



November 2024

Farming Grants - only a few months left of consultancy funding

Castle Vets are again teaming up with Business Information Point consultancy to let our farmers know how best to access the Sustainable Farming Initiative Funding. This funding includes the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway - having your herd/flock health plan paid for, alongside testing for certain diseases.

The workshop will provide the very latest information as the government funding for farm consultancy draws to a close. It will be one of the last chances for farmers to have this info contextualised and presented by local experts who can answer questions specific to farmers of the SW. These experts can then provide free one-to-one advice on your farm, to help you get to grips with the new grant systems, what to claim for and how, as the single farm payment is phased out.



Please register with Business Information Point via the link below. The meeting is 7-10pm, free to attend, with food provided.

27th November @ Callington Town Hall, PL17 7BD

<https://businessinfopoint.co.uk/workshops/the-latest-farm-grants-update-23/>

Bluetongue Virus + the rise of Haemonchus worms in 2024 – an update from our vets

Our next Flock club meeting will be held at the Launceston practice on November 12th at 6pm. All sheep clients are welcome and encouraged to attend, after what has been, for many, a difficult Summer and Autumn.



Vets Tim and Lucy will be leading discussions around both BTV-3 and Haemonchus contortus worms. Bluetongue virus was discussed in-depth in our last newsletter, and the current spread of disease can be found here:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=514ec88edec74575958d860f0196d2ea>

BTV-3 discussion will be followed by a look at anonymous faecal-egg-count-reduction data (drench checks) gathered from our Animal Health and Welfare Pathway clients this year. Looking into the types of worms that have been around, but also discussing the level of resistance to wormers we have routinely been reporting, Diagnosing *Haemonchus* has become more and more common over the past three years – bringing poor growth rates, anaemia and even deaths in its wake. We will discuss how this worm differs from more ‘traditional’ sheep worms, and how we can try to reduce its spread and impact.



Please contact reception to register your interest in attending.

Where? Castle Vets, Launceston

When? November 12th, 6pm

Food will, of course, be provided. This meeting is free of charge to all flock club members, or £25 per farm attending (not per person).

Lameness - individual and flock management in Smallholdings

Join vets Natalie and Lucy on November 21st, 18:30, at Castle Vets, Launceston, for an evening on sheep lameness. Practical tips and (hopefully!) some specimens to examine will make this a very valuable evening, giving you transferable skills for your flock.

Bring along some warm layers, as any practical elements will take place in our lambing bay!



Please give the surgery a call to RSVP, the cost is £25/attendee, food will of course be provided (+Mince Pies!).

When? 21st November, 1830-2030

Where? Castle Vets, Launceston

Cost? £25/attendee

The value of pregnancy-diagnosis in beef cattle

The average cost of keeping a suckler cow for a year is averaged at £650 with most of the cost concentrated in winter housing expenses. This is only offset by the production of a calf(s). An AHDB study in 2019 found that only around 82% of beef cows in the UK produce a live calf each year. All beef farms should be aiming for <5% of their cows to be barren every season, to maximize profitability.



Vet Lucy (6ft1") checking a rather short Dexter cow, last year, whilst kneeling!

This cost of replacing barren cows obviously fluctuates with the market value of cull cows vs replacements, but the cost does increase the longer an empty cow is left unidentified. This is due to the ‘hidden’ costs of feed intake, occupied housing space that could belong to a productive individual, and a delay in sourcing/retaining replacements.

It is possible to diagnose pregnancy in beef cows via ultrasound as little as 30days after mating. However, once a cow is more than 3-4 months in-calf, dating the pregnancy becomes less accurate, though it is possible to tell if she is empty or not. For those farms wanting to know more accurate pregnancy dates, we often recommend a few separate pregnancy diagnoses sessions. This will give you the most accurate dates for when to expect the calves.

If the bull has been out for over 30days, we will be able to identify any empty cows for you, meaning your culling decisions can be made without delay and additional cost. Not all cows that have been served will return and show obvious signs of ‘bulling’ if the mating is unsuccessful. Relying on seeing cows ‘return’ to the bull to check for empties can be effective, but only if the ‘returning’ cows happen to be in heat during the daylight hours, during the time you are watching them.

| BEEF HERD FERTILITY DATA COLLECTION SHEET | | | |
|--|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| MATING PERIOD FIGURES | | | |
| | COWS | HEIFERS | TARGET |
| Total number mated | | | |
| Number of bulls run | | | |
| Date bulls put with cows | | | |
| Date bulls removed | | | < 70 days |
| Number pregnant at PD (if done) | | | >95% |
| Number aborted | | | < 2% |
| Total number barren | | | <5% |

| CALVING PERIOD FIGURES | | | |
|---|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| | COWS | HEIFERS | TARGET |
| Total number calved | | | >95% of mated |
| Total number calves born (include dead calves, twins etc) | | | |
| Total no. calved in 1st 3 week period of calving * | | | >65% |
| Total calved in 2 nd 3 week period | | | |
| Total calved in 3 rd 3 week period and beyond | | | |
| Total number calves born dead | | | < 2% |
| Total number calves born live but died < 4 weeks of age | | | < 2% |
| Number of calves died aged 4 weeks -weaning | | | < 1% |
| Calf crop % (number of calves weaned ÷ number of cows mated x 100) | | | >94% |

*From date bull's put out to cows, add 285 days and count 3 week periods from this date (include any early calving cows in figure for first 3 week period).

We have unfortunately had several incidences this year of infertile or sub-fertile bulls ‘working’ in a herd, but this has only been identified via rectal ultrasound scanning, several months after the bull(s) has been taken away. If these farms had not scanned their cows, it could be much later before the empty cows showed themselves! With the current price of cull cows being high, and margins in general being very tight, we encourage anyone who hasn’t yet confirmed their cows in calf to do so, before spending the money on over-wintering them. Some basic targets for most beef herds (depending on your system!) are outlined above.

‘PD’s with a vet cost our time and a visit fee, or on a TB test £2.60-£3.50 per animal, depending on the numbers presented.

New Face

Christine Viggers – Approved TB Tester

Chrissie qualified as an Approved TB Tester in 2019 as part of the government’s pilot scheme. In her spare time, she can be found at home with her husband and their pedigree Beef shorthorn cows, British white’s cows and 3 Labradors.





GRASS FARMERS

DISCUSS HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR GRAZING WHILST ENJOYING A FREE LUNCH ON CASTLE VETS!!!

- ✓ Led by Laura Awdry from AHDB
- ✓ Lunch will be provided!
- ✓ Please wear clean clothing and boots that can be disinfected
- ✓ New faces always welcome!
- ✓ For more information, or to reserve your place, please call 01566 772371

Please ring the surgery to reserve your place.



**Wednesday 27th
November**

11am – 3pm

Topics covered:

**Farm Net Zero
demonstrative farm**

**End of season
grazing**

**On/off autumn
grazing**

**Out wintering grazing
cattle**

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**Venue:
Ennis Barton
Saint Columb
Cornwall
TR9 6EY**

**what3words:
///collides.tools.prices**

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