



Lanes
FARM VETS

Newsletter

November 2020

Hello

Covid 19: As I write this we are awaiting the details from the Government of the new lockdown. We are confident that our services will not be restricted and that we will continue to provide a comprehensive service.

Since March we have been taking every precaution within our team to reduce the risk of Covid 19. Our farm vets are still working remotely and only returning to the practice to process samples and restock our cars. We are pleased with how this has worked and it means should one of our vets become infected we can continue to provide a full service without the whole team being at risk or having to isolate.

Your safety is also of concern to us. If you wish us to wear a face mask (or if we are working in close contact with any of our farmers) we are happy to oblige, please feel free to ask – we won't be offended. We are regularly washing our hands and sanitising our equipment.

If you suspect you may have been exposed to Covid or are experiencing any symptoms do tell us before we visit your farm so we can take appropriate precautions.

Unfortunately, the regulations do mean we still can't hold our regular meetings. If anyone would be interested in us organising a remote zoom meeting on any subject, please don't hesitate to ask. If you require attendance at a Medicines Course, we are happy to hold them on farm for you and your staff.

National Johnes Plan: Dairy clients please be aware that your National Johnes Plan declaration is now due. Some milk buyers have extended the period for review to the end of December 2020. Please check with your milk buyer when yours is due and contact us to organise in plenty of time.

Computers: During the last month we have had to replace our practice management software. The data transfer encountered a few hiccups due to factors out of our control (not helped by Covid!). We are confident we have overcome all the issues (well done Jo & Helen for keeping sane!) however, if you do notice anything you don't understand please do ask.

Lastly, we hope everyone stays safe and well. If you are experiencing any problems getting to the vets for medicines (or any other problem) do get in touch – we are happy to help out wherever we can.

*'A local practice committed to delivering
outstanding service'*



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Handling Facilities

Having carried out our fair share of cattle handling and TB testing over the years, we have seen many handling systems in operation. There are plenty of designs for races from the simple to the state of the art. There are a few simple principles that can make even the most basic of facilities work quickly and efficiently.

- Cows like to walk uphill if possible, so a level or gently rising race works best - downhill is much slower as they fear slipping so are more cautious.
- Make sure the crush floor is non-slip as a cow that slides as she comes into the crush will dance about in an attempt to secure her footing. Checker plate is good but wood can be fine - it can get slippery when wet so cross braces for the front and back feet make the cow feel more secure.
- Cows also like to head back to where they came from (hence the use of circular races) and some of the quickest systems rely on the race and crush facing back towards the housing!
- Cattle love to walk towards a light, so point the crush towards daylight or have a light just in front of the crush. Cows don't like to cross a beam and will tend to stop at the back of the crush if that is where the strongest light is (which is often the case for feet and udder inspection). If you find cows randomly stop in the race and are hard to move forward try to walk up the crush yourself checking for stray light beams falling across the race which can then be blocked.
- Perhaps for this reason, and because there is reduced distraction, we find that solid sided races usually encourage cattle flow better than open sided races.
- The least frustrating races are those with a backing gate. There is not much more annoying than the back few cows reversing out of a full race and then refuse to come back in because they know something is up! Sliding gates in the race are better (and often safer) than swinging gates and it really helps if the cow behind the gate can see the front cow escape - she is more likely to move forward when the gate is opened.
- Lastly, make sure there is enough head room for cows in crushes with a gate and separate yoke. Many newer crushes have the gate well in front of the yoke or the gate is bowed in the middle which allows the cow to stretch her neck out and the yoke still closes behind her ears. If you have to wait for a cow to bend her head down in order to shut the yoke you are likely to waste time on each animal.

Handling facilities continued.

These simple principles can really help achieve safe, time efficient and stress free handling (for you and your stock!).

Although not design experts we are happy to discuss any plans you may have to improve your race.

If you are designing a new handling system we strongly recommend you read articles or look up videos by Temple Grandin. Temple is an American scientist who has won many awards for her innovative insight into cattle behaviour and reduction of stress in handling systems.

<https://www.grandinlivestockhandlingsystems.com>



Liver fluke: provisional Autumn forecast

The Autumn fluke forecast is predicting a high fluke risk for NW England. When evaluating fluke risk on-farm, it is important to take local conditions into consideration. Previous history of fluke infection, “flukey” pastures (permanently wet areas and/or permanent water bodies where snails may reside), co-grazing of sheep and cattle etc. will all increase risk from liver fluke. If in doubt, please ask.

Whilst the warm, wet conditions experienced over the summer are likely to have favoured development of liver fluke and their mud snail hosts, the relatively dry conditions earlier in the year may have delayed development to some extent, potentially pushing the peak risk period later into the year.

When considering acute disease, particularly in sheep, administering flukicide treatments in early autumn may not be beneficial in terms of protection, and may contribute to selection for drug resistance on farm. Instead, it is advised that first season lambs are used as sentinels by routine monthly blood sampling to monitor for rising antibodies, which indicates early stage infection.

It is therefore strongly advised that farmers with livestock grazing in high and medium risk regions are vigilant for signs of disease in the coming months, particularly in animals grazing “flukey” pastures and/or if there is a history of fluke infection on your farm.

Please ask if you are unsure regarding appropriate action for fluke control in your livestock.

TB testing

Tb testing is now getting quite busy with the majority of folks wanting testing in winter when cattle are housed. Please contact us as soon as you get notification of your testing window to book for a date of your choice. We are now booked up for big tests into December.

Remember the window is not flexible and DEFRA will penalise you if the test is not fully completed by the last date. Leave some time for any irregularities with missing tags etc be sorted as a test cannot be signed off as completed until every animal registered at your holding is either tested or accounted for. We will help where we can but ultimately we can only sign off what we have tested. Contact us if you have a query.

Foot Trimming Course

We are running our next foot trimming course in conjunction with Embryonics.

This course will be held at Arnside Tower Farm on 30th November—2nd December 2020.

As usual please book your place direct with Embryonics on 01606 854411.

The course is £475 plus vat and young farmers get a 10% discount.

Call now to avoid disappointment!

Contact numbers

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