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farm vets LTD

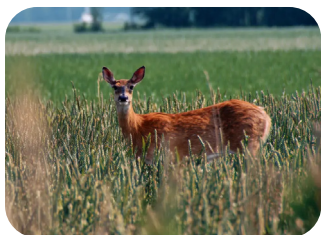
JUNE 2026



Deer, deer, deer.

As I write this, I'm looking forward to what promises to be a rare, hot bank holiday weekend—fingers crossed I can finally get the BBQ out!

It has already been an eventful morning, following an early-hours call-out to a deer involved in a road traffic accident. This was a first for me here in Cheshire! Deer are a recognised wildlife reservoir of TB and can play a role in transmission to livestock, and with an increasing deer population in the area this is something to keep an eye on. Although they don't tend to come into as frequent contact with grazing cattle or cattle feed in the way that badgers do, there are particular areas where they can be of significance to herd biosecurity.



Insights from Farm Post Mortems Ltd

Last month the practice hosted an interesting meeting with Ben Strugnell, who spoke to us about his career running Farm Post Mortems Ltd. Operating from a purpose-built facility in County Durham, Ben works at a site that handles nearly all the deadstock in the North East of England and has the opportunity to perform around 10 post-mortems on cattle and sheep daily.

His visit was a brilliant reminder of just how much valuable information can be gathered from performing post-mortems and carefully selecting which samples to take. Ultimately, understanding exactly why an animal died is one of our best tools for protecting the rest of your stock. By identifying and controlling disease exposure, you can prevent further losses and significantly improve the overall productivity of your herd or flock.

We strongly encourage a proactive approach to deadstock. While losing an animal is always a difficult event, we can turn it into a valuable preventative measure for the future. If you are able to call us to perform a post-mortem while the carcass is still fresh, the internal pathology can tell us a massive amount. For instance, looking inside the chest of an animal that succumbed to pneumonia can reveal six distinct gross pathological presentations, giving us a precise diagnosis. This can be followed by collecting samples for laboratory culture and pathogen identification so that more specific vaccine plans can be put in place.



AHWP Visits and BVD

Recently I have been busy completing Animal Health and Welfare Pathway visits. If you have cattle, assessing your BVD status as part of these visits now will allow you to be better prepared when BVD legislation is introduced in the future. With the recent increase in funding, these visits are even more worthwhile. Have your agreement number ready and give us a call to arrange your visit.

Team News

We have some wonderful team news to share! Amy Cox and her partner, Chris, welcomed a beautiful baby boy, Archie George, into the world on Friday 1st May at 10:22am. Weighing a healthy 10lb 13oz, both mum and baby are doing well. We send them our very best wishes and warmest congratulations!



Milk Hygiene

With restrictions to milk volume continuing and many processors still holding at a lower milk price despite some slight uplift, it is prudent to maximise the return on every litre of milk sold. Minimising both your Bactoscan and Somatic Cell Count (SCC) can provide real returns to farms over the month.

The AHDB milk hygiene reports the average UK Bactoscan for April around 28,000/ml and average SCC at 148,000/ml. It is worth reviewing your milk hygiene compared to the average to see where you sit. Can you improve your current performance?

BACTOSCAN

Bactoscan is a measure of the amount of bacteria in a milk sample, both alive and dead, this is different from Total Bacterial Counts (TBC) which measure the amount of live bacteria in a milk sample. If we were to test your colostrum cleanliness in the practice we perform a TBC. Bactoscan can be measured quicker than a TBC as there is no need to wait for the bacteria to grow, providing results on bacterial levels quicker, which is more useful to milk processors.

There are a few key areas that can have a big impact on Bactoscan and can be reviewed with your vet to try and identify your biggest win;

- Cow cleanliness - teats and tails
- Mastitis cases - are there missed cases? High number of subclinical cases?
- Poor milking plant cleaning and disinfection
 - » Check your vacuum line
 - » Is the hot water hot enough?
- Problems with milk cooling and storage
 - » How quickly does your milk cool?
- Environmental contamination from water-borne bacteria -how clean is your water?

BULK SOMATIC CELL COUNT

Bulk SCC can be a grumbling problem and can creep up on you if not kept in check. Often the first we hear about it is when SCC is >300,000/ml and there are some major penalties going on.

The first thing to tackle if you are being heavily penalised for a high SCC is to get it down below 300,000/ml. The best place to start is to pre-strip every cow and ideally if available use a California Milk Test to identify those really high SCC cows and take them out of the tank.

Identifying the source of the high SCC is then the next step. Is there a small number of very high



SCC cows, missed clinical cases or a high number of subclinical cases?

One of the first points of investigation is to do a milk recording for the whole herd to test individual cow SCC and identify the cows who are making a large contribution to the bulk tank.

Once the individual contributors have been identified, an action plan can be established along with your vet which will often target the following areas;

- Dry cow treatment protocols
- Individual high SCC cows for targeted management
- Culling chronic mastitis cases
- Early effective treatment of cases in lactation
- Staff training to aid early identification of mastitis cases

Current milk price leaves a lot to be desired for many dairy businesses, so any steps we can take to help you maximise your returns per litre by improving bulk SCC or Bactoscan we are happy to help.

Urine for a surprise

Recently Gwen (with a number of NFV spectators!) performed a perineal urethrostomy on a ram with a urinary blockage. This involved surgically reorienting the plumbing to the perineal area, bypassing the obstructed region. Flow restored, and ram much happier!



Dates for your diary

Tues 23rd - Fri 25th June

European Dairy Farmers Congress, Chester

This will be an exciting opportunity to connect with other dairy farmers from around Europe as well as hear and learn from some of the best in lectures and workshops.

Get in touch...



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