



THE
WOOD
VETERINARY
GROUP

FARM NEWSLETTER JUNE 2022

A Farewell

At the end of this month, we say a fond farewell to Graham Stephens. Graham joined the practice in 1991 and was even doing some small animal consults in the early years. In his time, he has expanded and



mentored the farm team into what it is today as well as developing a thriving onsite laboratory. Always enjoying the crazy variety that farm vetting has to offer from dairy farms to pet pigs we know working with fantastic clients is what he will miss the most. Having dedicated 31 years of his 35-year career to Wood Vet Group farm team, we now wish him and wife Liz a well-earned retirement. We are sure all the cricket, rugby and cider making will be interrupted by at least some work as groom for Liz's RDA carriage driving ponies to keep him busy. We hope as many of you as possible will join us for the summer social and retirement party on 21st June. Please see overleaf.



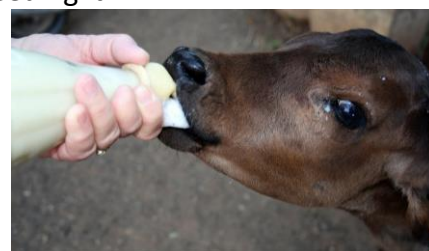
Teen Pregnancies and Castrations

Young heifers that accidentally get pregnant can be costly, detrimental to genetic improvement and often fatal for the heifer if they go undetected.



Markets impose heavy fines for animals that are sold as stores and are found to be pregnant, but it is just as costly when it is a homebred replacement heifer or fat animal. These animals often require a caesarean section due to the poor development of their pelvic canal and the calf is often not viable or is a fairly poor specimen. The heifer's growth is nearly always stunted by the pregnancy, and they never seem to have much milk for their calf either so if it's alive then you waste hours bottle feeding it.

There are two sides to every story and in this case both the adult stock bull and young un-castrated or rig bull calves can be to blame. Heifers can, depending a little upon breed and weight, happily **conceive a pregnancy as young as 5 months old**. Trust us, we've done the caesareans!



When misalliances are identified we can either abort pregnancies early on or induce heifers to calve early to keep the foetus size to a minimum – whilst this reduces the viability of the calf it is far better than damaging the heifer. In the last few weeks pre-calving, the injections have less impact so detection is key. The earlier a pregnancy is removed the better:

1. Heifers can be injected with a prostaglandin (PG) if pregnant less than 100 days
2. Heifers in calf more than 100 days need a course of corticosteroid injections – most animals respond in 36 hours to the first injection

How can we prevent this?

Stock Bulls

- Tight removal of the stock bull after breeding the cows is essential. Most of you are achieving tight 8-10 week calving blocks - leaving the bull in after calves are 4 months old is just asking for trouble

Bull calves

- Bull calves become sexually mature very early and so need to be castrated before 6 months of age to prevent them serving as well as reducing the risks of castrating them
- **There is no difference in the age that castration is done on weight at weaning or final kill weight but...**
- The 'check' that occurs from castration is far less if done by rubber ring under 7 days old (trained member of staff and with good clean technique – make sure there are two testicles beyond the ring). If possible, this can be done within 24 hrs of birth at tagging to make it a simple and quick procedure.
- The next best option is open castration by vet under 3 months of age
- The abattoirs are pushing most customers for castrated males now and there is definitely very little premium to be had for bull beef anymore



Heifers

- If bull calves have been missed or your stock bull is Houdini then the earlier we sort the situation the better
- We can **inject heifers 14 days after removal from the bull** if you know about an 'escape' but not before. Heifers will come on bulling again so need to be well away from potential males
- If there is any chance of later pregnancies, heifers need to be scanned first and then the appropriate treatment selected depending upon the age of the pregnancy.

On Farm Medicine Disposal – Dairy, Beef and Sheep Units

In order to comply with Red Tractor and crucially DEFRA guidelines **ALL LIVESTOCK PREMISES MUST HAVE A YELLOW SHARPS BIN AND GRIFF BIN** to dispose of used needles and the bin for medicine bottles. These containers are also suitable for the disposal of medicines that are out of date, contaminated or have been broached for over 28 days and recorded as wastage on your medicine records. These are always available from the practice and the cost of purchase includes returning the container to us for licensed disposal. It couldn't be easier! To help get everyone compliant with the rules we are running our summer offer again:



Throughout JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST

Buy a 27 Kg Bottle Bin and a 2 Litre sharps bin for just £65 +VAT

This is a saving of nearly £20 and for a lot of you these two containers will last a very long time.

Remember that these rules apply to all medicines administered on livestock premises

Ring the Office today to order your summer deal!

Summer Social and Retirement Party



Littledean Tap

Tuesday 21st June From 7pm

Church Farm, Church Street, Littledean, GL14 3NL

We look forward to seeing you all there for food and beers. **RSVP 01452 543999 / largeanimal@woodvet.co.uk**

New and Returning Faces

Lies Beekhuis is a vet joining us from west Wales for three days a week throughout the summer months. She is a RCVS Specialist in Cattle Health and Production so will be a great asset to the Woods team.

Please give her a warm welcome to the area

You will also see Katie Kipling around over the summer as she starts her return to farm life so give her a warm welcome back.



Wood Vets Farm Team



@woodvetsfarmteam