

# Farm Animal Practice News

Langford Vets 

 University of  
BRISTOL

Smallholder  
Autumn 2023

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## Welcome to the Farm Animal Practice

This summer seemed to be one of extremes; either weeks of baking hot weather with not a rain drop in sight, or constant rain for weeks at a time. It seems like weather patterns will continue to fluctuate unpredictability which means we will need to be prepared, be it with parasite control (we saw a lot of haemonchus worm this year) or harvesting forage crops early to try and maximise yields where possible. This is something that was discussed at our evening meeting looking at sustainability in farming with Kite consulting in June, thanks to those that attended! With preparedness in mind now is the time to look ahead to autumn and winter – the rams will be going in soon (see article in this issue about sharing breeding males!) and treatment at housing/ pre-winter of animals should be planned ahead of time – please speak to us for advice on worm/ fluke/ ectoparasite treatments as well as what vaccines might be worth considering ahead of housing so we can have a plan ready!

We have completed a number of animal health and welfare pathway visits now - don't miss out on free funding for veterinary testing and advice, particularly for sheep for which the wormer testing will be best done at this time of year! Again, speak to any of the team or look up: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-health-and-welfare-pathway](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-health-and-welfare-pathway).

## Unpacking, with a Twist

Welcome to 'Langford' the Cria born by Caesarean section. Due to our vet Sarah Woollett's quick diagnosis of uterine torsion, Angelica the alpaca was quickly transported to the Langford Small Animal Hospital where specialist anaesthesia and nursing teams were co-ordinated for her arrival. Sarah then proceeded to perform a caesarean section, bringing 'Langford' into the world. With excellent nursing care from staff and her devoted owners we are delighted that both Angelica and Langford recovered well, and have bonded, which is always a concern when animals are born in this way.

Uterine torsion (twisted womb) in alpaca's is relatively rare and is seen more in cattle. Conservative treatment of rolling the animal can 'untwist' the uterus in some cases, and in cattle other veterinary intervention can assist. Immediate veterinary attention of animals experiencing difficulty in birth is a must for quick diagnosis and prompt emergency treatment. Langford vets are proud to work as a team across the clinical disciplines, ensuring best outcome for our patients.

**Opening Hours:** Mon - Fri 8.30am - 5pm

**Telephone:** 01934 852 650  
**24 hour emergency cover**

**Email us:** [farmpractice@langfordvets.co.uk](mailto:farmpractice@langfordvets.co.uk)

**Web:** [langfordvets.co.uk/farm](http://langfordvets.co.uk/farm)

Farm Animal Practice, Langford Vets,  
Langford House, Langford, BS40 5DU

## Staffing Update

If you've visited the farm practice or called us recently you may have spoke to our new Receptionist and TB Administrator Dylan. Dylan graduated with a masters degree in Zoology from University of Bristol. He is passionate about animals be it caring for his dog and tortoise or studying invertebrate communities in forests. We're sure you'll give him a warm welcome.

Meet Rob, who teaches at the vet school and will be doing some locum work with us for the foreseeable future. Rob grew up raising Herefords on his family farm in Kansas, USA. As such, he has a passion for farming, animal welfare, and more recently, teaching. Rob trained to be a vet in Glasgow after studying evolutionary biology in California. He has just started his 25th year in clinical practice and has worked in the US, Scotland, New Zealand, and before Bristol he taught farm animal medicine at the Cambridge vet school (including their referral hospital). Rob says he's excited to meet some of the local farmers and smallholders, explore a bit more of Somerset, and hopefully help some critters in the process!



As many of you will already be aware Sarah Woollatt is sadly leaving the practice this autumn in order to move to Cardiff with her partner. Sarah has contributed so much to the practice in the years that she has worked here and her hard work, excellent clinical knowledge and particular eye for detail will be sorely missed. We wish her all the best in the future and hope she stays in contact with us all in the practice.



## Student Update

Our final years are now getting on for being halfway through their year of clinical placements. It's a busy year for them moving around placements within the Langford site and at partner practices too. Before they join the farm practice they have usually spent time in the on site small animal referral hospital doing surgery, anaesthesia and on placements in charity practices, so being out on farms is quite a change of scene for them!

The students share their thoughts on their experiences at the end of their time with us; they always value the opportunity to get involved; whether that's giving vaccinations or other medications, examining less commonly encountered farm species such as alpacas and hens and supporting the team in procedures. For example, in this most recent block our students supported the vets castrating alpacas, performing vasectomies and with cattle caesareans. They also highly value time chatting to you all, as this time next year they will be out in practice and working alongside clients themselves. So whether that's asking you questions to gather the background information for the cases they are seeing, or chatting to you about your animals and holdings these experiences are very much appreciated.



### Follow us on social media!

 @langfordvetsfarm

 @langfordfarmvets

Check out our Instagram



## You said, we did

Thank you to everyone who gave their time in April/May to fill out a feedback form or have discussions with our vets about the services in FAP. All the feedback we received was hugely valuable, and we have been working on implementing changes within the practice to help us best meet your needs. Below are some examples of feedback suggestions that we received and what we already do, or have already implemented, in response to this feedback. If you did not fill out the last feedback form, and would like to send us some feedback, we are always interested to hear from you!

Feedback - You said	Action - We did
'It would be helpful for vets to carry a price list for consumables etc.'	Going forwards our vets will carry price lists that will include standard services/procedure prices as well as prices for seasonal and common consumables and nutraceuticals so that they can give you a quote for items that you may be interested in purchasing during a vet visit. Alternatively, a quick quote can always be phoned through from our reception team whilst the vet is on your farm.
'It would be good if the practice were open on a Saturday.'	Did you know that vet visits on a Saturday from 8:30am -12pm do not incur an out-of-hours visit fee? While we do reserve weekend time for emergency work, as we only have one vet on duty, if you call for a visit on a Saturday morning, the rates will be the same as on weekdays.  In addition to this, last year we installed a lockbox at the practice so that if you order drugs or consumables and cannot collect them in normal office hours, you can collect any time that is convenient to you!
'I would like to be invoiced sooner after a vet visit.'	GIF We have moved from monthly to weekly invoicing for one-off visits. For ongoing cases, we will delay invoicing until the end of the month or until treatment has been completed, whichever is sooner. More immediate invoicing can be made possible on request - please ask at the time of booking your visit, and we can discuss your specific circumstances. External fees such as lab tests or couriers may need to be invoiced at a later point due to their charging systems.
'It would be helpful for vets to gain more information over the phone/ advise on things owners can do at home.'	We have introduced a phone consultation system. This means that if you would like advice about anything, or have a question for a vet, we can book a phone call at a time that suits you. This is a free service for very brief queries, however longer consultations will be charged for at the vets' discretion. If a phone consult results in a vet visit within 24 hours, the charge will be removed.

## A blood transfusion and haemonchus warning

A newly bought in Ryeland ram was presented to the practice very weak and depressed. On exam, Andrea found that he was very pale and his heart rate very fast. Concerned that the ram was either in shock or anaemic, Andrea took a blood sample to test for red blood cells present - the volume was less than 10%, normal is above 27%!

The vet team quickly organised for a whole blood transfusion to take place, the owner was sent to bring two healthy friends who could be blood donors for the ram. Meanwhile, Andrea investigated the cause of the red blood cell loss. During the summer months we are increasingly seeing cases of a worm called Haemonchus Contortus - a prolific blood sucking worm. This worm does not cause diarrhoea but instead is a sheep and goat "vampire", living off blood that it drinks from the gut. A dung sample was collected and showed extremely high count of 42,000 strongyle eggs per gram (we'd be worried about a count of 250-500!) so we were highly suspicious of this worm. Worming treatment was promptly administered.

The ram's friend "Lucky" soon arrived and was extremely well behaved while blood donating. The donation was quickly administered to the ram who was kept with us overnight. The following morning the ram had improved in himself, his appetite returned, and he could walk around without weakness. He was not out of the woods but could be sent home to recuperate.

Remember to always quarantine new animals coming into your flock and to worm them promptly on arrival. This worm can prove fatal but can be treated if caught early with most wormers - talk to us for advice.



## Sharing Breeding Males Safely

In smaller flocks and herds, it's common for rams, billies and bulls to be hired or shared between different holdings. This is understandable, as it's not always practical to keep feisty breeding boys, and you may not have company for them or fence integrity to keep them separate from the ladies when not in use! Whilst there are plenty of good reasons for hiring or sharing, it does pose infectious disease risks for your girls which is worth being aware of. A sample list is in the table below:

Rams	Billies	Bulls
Campylobacter	Campylobacter	Campylobacter
Enzootic Abortion	Enzootic Abortion	BVD
Orf	CAE	IBR
CODD	CODD	Lepto
Resistant worms	Resistant worms	Johne's disease
Haemonchus worms	Haemonchus worms	TB
Pinkeye	Johne's disease	Lice
Johne's disease		Ringworm
Maedi-Visna		
Sheep scab		

Luckily, there are several steps you can take to make your breeding transactions safer! :

- Get the males blood tested before they travel to you
- Check the males are in peak health before travel – no lameness, skin problems, scouring etc – and in good body condition
- Allow for a quarantine period, ideally 1 month after arrival, to keep the new boys separate from your own herd/flock and monitor for any problems before they have a chance to spread
- Give some treatments on arrival – a wormer and a footbath is usually a good start
- Vaccinate your females before the breeding season

Perhaps the most important piece of advice is to speak to your vet prior to setting up the hire agreement, so that we can give you individual pointers based on the health status of both your animals and the farm of origin.



## Veterinary attestation forms introduced in December

From the 13th December 2023 producers will need to have a signed 'veterinary attestation' form in order to send animals to slaughter so that the animal and / or part of the animal can be exported outside of the UK. Since some parts of nearly all animals sent to slaughter are exported to the EU this will be applicable to all producers, including those selling direct to slaughter or via a market.

This new legislation is required for the export of 'products of animal origin' to the EU and requires that the farm of origin has had regular veterinary visits, including discussions about certain notifiable diseases.

### What do you need to do?

Producers will need to have a declaration form signed by a vet to say that they have had a vet visit to discuss animal health, specifically regarding notifiable diseases, and biosecurity. This can be done at the same time as a vet visit for another purpose, including TB testing, herd health visits or APHA funded visits such as TBAS (TB advisory service).

Farms that are certified under certain assurance schemes do not need to complete the veterinary declaration. Assurance schemes (in England) under which it is accepted that the farm of origin meets the requirement for regular vet visits include:

- Annual animal health and welfare pathway review (England only)
- Red tractor

Since the veterinary attestations will be a requirement after December the 13th we advise you get these done now where possible. Until the 13th December farmer attestation forms can be used.

Producers must get a new veterinary attestation form every 12 months and if done at a visit for another purpose an administration fee only will be charged. If you wish for the form to be back-dated from a previous visit it will be valid for 12 months from that visit and you may be required to have a phone consultation with a vet to meet the requirements to discuss the particular diseases covered by the form.

If you have any question about this or would like to book a visit to get a veterinary attestation form signed please give us a call.