

# Spring 2024 Farm Newsletter

## Registering Backyard Flocks

Defra have announced that all backyard flocks must be registered, before the **1<sup>st</sup> October 2024**. This includes all birds that aren't kept inside your house as pets. Previously this only applied to flocks of more than 50 birds, but now includes even just one duck or chicken.



## Farming Connect

Farming connect funding is available again for vet time, health planning, disease and poor performance investigation including cattle scanning. Farming connect will give you a "70% off voucher" off a total bill of up to £500 excluding VAT. This is available twice a year for the next two years while funds last. A 30% contribution must always be made by the farmer.

Registration must occur before work is carried out, but applying is easy! If you're already with farming connect just register your interest with your vet or your local farming connect representative.

## Included in this issue:

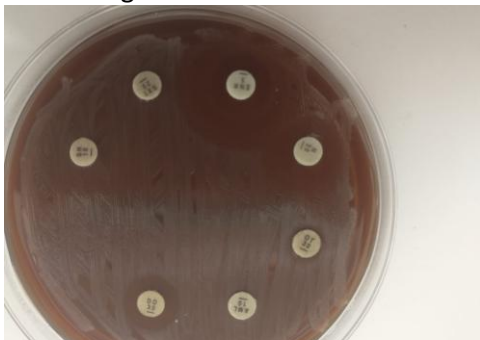
- Farming Connect
- Antibiotic resistance
- Farm dog neutering
- Backyard flock registration
- Nematodirus in Sheep
- Getting the best out of replacement heifers
- New staff member

## Resistance to Antibiotics

We are seeing a significant increase in the number of cases of antibiotic resistance in this area. For farms affected, certain antibiotics are no longer effective, which reduces the number of options they have to treat cases with.

It's important to start treatment with first-line antibiotics, so that if resistance develops, second-line options are preserved. Good isolation periods for bought in stock also reduce the risk, as they are less likely to carry resistant bacteria onto your ground. We can offer in-house culture and sensitivity swabs, which check which antibiotics work against that disease, to clients.

For example, on the farm below, a number of antibiotics aren't effective, including Tuloxin, Alamycin, Betamox, Trymox, Spectam and Diatrim. As you can imagine, this has significant effects on their treatment options during any disease outbreak.



## Flock Club Evenings

Our Flock Club evening talks are back!

### The Monty Club, Newtown

Post-lambing losses: from birth to weaning – 30th April  
Sheep lameness – 28th May

### Red Lion, Llanidloes

Post-lambing losses: from birth to weaning – 7th May  
Sheep lameness – 4th June

### Horse and Jockey, Knighton

Post-lambing losses: from birth to weaning – 14th May  
Sheep lameness – 11th June

### Severn Arms, Penybont

Post-lambing losses: from birth to weaning – 21st May  
Sheep lameness – 18th June

## Farm Dog Neutering Funding

Funding is still available for some farm dog neutering!  
Phone for more details

## Hafren Veterinary Group

Newtown

01686 625344

Llanidloes

01686 413475

Knighton

01547 528292

Cross Gates

01597 851500



### New Staff Member



Hi I'm Róisín, I moved to Hafren at the end of November. I graduated from SGGW in Warsaw Poland in 2022.

Previously I completed an internship in a busy Equine Hospital in Shropshire. I come from a farm background from the west of Ireland. At home we keep brood mares, beef and sheep. I especially enjoy reproductive work, foal care and lambings.

### RCVS Practice Standards

We're proud to have achieved RCVS accreditation in all our species again this year! We are once again the only practice in Wales to achieve this mixed accreditation.

### Nematodirus in Lambs

One of the worst worm issues you can see in summer is Nematodirus in your lambs. Its unusual lifecycle means this worm suddenly comes out at once under certain weather conditions, leading to its high death rate. Because the damage is done by the young larvae that aren't laying eggs yet, faecal egg counts aren't a reliable indicator of Nematodirus risk. It's important to start tackling the problem as soon as you are suspicious of an outbreak.

#### Risk factors to watch out for

Lambs grazing on ground used for lambs last year and one of the following:

- Old enough to eat significant amounts of grass (usually 6-12 weeks)
- Groups that might also be challenged by coccidiosis
- Sudden cold snap followed by warm weather (over 10c)
- Lambs under other stress, such as triplets, fostered or on especially old/young ewes

The SCOPS nematodirus forecast can also be used to consider likely periods of risk on your farm.

### Getting the Best Out of Replacement Heifers

Starting heifers out right is essential for good fertility performance over their lifetimes. Below are a few factors to consider as we head out of calving.

#### Weight

Heifers should have reached 65% of their adult target weight at 15 months old. Because of the high weight gain per day required to achieve this, most replacement heifers have to be selected from the calves born in the first month of the calving block. Good weight gain over summer will be essential, as most heifers will need an average daily live weight gain of 0.85kg from birth.

#### Preparing for the mating block

Prior to mating, heifers should be checked for any trace element issue, and these corrected well before the mating period begins, as trace element deficiencies can have a major effect on fertility. Any vaccinations required (eg BVD) should be completed at least two weeks before mating begins, to avoid stress impacting on fertility. Worm and fluke status should also be checked and treated if necessary.

Selecting a bull or semen with good selection indices for your herd plans is very important. Some figures to consider in heifers are a good self-replacing index to breed more replacements, or a high terminal sire index if calves are intended for slaughter.

#### Breeding heifers

Maiden heifers should be bred for only 6-7 weeks (either with an easy calving bull or put through two synchronisation programs), so only the most fertile animals are kept as cows. In this time a fertile bull should mate 85% of heifers, so put in more heifers than you intend to calve. Keeping the mating period at 6 weeks also ensures they calve in the first half of the calving period, giving them the time after to get back to peak fertility before the next mating season, as the demands on growing heifers with a suckling calf are high.