic use of Footvax vaccine is the best way to manage on-going issues.

**Step 4: How do you keep the problem away?**
Ideally a closed flock policy is the gold standard but this is impractical for most sheep farmers. Careful selection of bought-in stock to prevent buying a problem combined with a quarantine protocol that includes foot bathing will help keep problems away. Contagious causes are often held in the pasture too, so knowing the history of ground before running stock is useful.

If you’re are struggling with a lameness issue or want to plan ahead and you currently have a flock health plan, or are planning to implement one, you can ask your vet to include tailored protocols.

Please contact your nearest branch to discuss a specific issue, we are happy to help.
Your annual livestock health plan review must be written and updated in conjunction with your vet.

An annual review of antibiotics used must be undertaken by your vet and any antibiotic failures should be discussed with your vet within one week of occurrence.

**Foot care & lameness management**

- Johne’s disease must be managed through the implementation of the National Johne’s Management Plan
- BVD must be managed through a BVD eradication programme designed in conjunction with your vet.
- At least one person, who is responsible for administering medicines has undertaken training and holds a certificate of competence/attendance from training undertaken since October 2016.
In August, Red Tractor made changes to their dairy standards which will come into force from 1 October 2019. If your health plan has been reviewed by your vet within the last 12 months (1 October 2018 – 30 September 2019), these updates will apply from 1 October 2019 onwards and will need to be addressed at your next review date.

How Penbode can help you

At your **annual herd health plan review**, your routine vet can discuss with you any emerging issues and identify areas where we can help improve farm efficiency, health and welfare.

Using your medicine purchases from the previous 12 months, we can advise you on areas where you can reduce your medicine usage without impacting on animal welfare.

For example, guiding you on the reduction in your use of antibiotics at dry off and moving towards selective dry cow therapy where appropriate.

If an antibiotic failure occurs, we can help you investigate the cause and implement strategies to prevent it occurring again.

We can facilitate this requirement with our Vet Techs being able to mobility score. Meg and Hayley are both on the Register of Mobility Scorers (ROM’s). **Don’t miss our Mobility Scoring offer** (see overleaf for details).

All of the vets at Penbode are **BCVA Accredited Johne’s Veterinary Advisors** and can advise you on the most appropriate management strategy for your farm.

By attending one of our BVD **Stamp It Out** meetings, you can access up to £850 worth of government funding to eradicate BVD on your farm.

Our **Mastering Medicines Course** covers all of the elements required by Red Tractor. We also run **MilkSure** courses (a course which is required by many milk buyers) which is another Red Tractor accredited course.
Special Mobility Scoring Offer

The new standards require farms to have lameness management in place including:
- mobility scoring protocol
- foot trimming protocol
- footbathing protocol

For foot problems relevant to the farm:
- Details of the person responsible for treating
- When and how the problem is treated and the controls, treatments and products used

Special offer! Four mobility scorings for the price of three!!
Our VetTechs are able to mobility score, with both Hayley and Meg being on the Register of Mobility Scorers (ROMs).

Sign up to our Mobility Scoring Offer and we will come out and do quarterly mobility scoring. You’ll pay for the first three and get the fourth FOC!

Contact your local branch to book your visit and to find out the price for your herd
Access £850 worth of BVD visits and testing

We are delighted to announce a third phase of Penbode Farm Vets BVD cluster meetings. Two attendees per farm are invited to attend either of our meetings in October. Please note that these meetings are for those who have not already attended a Cluster meeting (held in at the Bradworthy Inn, Wilsey Down Inn or Rydon Inn).

Thursday 24 October, 6:30-9:30pm
Trethorne Leisure Farm, Kennards House, Launceston PL15 8QE
Join us for a two course carvery

Tuesday 29 October 12 noon-2:30pm
West Country Inn, Hartland, Bideford EX39 6HB
Two course lunch meeting (when you call to book please ask for menu choices):

About BVD
Bovine Viral Diarrhoea or BVD is a highly contagious viral disease affecting cattle. It is one of the biggest diseases facing the UK cattle industry but is also a disease that could be easily eradicated from the UK cattle population. Signs of BVD aren’t always obvious and the costs are often hidden in reproductive failures, secondary disease, poor production and deaths.

It is estimated to cost businesses in lost performance c. £61 million p/a

The BVD Stamp It Out programme is particularly suited to those farmers who are not BVD Free or have not signed up to the BVD Free initiative. We are participating in delivering the programme and many of our vets have undertaken the additional training required.

All you need to do to qualify for free visits and funding is to attend an initial FREE two course meal ‘cluster’ meeting.

Contact your local branch to book your place
MilkSure Meeting

Thursday 17 October  11:30am—2:00pm
The Cow Shed Café, Holsworthy Market, Holsworthy EX22 7FA
Even if your milkbuyer hasn’t stipulated you must attend a MilkSure course, we recommend that farmers do so. You will then feel more in control of safeguarding your milk production. Contact your local branch to book your place and find out how to register with MilkSure to follow the course.

Mastering Medicines to Comply with New Red Tractor Guidelines

Penbode Farm Vets, North Road, EX22 6HB

Tuesday 22 October, 9am – 1pm
Monday 4 November, 9am – 1pm
The new Red Tractor standards require that at least one person, who is responsible for administering medicines, has undertaken training and holds a certificate of competence/attendance from training undertaken since October 2016.

£60pp (ex VAT)

BVD Cluster Meetings

Don’t miss your opportunity to get £850 of free BVD testing
These meetings are only for farmers who haven’t already attended a cluster meeting.

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