

Seeking Participants for research project

The University of Liverpool is running a project to investigate Johne's disease on UK beef and sheep farms.

Johne's disease in sheep is much more common than most people realise and this project will investigate the risk factors and effect of the disease on the productive lifespan of ewes and farm economics. Furthermore, little research has been done on cross species transmission and a major aim of this project is to better understand the risk posed by sheep to cattle for Johne's infection and vice versa.

The University of Liverpool are looking for sheep only, beef only and mixed beef and sheep farms to participate in this practical research, whether you think you have Johne's on your farm or not. If you wish to take part, please complete the short questionnaire which can be found here, <https://liverpool.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/johnes-disease-copy> along with further information about the project and a consent form.

A follow up, free of charge visit for flock and/or herd-level sampling and further data collection will be arranged for later in the year for approximately 100 suitable farms. Each enrolled farm will receive a detailed diagnostic report from the samples collected, free of charge.

Please feel free to email Laura Taylor at L.Taylor11@liverpool.ac.uk for further information.

Staff News



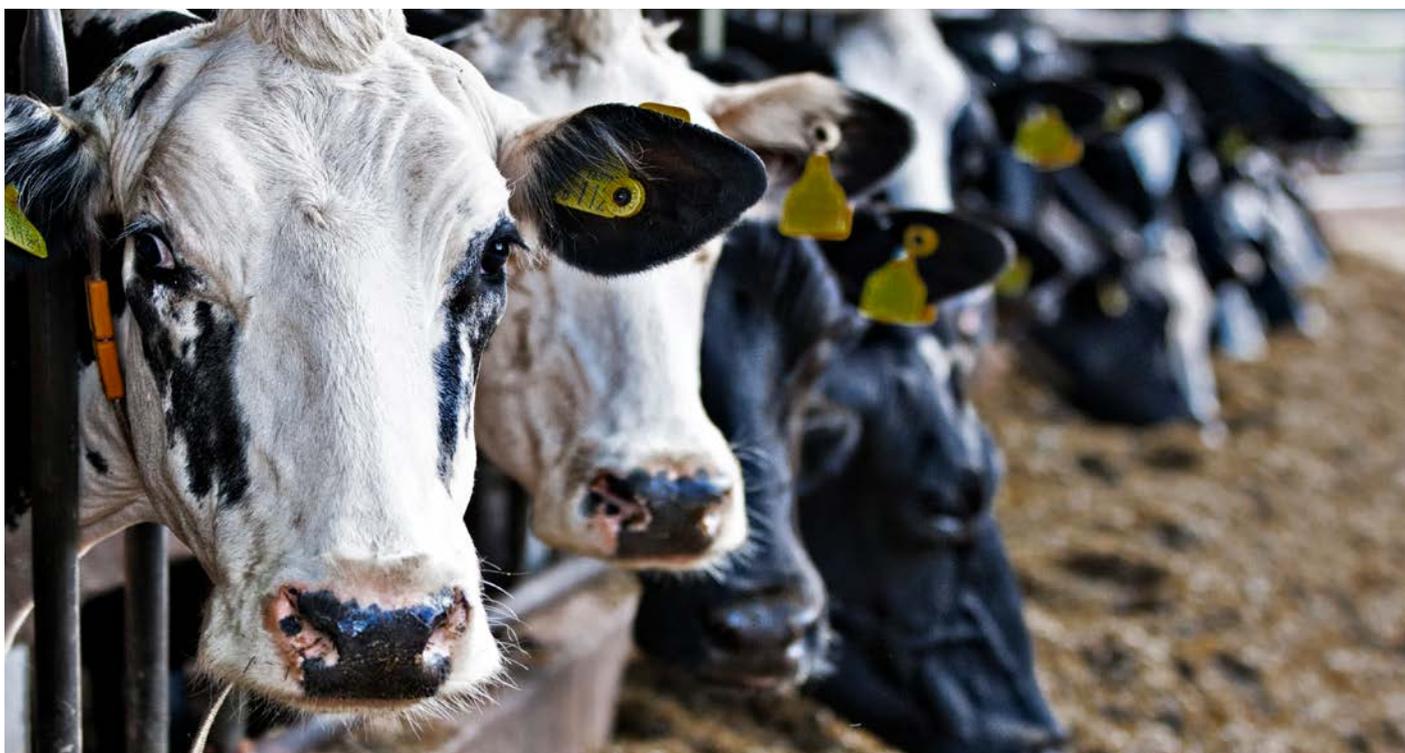
Next month will see a new face joining the veterinary team. Bedwyr Roberts is joining the practice in mid July having graduated from Liverpool University. Having grown up on the family beef and sheep farm near Denbigh, Bedwyr is passionate about farm animal

medicine. Some of you may already be familiar with Bedwyr. He has previously spent time with us as a student, where he made an excellent impression, and we are really looking forward to having him on board as a permanent member of the team.

Covid-19 Precautions

We would like to say a big thank you to all our clients for being so cooperative and understanding during the present lockdown.

Social distancing is vital and yet not easy to achieve in a normal work situation. We really appreciate that farmers are finding ingenious ways to restrain cattle and sheep for us while still keeping a 2 metre distance. Where circumstances dictate that we need your help to give an animal essential treatment and we cannot guarantee that we can stay more than 2 metres apart we may need to ask any helpers to wear gloves, face away or even to wear facemasks that we can provide. So if we sometimes ask people to stand clear or insist on PPE for everybody, please do not be offended - we only want everybody to stay safe.



Don't Ignore Fluke This Season

Advice has been published by SCOPS and COWS to help farmers take advantage of the warm weather and get control of fluke on their farms:

Last winter may have seen a relatively low incidence of fluke across the UK, but there are still individual farms reporting problems with chronic fluke in sheep. Livestock farmers are warned that liver fluke is carrying on as normal.

Despite the relatively mild winter experienced across the UK, average temperatures have generally remained below 10°C from December 2019 to March 2020, so the development of fluke on pasture will have slowed or even stopped during this period. Followed by a warm April, also one of the driest on record, snail activity and subsequent fluke development on pastures will also have been low this spring.

However, farmers are urged to not become complacent about the risk of fluke later in the season. "It is wise to test adult stock now to determine the need for any treatment to limit pasture contamination for the rest of the year," says Moyna Richey of APHA. Action now could help reduce fluke risk in the Autumn.

With temperatures beginning to rise as we go into the summer, the top priority now is preventing contamination of pastures with fluke eggs because reducing contamination of pasture with eggs now is key to mitigating risk in the autumn.

A single adult fluke can produce thousands of eggs in one day meaning infected stock could



be shedding large numbers of eggs, so if you haven't treated this spring, now is a good time to talk to your vet about checking your livestock.

Options are:

- Screen using faecal egg counts (FEC) from 10 sheep or cattle.
- Screen using a copro-antigen test on samples from 6-10 sheep or cattle.
- Fallen or dead stock are also very useful to check for fluke
- Bulk Milk Tank monitoring in dairy herds. Quarterly or monthly monitoring can help assess fluke exposure in cows and testing your herd now will provide a base line value and help identify when/if levels of exposure begin to rise later in the year.

Treatment

Most of the liver fluke inside animals at this time of year will be adults so treatment with a product that targets adult fluke only is recommended. Products containing Albendazole (at fluke dose rate), Oxytoclozanide (or Clorsulon in cattle) are effective adulticides.

When dosing always observe the COWS/SCOPS 5R's. Treat the Right animal with the Right dose of the Right product at the Right time and in the Right way

Key points:

- If faecal egg counts or copro-antigen testing come back positive consider treating that group of animals
- Check dead/fallen stock to identify fluke infections in your herd/flock
- If adult fluke are detected, treat with a product that targets adult fluke
- Prevent pasture contamination with fluke eggs now to reduce risk of disease in Autumn

Bull Testing - A Reminder

Infertile bulls are rare but sub-fertile bulls are common. A fully fertile stock bull running with fifty healthy cows can achieve a 90% pregnancy rate after a nine week mating period. But almost one in three stock bulls currently fail to achieve this target.

This means fewer cows get pregnant in time, leading to an extended calving interval and more barren cows. This carries a huge cost to both dairy and beef sucker herds. On dairy herds the cost of an extended calving interval can be between £2-£4/day for every day over the target calving interval. In spring calving suckler herds it leads to a higher barren rate and more cows calving late in the calving period. Calves that are born later in the calving block will be smaller at weaning/housing, which means they are likely to be smaller and of lower value when sold as stores.

Cows that calve later will find it more difficult to get cycling again and so are less likely to get in calf in time next year, leading to more barren cows, and an ever-extending calving block. We can carry out bull breeding soundness examinations to identify infertile and sub-fertile bulls before the breeding season to tighten calving patterns and maximise the pregnancy rates of our clients' herds.

The testing is best performed 4-6 weeks prior to the mating period so Spring Calving Herds need to act now. All stock bulls should be tested including new arrivals. This examination should form part of the annual health checks of both beef and dairy herds.

Please contact the office on 01978 311444 to discuss how testing your bull can help your herd and to book an examination.

