Show roundup
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What’s new on the pneumonia front
Meet the rainbow herd of Dunstable Farm
How our VetTechs can help you

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Are your cows coughing?

The warm, wet weather we are currently experiencing is great for cow worms and we are expecting outbreaks in our area over the next few weeks as mass hatching of gut and lungworm eggs occur following the dry spell of weather.

Eprecis® Injection
Highly effective zero milk withdrawal injectable wormer for the treatment of gastrointestinal roundworms, lungworms, warbles, mange mites, sucking lice and horn flies in dairy cows.

The benefits of using this product over a pour-on include:

- The injection can’t be washed off in the rain or licked off by other cows
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- Eprecis is faster acting (48 hours v. four days)
- The low sub-cutaneous dose rate is only 1ml/100kg
- More cost effective - about 15% cheaper

Eprecis® Injection Special Offer!
250ml only £130*
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Bovine Respiratory Disease (BRD, Calf Pneumonia) continues to pose a major threat to the cattle industry, associated with decreased production, high mortality levels and increased veterinary and labour costs.

On top of the short term effects, BRD can have severe long term impact due to loss of functional lung capacity of recovered animals.

That means:

**For Beef Farmers:** Longer finishing times  
**For Dairy Farmers:** Increased age at first calving, production and reproduction losses

A number of factors usually contribute to a calf’s susceptibility to respiratory disease.

Stress, concurrent disease, environment, insufficient colostrum management are just the tip of the iceberg. Hence it is worth checking your calves’ Total Proteins to assess colostral transfer and discuss with your vet on calf management and disease prevention.

There is a large number of Pathogens are implicated in both calf and cow pneumonia.

**Viral:** BRSv, PI3, IBR, BVDv  
**Bacterial (the most common):** *Mannheimia haemolytica, Pasteurella multocida, Histophilus somni* and *Mycoplasma bovis.*

**Typical Symptoms include but are not limited to:** Fever, open-mouth breathing, droopy ears, droopy eyelids, nose and eye secretions, loss of BCS, coughing and decreased activity.

On the diagnostic front, a few options are available. It is best to discuss these with your vet.

- **Nasopharyngeal swabs** (for bacteria & virus identification)  
- **Ocular swabs** (for IBR suspicions)  
- **BAL** (for bacteria, virus or mycoplasma identification)  
- **Paired serology blood samples** (14-21 days apart)  
- **Post-mortem investigation** (in severe outbreaks with high mortality)
The proper treatment of BRD is able to target two points, the bacteria and the inflammation.

Among systemic antibiotics, Nuflor is a frequent treatment option with documented high level of activity against BRD bacterial agents.

On the other point, bacteria cause severe inflammation leading to permanent damage to the animals' lungs. Hence, the use of an anti-inflammatory (NSAID) (e.g. Metacam, Finadyne) is of paramount importance, as research has shown that the combined use of an antibiotic and an NSAID leads to a faster clinical cure.

Practically so far, treatment options consisted of a combination of two different products (e.g. Draxxin and Metacam), and/or a single product combo licensed for BRD treatment (e.g. Resflor) combining Florfenicol and Flunixin. However, the recently made available in the market product Zeleris, combines the very potent antibiotic Florfenicol with Meloxicam (Metacam).

Recent studies have shown that the combo Florfenicol-Meloxicam (Zeleris) achieved quicker BRD treatment than the Florfenicol-Flunixin combo (Resflor). Thus, with better efficiency, faster time to cure without relapses and higher optimisation of Body Weight, Zeleris is deemed a more optimal BRD treatment. (see Figure 5 below)
What’s new on the pneumonia front? Cont’d

Last but not least, preventing BRD from setting foot on your farm should be the cornerstone of pneumonia management of farm. Most of the points you will need to consider can be applied to most diseases.

1. Diagnostic identification of the causative agent
2. Specific medical therapy
3. Correction of management, housing, nutrition and other deficiencies that contribute to respiratory disease.
4. Preventive medicine, including management techniques and vaccination.

Some examples of management interventions include but are not limited to:

- Early calf inoculation with intranasal vaccines
- Colostrum quality checks as well as total protein assessments
- Scour management
- Calf housing hygiene and biosecurity
- Appropriate calf grouping by age and/or size
- Improved ventilation with board removal or active ventilation systems
- The “smoke bomb” test to assess air flow
- Fly control
- Feeding equipment hygiene

A thorough discussion with your vet on BRD management will provide you with specifics and practical applications.
Show round up

We’ve had a thoroughly enjoyable show season this summer and we hope you have too. From serving ploughman’s lunches followed by Eton mess at the Royal Cornwall Show in Friday’s horrendous wind and rain to offering our signature cream teas (Devon and Cornish, with and without raisins!) at many of the other events, the show season has proved to be as rewarding as always. We catch up with old friends, make some new ones and learn that being a vet is just as much about the people you work with and support as about the animals you tend.
Showing his young Zwartble shearling at all eight qualifying shows certainly helped William Allin of Woodford Bridge to win the first Senior Young Handler Series, sponsored by Penbode Farm Vets. Snapping at his heels were the sisters Kayleigh and Bethan Rennie. The competition went right down to the wire, with the second and third place cash prizes hanging on the very last results at Holsworthy & Stratton Show.

In the end 15 year old Kayleigh took second and Bethan third. We have heard from the show secretaries that entries have been up this year and we hope that this is down to the new competition. Apologies for any issues there may have been over the upper age restriction. We will discuss this with the secretaries to ensure that next season’s sheep and cattle classes run without any confusion...watch this space!

Proud to support tomorrow’s farmers today

We are always delighted to see the passion and enthusiasm show by the show young handlers. We have given a ‘goody bag’ to every competitor in classes we sponsor for a long time and this year was the year of the ‘t-shirt’. Competitors in the Young Handler Cattle and Sheep Classes we sponsored received an eminently collectable and exclusive Show Season 2019 t-shirt in a variety of colours.
Two brands operate out of Dunstable Farm in Holsworthy Beacon. The challenger ice cream brand Farmer Tom’s and the Dunstable Dairy Herd which provides Farmer Tom’s core ingredient.

Steve Urquhart and his step-daughter Dannee Bird have been milking their rainbow herd, on the farm where Dannee’s great-grandmother’s was born, since September 2014. They are now tenants of the farm and safe to say the landlords (Colin and Mary Martin) are very happy with what they’re doing and it’s not surprising. They have grown their herd from 32 to now 120+ cows.

**How do you run your farm?**

We farm in a far more traditional way. We don’t use AI, we run our own bulls (British Blue and Hereford) with the cows and calve all year round. We tried synchronised block calving before but it just didn’t work for us. The cows seem to synchronise themselves - so much so that we have seen over half a dozen calve in one day! Where possible, the cows calve outside and we like to keep the calves on mum for about a week before transferring them onto a bottle/feeder. We’ve found it’s just not cost efficient to breed our own replacements, and with 113 acres (and an additional 100 rented all laid to grass), there’s a limit to how many cows we can run at one time on the farm.

“We go at cow pace. Cows don’t go at our pace.”

**What sort of herd do you have?**

We have a flying herd. We have to select our milking cows very carefully as we have a small (hand built) abreast milking parlour (although we do have some mod-cons such as ACRs). We look for stocky, hard-wearing in-calf cows that are used to grazing. The herd currently consists of British Friesian, Norwegian Red, Jersey, Dairy Shorthorn, Ayrshire, Guernsey, Brown Swiss and Fleckvieh. When it is milking time, both the 5am and 4pm milking, the cows find their own way into the collecting yards. We can only milk six at a time, so it can take about two and a half hours.

**Dannee:** We really care for our girls and because of this they deliver the product we’re looking for. We don’t push them. The average yield is a mere 6500l per year, but we are looking for quality - 5% butterfat and 4% protein - over quantity. Many cows have seen over a dozen lactations, and we’ve even one old girl who’s been with us since the start, who’s an amazing 20 years old! Where possible we tend to dry off more during January and February, when the demand for all things dairy is lower.
**What do you feed?**
Our cows stay out as much as possible so we’re reliant on strip grazing good grass and making our own silage. We work closely with Paul Cholwill, from Harpers, who provides us with both cake and fertiliser so that we continue to achieve our butterfat and protein levels. In the past, we have supplemented with sugar beet. We run ‘old-school’ machinery which we can maintain ourselves (Steve originally trained as an agricultural engineer) and share the silaging work with other small farmers in the local community.

**Tell us about the link with Farmer Tom’s?**
Five years ago, Farmer Tom’s were getting their milk from elsewhere. Then in 2014 we started supplying them. The ice cream and farming businesses have both grown together. We meet regularly and discuss our plans so that we can continue to work together in the seamless way we do now. We have our own steriliser and pasteuriser and our own secret batch pasteurisation process. The farm and the ice cream factory are linked by the dairy which holds the bulk tanks, so the milk goes directly from the parlour to the bulk tanks where Farmer Tom’s can then use it on their production line. Obviously we need to increase our yield for the summer months and also in the lead up to Christmas (when more ice-cream, cheese and clotted cream is ordered).

**Who came up with the bottled milk concept?**
**Dannee:** We were both very much behind this and we have lots of other plans for the future (you tend to think about these things whilst you’re milking!) I was teaching in a primary school until 2016, as well as being on the farm, but I then stopped teaching and started to support Steve full-time in the dairy venture. Then in 2018, Albie (the face of Dunstable Dairy) joined the Dunstable Dairy Herd.

**Steve:** The big milk buyers have always been very keen to add us to their contract list, but we’re keen to keep our business local and to other support local enterprises. We started to sell our milk directly to companies (such as Harpers Farm Supplies) in October 2018 and we support local village shops, community shops and farm shops (eg Blackberry Farmshop). Now 50% of our milk goes to ice cream, 45% to cheese and 5% is sold as bottled milk (on average around 800 reusable glass bottles go out per week).

**Have you had any challenges?**
**Dannee:** It is sometimes difficult to explain to people why neither the ice cream factory nor the farm sell products direct to consumer - especially as they will have seen our delivery vans around the area and our brand on the shelves of certain stores. But at the moment, as we’re growing, this is the best way of making the business work and it gives us the opportunity to support our local companies.

**Steve:** Of course working as a two man band (we do have Mike the relief milker) and being categorised as an SME do present you with both working and funding challenges.
In your vet’s wellies for a day

Name: Lesley Bingham

Age: 36

Hometown: Originally from Kendal, Cumbria. I moved in 2007 and now live near Hatherleigh

How do you usually start your day?
My children Jasmine and William normally wake me up with their demands to be fed and watered before I go to work! They’re only three and four so they can be forgiven!

What are your favourite aspects of the job?
I really enjoy working with block calving dairy herds and beef and sheep farms. I love organising people so particularly enjoy health planning and consultancy work. I have recently been carrying out advice visits for the TB advisory service which have been very rewarding.

Anything you’re not so fond of?
Rainy days :-(

Why did you become a vet?
I’m from a dairy background originally and I really enjoyed the vet visits. I liked what I saw and thought I’d like to do it too!

What do you do in your spare time?
I play forward for Okehampton hockey club and am also their secretary. My husband plays hockey too - so it’s a family affair!

What is your greatest achievement?
I have to say my two children!

What are your plans for your next holiday?
Most of our holidays are spent visiting family in Cumbria and Lincolnshire with nothing more exotic planned.

Describe yourself in three words.

Stunning views of Cumbria
Our team of VetTechs can carry out a variety of essential on farm services; delivering the same high quality you would expect from Penbode Farm Vets but at a cheaper price.

Our VetTechs and what they can do for you.
Megan Brooking is our senior VetTech and she is currently mentoring Walter Tucker who has just joined our team. Your vet may suggest that a VetTech visits your farm to carry out specific jobs at your convenience.

**Mobility scoring**
We recommend that this is done at least quarterly by a VetTech. This costs £25 for the first 50 cattle and £15 for each 50 thereafter.

**Vaccinate**
Provided that the vaccine has been bought from Penbode, our VetTechs are able to vaccinate livestock for £17.50 per hour.

**Disbud calves**
Two members of our farm team including a VetTech can disbud your calves for £5 per calf of <8 weeks for a minimum of 10 calves plus medicines (thereby freeing up the farmer’s time for other tasks.)

**Scribing at TB Tests**
If you haven’t the time to scribe at your TB Test, a VetTech can do so for £17.50 per hour

The following services are available for £35 per hour and no call out fee.

**Body condition scoring**
We recommend that this is done quarterly by a VetTech. We look at cows at the key points of their lactation cycle (drying off, pre-calving, peak yield) on the 1-5 scale, so as to monitor how well the cow’s diet is meeting her needs.

**Teat scoring**
Should be carried out quarterly. We can assess the impact of your milking parlour on your cow’s teats, as an aid to reducing mastitis and SCC.

**Milk sample**
We can take a milk sample for bacterial culture to inform treatment decisions for clinical cases, high cell count cases and to inform drying off decisions. Note: A lab fee is attached to analysis of samples.

**Weigh calves**
VetTechs can measure calves and assess colostrum transfer as part of our Calf Tracker Scheme.

**Udder singeing**
VetTechs can singe your cows’ udders to help keep them clean and to improve your parlour hygiene.

**Tail and Freeze Brand clipping**
VetTechs can assist you in keeping your herd clean and tidy.

Please contact your nearest surgery for more information
From Sunday 1 September, the Trethorne branch of WestPoint Vets will join the Penbode Farm Vets family and will cease trading as Westpoint Farm Vets (please note that no other WestPoint branches will be affected). The team of two - 12 years experienced vet Lesley Bingham (you can read about her on page 10) and receptionist Kath Dawe - will remain and they will of course be supported by the rest of the Penbode Farm Vets clinical and admin teams. Any Penbode clients based around the Trethorne area now have the option of dropping off samples at the branch (which will be rebranded as Penbode soon and which will be referred to as Penbode Farm Vets Launcesto) and of collecting drugs from there or from their locked box at Country Lanes Garden Centre, Okehampton. If you think this will help you please let us know. We hope that this will make your lives easier.

With the geographic growth of the practice it is important that we continue to retain a local feel and deliver a local service to all our clients. From the 1 September we will have a clinical team of 23 vets which gives us a greater scope to meet your needs. We generally split the team to cover the four areas, to ensure you keep seeing a familiar face.

We’ve mapped out the team below.