

**Chris McGregor**

**Clyde Vets**  
Lanarkshire

\* Slurry stores are full to capacity, but we are still

encouraging our farmers to get sheds and pens mucked out and disinfected to reduce spread of scour and pneumonia through this year's youngstock. Good hygiene, a dry, draught-free environment and an adequate colostrum intake in the first six hours of life are key to good early health and optimum growth rates.

With better quality forage and a reduced fluke challenge all winter, stock are in much better condition this spring. Cows and ewes have plenty of milk, lamb birthweights have been good and they are growing well.

However, we have been kept busy with numerous caesareans on pedigree flocks. This could be an indicator of what is to come when calving really kicks off.

**VET VIEWPOINT**

A regional monthly round-up of key veterinary issues from members of the XL Vets group.  
[www.xlvets.co.uk](http://www.xlvets.co.uk)

# Vet Viewpoint

A regional round-up of key veterinary issues

**Mike Thorne**

**Rutland Vets**  
Rutland

\* So far this year we have not seen any Schmallenberg and

with the mild winter, stock in the East Midlands has fared relatively well. This allowed us to make inroads into the thousands of cattle we have to TB test. We are now in an annual testing area. Fortunately, in spite of increased testing, we have not found many new TB cases.

We have also focused on farmer training in January and February with courses in bovine viral diarrhoea, calf rearing, lambing and basic veterinary emergency techniques. With a younger generation of stockman eager to expand their skills, the courses are very practical. This enables them to tackle common presentations in delayed calvings and lambings and then care for the

newborn – saving vet costs and improving welfare and productivity.

**Jono Cooper**

**Minster Vets**  
York

\* On the back of a very wet and mild winter, cattle and

sheep farmers should be very aware of the fact that we are likely to have problems with parasites this year. Useful information can be found on the National Animal Disease Information Service website including monthly regional parasite forecasts.

To minimise the numbers of worm eggs that the lambs will pick up, farmers should graze their ewes on "clean" pasture when they have lambs at foot. Pasture contamination from the ewes can be minimised in some cases by the use of a wormer prior to turnout. This should be

targeted to gimmers, ewes in poor condition and ewes with twins and triplets. Fit ewes with singles should be left unwormed. Clean pasture is that which has either been re-seeded, or grazed by cattle last year. Contact your vet for planned worming advice throughout the season.

**Rob Smith**

**Farm First Vet Services**  
Monmouthshire

\* The media furore over the leaked

results of the recent badger cull inquiry has brought home to me the difficult job the industry has of getting across a balanced message. This was highlighted further in a Radio 4 interview, with an eloquent scientist promoting the leaked findings and an NFU representative defending the cull procedure. I'm sure part of the problem is that the media may be more interested in talking to the likes of Brian May than to less "sexy" organisations such as the British Cattle Veterinary Association, but we do all need to get better at getting the message across. As we wait, the disease continues to sweep north and east across the UK and about 30,000 cattle a year die.