



Frame, Swift and Partners Newsletter Jan 2009

A Happy New Year to all of you and lets all look forward to great (and drier) 2009. A lot seems to have happened



since our last newsletter. We are delighted that Martin Rook has joined the team, making 11 full time vets and 2 part time. Many of you will have already met him since he started in August; Martin is particularly interested in the farm side of the practice, and is a local Cumbrian lad.

MEETINGS

Chris spoke at an EBLEX meeting recently at one of our client's farms on **pneumonia** prevention. This was alongside a specialist in building design. There is no doubt that the environment - ventilation, airspace, bedding and stocking density are the most important factors in pneumonia control. As always, unfortunately we have had outbreaks this autumn in very good buildings, and turned up RSV and Pi3 viruses as the culprits. This shows that vaccination against these diseases must also be part of the control regime. On a slightly more positive note, luckily the newer intra-nasal vaccines produce a much more rapid immunity, and can effectively be used during an established outbreak.

Matt hosted a sheep meeting at Newton Rigg in November for the excellent Scottish research institute the Moredun Foundation - and indeed Matt is on their board of trustees. The meeting was on **monitoring sheep feeding** at lambing time by using blood profiles. I know some of you were there anyway - but if you want further details about the usefulness of this approach, don't hesitate to contact Matt at the surgery - or read his article in The Cumberland News!

ADAS meeting on 'Low input sheep production' Thurs 29th Jan , 7.30pm at the Brantwood, Stainton.

FERTILITY and technology

Much of our time is spent monitoring and helping with cattle fertility, especially on the dairy side. As you know, keeping the calving interval down is the best way to maximise the herd's milk yield. We can now compare and 'benchmark' farms that milk record with CIS or NMR. If

you milk record and you are not on our Internet list yet, please let us know.

Fertility Efficiency is a measure of how well things are going, and is made up of conception rate and heat detection rate. The herd conception rate is largely down to nutrition and this can be difficult to dramatically alter in the short term, but the heat detection rate is down to how hard you are looking - and there is always room for improvement! Looking for 20 minutes 3 times a day when the cows are not being milked or moved is the traditional advice. But these days who has the time to reliably do this every day (including Bank Holidays)? A number of clients have installed electronic systems to aid detection, and so far these have been universally popular and cost efficient. Fewer cows are presented at routine visits as 'not seen bulling' and more cows are pregnant on PD. Remember a saving of 5 days to conception can save £2,000 a year in a 100 cow herd.

MILKING and technology

The first **robots** have been installed on one of our client's farms - two robots to milk half of the herd. So far so good, apart from a few teething problems. Other clients are installing automated back flushing cluster disinfection and teat dipping systems. This idea has tremendous potential to prevent the spread of contagious mastitis at milking time and is certainly the way forward - although at a cost. Will these be the 'norm' in a few years time? They don't help environmental mastitis though and in general cell counts have been up this winter. Investigations have found a mixture of environmental (*E.coli* and *Strep uberis*) and contagious bugs (especially *Staph aureus*). The environmental problems have largely been down to a lack of good dry straw for bedding and a lack of kiln dried sawdust locally.

If you are having problems, let us know. Control of mastitis and cell counts is vital and obviously can be sources of significant loss of revenue. Investigations start with sampling of individual cows and/or the bulk milk tank, plus analysis of the farm mastitis records - however complete or incomplete they may be. This is then followed by a farm visit to include milking time to build up a full picture of what is happening on farm. From this, an action plan can be drawn up to get things back on track. Give us a call at the surgery for more information

HERE'S TO 2009!