Jejunal haemorrhage syndrome is a relatively new disease to the UK but one which is being diagnosed with increasing frequency. Several cases have been seen by the Synergy Farm Health team alone these last few weeks compared to just a handful of cases seen in the entire UK less than a decade ago. The disease has an incredibly quick onset with death normally occurring within 24 hours of symptoms, it is a common scenario for the animal to be found as a sudden death. The disease also has a worryingly high mortality rate with close to 100% of affected animals dying, even when treatment is administered.

Symptoms include a severely depressed, dehydrated animal with milk drop passing scant bloody faeces. The colour of the faeces ranges from black to bright red and is caused by blood leaking into the intestine at the location of the jejunum. There is often only a small amount of faeces being passed because the clotted blood filling the intestine will eventually cause an obstruction, it is believed that the backing up of food caused by the obstruction is the actual cause of death in the animal.

Several theories for the cause of this disease have been proposed including common bacteria found in the soil as well as fungi found in mouldy feeds. Unfortunately no one knows its cause for certain and as a result the condition has gained much interest. There is currently a study going on that is offering free diagnostics on samples taken from JHS cases as well as a potential free post mortem to be undertaken by government laboratories. We would urge anyone who suspects a case of Jejunal haemorrhage syndrome to contact Synergy so that we can take advantage of the free services provided. By using these services we will also be providing opportunities to learn more about the nature of this disease including why it occurs and hopefully how to control it.

New and devastating diseases such as this highlight the importance of notifying your vet when problems arise. Reporting events such as sudden deaths act as a form of surveillance for the UK and help us effectively determine imminent problems to the livestock sector and deal with them as efficiently as possible. Surveillance is also an important way of showing our countries of export that we are diligently monitoring for emerging and notifiable diseases. By displaying both our disease status and evidence of continual monitoring we help reassure other countries to maintain high standards.

If there are any concerns or queries on this subject, please do contact the Synergy Farm Health team.

Ben Barber

Changes to your APHA TB Correspondence

Our clients with Somerset and Dorset holdings may have noticed that letters sent by APHA requesting TB tests refer to your vets as XL Farmcare Wessex. This does not mean you have to call any other contact number other than 01935 83682. This service will still be carried out by your vets.

XL Farmcare Wessex is a business formed by the collaboration of several large animal farm practices working together so that we now operate TB testing as a single business entity. As a group we are the largest existing provider of TB testing to this Government region to provide you all with a professional local service.
Farm Animal Vets — a ‘Rare’ Breed?

Many of our fellow veterinary professionals working in other fields such as small animal and equine may well think we are a ‘rare’ bunch – rare in the sense that we choose to work in often less than ideal conditions, whether it be the arrangements for a difficult operation or simply that we are outside in a howling gale with horizontal rain! We don’t agree of course, we love our work and any difficulties are more than compensated for by the great people we provide a service to.

However, did you know that only 4% of all the vets in the UK are working as farm animal only practitioners – in that sense perhaps we are rare!

By the time you read this we will be in the middle of our first ‘rotation’ of students from the Royal Veterinary College (London University). Much work, both bricks and mortar and brain ache (!) has gone into developing this project and we are passionate about encouraging young vets and aspiring vets to consider a career in farm animal practice. Our Intern program (first Gareth, then Emily, Peter, Rob and now Ben) has been a great success and we have seen the great positive effect of the energy and enthusiasm (and knowledge!) of all the younger members of our team. In the end it is these people that move a business forward (veterinary or farming).

We have really appreciated the positive response from many of you and especially those who agreed to be regular ‘farm partners’ for student visits. We hope the students will contribute something on many of these be they for mastitis, young stock, lameness etc. and we will always be pleased to hear from any farm that would like to get involved.

Hopefully we will give the students a great positive learning experience, a bit of fun and maybe encourage a few more to consider our line of work so that we don’t move from a ‘rare breed’ to the ‘endangered list’!

Mark Burnell

Investing time and money in the next generation

For the last two years the Vet Tech side of the business has been participating in a scheme, in conjunction with Bridgwater College, where we and other businesses can sponsor an agriculture student with a bursary type payment to help them with their tutorial fees. In return the successful candidate will spend 200 hours work experience with the business to gain useful work place knowledge and skills.

The main objective is to give young agricultural students an opportunity to broaden their knowledge and try something different. For us it’s a chance to raise the profile of Vet Techs and the role they play within the practice, as it is still not a recognised profession and for most it isn’t a job that they would be aware of. More and more Vet practices are employing trained Techs to carry out various tasks from hoof trimming, freeze branding, heifer weighing vaccinations, blood testing and many more.

Hopefully by participating in this scheme with the college it will give the students another career choice and we might unearth our next Vet Tech! Who knows – in the future this may even lead to a formal Vet Tech college course or apprenticeship scheme.

Last year we were pleased to sponsor Jacob Wagemans from West Huntspill. He spent five weeks with the business split into weekly blocks, in which time he learnt the basics of hoof trimming, freeze branding, heifer weighing and cattle handling. He really enjoyed the opportunity of hands on practical experience working with skilled technicians, and we certainly enjoyed the time spent teaching and working with such a keen and enthusiastic student.

Well done Jacob.

This year we are looking forward to welcoming Lucy Wilkins, a farmer’s daughter from Henley near Langport. We were very impressed with Lucy at the interviews held at Cannington, she was obviously very hard working, keen and passionate about her role within the family dairy farm whilst juggling a two year agriculture course. I’m sure Lucy will enjoy and gain some very useful knowledge and practical skills from her work experience with us at Synergy.

Dave Frecknall
Time to Plan Pre-Turnout Vaccinations

Turnout time will soon be upon us, so now is the time to start planning prevention of a few problems including Leptospirosis and Lungworm. We are pleased to be able to offer a new low price on Leptavoid H (25 dose pack) for this year and also an extra 5% discount when purchased in combination with Bovilis BVD which gives an additional saving of 10p per dose.

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<tr>
<td>Bovilis BVD</td>
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**Huskvac Price Offer**

£4.50 per dose To reflect the manufacturing problems of Bovilis Huskvac in 2014. We will be freezing the price for Spring 2015. Place your orders with the dispensary now.

**Liver Fluke Meetings**

Rob Goss and Ed Powell-Jackson recently held a very well attended evening meeting at the Lamb and Lion, Hambridge, discussing this very common parasite. The importance of the correct fluke treatment at the correct time of year was highlighted, as well as the cost of liver fluke and the damage it can do to cattle health and productivity. Well done Rob on taking some excellent and gruesome illustrative photographs! The evening concluded with a very pleasant social gathering over some hearty fodder. We are running a similar meeting at the Eagle Tavern, Buckland St Mary on Tuesday 10th February - all are welcome to attend - please contact Lucy in our office.

**Congratulations**

Congratulations to Synergy clients Tom and Helen Garland whose dairy sheep enterprise recently featured in the Farmers Guardian. Tom and Helen, who farm at Curry Rivel, between Langport and Taunton, milk 550 Friesland sheep, lambing in blocks throughout the year. Their milk is sold to produce cheese and yoghurt, with yields of approx 350 litres per lactation at an impressive 6.3% butterfat and 5.2% protein.

As Tom says in his article, there is one considerable advantage over milking cows, in that the couple set their own milk price – in agreement with buyers – rather than taking whatever a global market dictates.... You can read more at: http://www.farmersguardian.com/home/livestock/livestock-features/milking-sheep-for-all-year-round-production/69443.article

**Interesting Case**

I recently was called to a calving where the farmer “wasn’t sure what was going on”. After having a very good feel myself of what felt like 2 front legs and a rear I initially thought that it could be twins with one head back and one breached. After feeling for a while longer I discovered that the ‘front legs’ were attached to the rear ultimately meaning a deformed calf and a caesarean being needed. After having to extend my incision multiple times, so eventually it was almost the width of the cow, we managed to get out a very deformed calf that almost gave me nightmares. This highlights the importance of knowing exactly what you are feeling and if you’re not sure then giving us a call.

Ed Powell-Jackson

Leesa Morrish

**Administrative Assistant Required – Part-Time & Full-Time Hours Considered**

An enthusiastic and highly organised individual is required to join our Administration team at Synergy Farm Health - a busy, progressive Farm Animal Veterinary Practice based in Evershot Dorset. We require a good communicator with the ability to prioritise workload and work to agreed timescales. Responsibilities include TB data input and the use of several IT programmes for report analysis. The ideal candidate needs to perform tasks accurately and be able to handle several tasks consecutively along with meeting deadlines in a pressured and busy environment. Sense of humour is also essential! Synergy Farm Health is an equal opportunities employer.

Please apply by email to heidi.white@synergyfarmhealth.com
Dorset
Emily Gascoigne
With the gluttony of the Christmas period behind us, many of our herds and flocks are gearing up for the forthcoming 'busyness' of spring.

The season of pre-lambing visits and pre-calving visits is upon us with the general impression that animals have overwintered well and body conditions are favourable going into Spring.

With flocks we are looking at scanning performance as an indicator of flock preparation prior to tupping and for clues as to the lambing ahead. Body condition score is 'king' and crucial for ewe performance and health in late pregnancy and ultimately for optimal lamb performance during lacatation.

The importance of colostrum management is brought sharply into focus with our block calving herds but should be a timely reminder for all herds 'colostrum IS the food of life', and the old adage 'cleanliness is next to godliness'!

As I write this, Pete Siviter, Ben Barber and I are heading off to our last panto rehearsal before the big opening night. One of us is wearing high heeled leather boots, another a fairy costume and the third a regal outfit. I will leave it to your imagination, which way round it is in our young farmer production of "Shrek and the Purbeck Stone!"

Devon
Leesa Morrish
I can’t believe how time is flying at the moment. I have already been here for 3 months and have settled in quite nicely. Only 6 months to go and then we will be off to travel around Europe again for a while and then back home to NZ. I have been getting jealous of friends and family (and Esme and Moff) at home sitting in the sunshine and having BBQs/beers in the 30 degree heat. At least now the days are getting longer and daffodils are starting to flower so spring is on its way slowly.

I have been to see quite a few sick calves lately. Remember there are 3 things to consider when dealing with disease in animals – the bug, the environment and the animal. Clean, dry bedding is very important for both diarrhoea and pneumonia. Try kneeling on the bedding for 30 seconds and if you are wet then it needs to be addressed. Also colostrum management is equally if not more important. The first feed the calf gets is key – they need at least 2 litres of good quality colostrum the first time they suckle, within the first 6 hours of life, to get the best protection. Vaccination is a good insurance programme to help boost the calves immunity and if you want to discuss what is available or if you are having a problem please give us a call.

Feeding Beef Stock (Calves, Stores and Sucklers)

After the success of the first Beef meeting on Weaning Management we are excited to announce our second Beef meeting of three has been organised for Friday 20th February. It is kindly being hosted by Deane Laramy of Firs Farm, Honiton and Sponsored by Zoetis. Together we have organised a guest speaker from SAC consulting Karen Stewart who has a particular interest in beef and sheep nutrition.

We will have a farm walk commencing at 10.30 looking at various stock and discussing the best feeding regimes for each group. We will run through to 1.30 at the latest when we will retire to the Hare and Hounds, Gittisham, for some food and drinks provided by our sponsor. Karen, Zoetis and several of the Synergy Vets will be there to have a social chat or answer any questions you might have.

If you wish to attend or want more information please contact Lucy on 01935 83682
We look forward to seeing you there

Somerset
Ed Hayes
I hope everyone enjoyed their Christmases and a Happy New Year to all.
We are receiving an increasing number of ear notch samples for BVD testing. The majority of these are from young calves taken at the time of normal ID tagging. It is encouraging to see that for most of the farms there are only occasional positives but it is good to weed out these persistently infected calves before they cause more problems later on!

I am a big believer in trying to screen your cows for diseases before the number of cases increase and a number of you have been unfortunate enough to listen to my tales of Neospora woe (a nasty parasite that causes abortion in cattle). I have seen a number of positive blood samples from cows that have aborted in recent weeks- please keep putting up your aborted cows for blood samples so we can try to reduce these numbers!

A number of clients have mentioned an increased number of digital dermatitis cases as the winter has progressed and cows have been exposed to more slurry and more bacteria! It may therefore be a good time to make sure the cows have been footbathed and that you are doing it as regularly as it needs to be done! Calf pneumonia cases are also troubling a number of farms in the area and may continue if the weather keeps changing its mind.

With all best wishes for 2015

Liver Fluke Meeting
Tuesday 10th February
The Eagle Tavern, Buckland St Mary
Fedding Beef Stock
Friday 20th February
Firs Farm, Honiton

For further information or to book your place please contact Lucy on 01935 83682