

# Vet Viewpoint

A regional round-up of key veterinary issues



## Adam Reeves

**Severn Edge Group  
Shropshire**

\* Since October, it has been compulsory for locomotion scoring to be part of dairy

herd health plans – many farmers don't realise how many lame cows they have on farm.

Knowing the effect lameness has on fertility and milk production has encouraged a more proactive approach in tackling it.

Once the main causes of lameness have been identified and addressed, locomotion scoring allows you to see how this improves over time, and if the problem starts relapsing.

It also allows for persistently or repeatedly lame cows to be identified for treatment or potentially culling.

A big risk factor for a cow becoming lame is a previous lameness. Identifying and treating lame cows early leads to more successful cures.

## Andrew Millar

**Ardene House Vet  
Practice  
Aberdeenshire**

\* As the winter housing period continues, we are

seeing more cases of infectious diseases which can build up in the sheds – for example, calf diarrhoea due to *Cryptosporidium parvum*.

Cryptosporidiosis is not specific to cattle and can be seen in housed lambs. It is transmissible to people,

so personal hygiene is important, especially where children are at risk.

Vaccines are available for prevention of some viral and bacterial infections, but there are no vaccines for this protozoal infection. Prevention and treatment options should be discussed with your vet.

Cryptosporidiosis has also been seen where the same fields are used for calving or lambing each year, especially where stocking density is high.

## Neil Eastham

**Bishopton Veterinary  
Group  
North Yorkshire**

\* As many spring-calving suckler herds are well under way

with calving, we need to give some thought to getting the cows back in-calf.

Bull fertility is vital. Some studies suggest up to one-third of all bulls are subfertile.

These, alongside truly infertile bulls, result in delayed calving to conception and increased barren rates. This represents a real drain on productivity in a system where fertility is central to profitability.

A pre-breeding bull soundness check includes a full physical examination. Following semen collection by electro-ejaculation, a comprehensive evaluation looking at sperm motility and morphology completes the check.

This is a relatively straightforward and inexpensive method of ensuring you have adequate bull power before the service period commences.



## Toby Kemble

**Wensum Valley  
Surgeons  
Norfolk**

\* In East Anglia we are fortunate to be on a four-yearly TB

testing regime and we rarely see reactors. Those we do see tend to be due to animal movements from areas where the disease is more prevalent.

Farmers in our region often have the misconception that because they have badgers on their land, they are at increased risk of seeing the disease. This is not the case. For now,

our cattle are free of the disease and so are our badgers.

The greatest risk we see is from farmers buying in cattle from other regions where TB is seen. I tell our farming clients to source locally or from areas that are also on four-yearly testing regimes.

With small steps we can all try to stop the disease spreading into our TB-free regions.

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