

# Vet Viewpoint

A regional round-up of key veterinary issues

## Anna Patch

Shepton Vet Group  
Somerset



\* Many of our dairy farmers are now regularly monitoring ketosis levels in freshly calved cows using milk ketone

tests. One of my clients started doing this last November and found up to 50% of his freshly calved cows were affected. Identifying individual ketotic cows is useful, as they can be given propylene glycol, which will reduce the chance of them developing lower displaced abomasums.

Dry cows gaining too much condition led to ketosis in early lactation. To prevent this my client now feeds a ration containing a high proportion of straw and levels have dropped to less than 10%. Milk yields

and cow health have also improved.

Over the summer months ensuring far off dry cows don't gain too much condition at grass will keep ketosis levels low.

## Ben Pedley

Willows Vet Group  
Cheshire



\* In the past few weeks I have seen a number of cases of bovine Herpes mamillitis. It normally starts as a small

scab on the side of a teat and can spread over the whole teat. It has a "leathery" feel to it and, despite it looking painful, causes little reaction when handled. Treatment involves keeping the teat moist with good udder cream after each milking, and maybe using teat cannulae. Some animals will, however, lick

the affected teat and cause it to bleed. One way to stop this is to put a car tyre over the animal's head. A 38-40cm one with two small cuts to allow it to go over her head usually works.

## Eilidh Sellars

Armour Vet Group  
Ayrshire



\* We've recently carried out a number of metabolic profiles for our beef and sheep clients in the run-up to lambing and

calving. Metabolic profiles are a great way of establishing how well the animals are using their ration. The profile will measure energy, protein and mineral status.

We have seen mixed results, with some cows low in energy and protein. The sheep results highlighted that triplets were struggling with energy levels. Some of our sheep flocks have also shown low albumin levels, suggesting underlying health issues, for example liver fluke infection. Correcting shortfalls improved colostrum quality, milk production and post-calving/lambing health.

## Steve Glanville

Hook Norton Vet Group  
Oxfordshire



\* We are seeing numerous outbreaks of staggers in suckle cows both housed and at grass, and in ewes with lambs at

foot turned out on to pasture.

The first sign is commonly sudden death with no previous clinical signs. A diagnosis is dependent on prompt post-mortem by your vet. A sample taken from the eye to check for magnesium levels can help rule out staggers in or out before a full post-mortem examination.

As magnesium is not stored in the body, it is vital that suckling ewes and cows have a daily intake of magnesium via food, water or magnesium bolus. Supplementation should continue throughout the suckling period and for a fortnight after weaning.

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