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## Lots of Events to look forward to this Autumn and Winter!

The Towcester Farm Vets team are very excited about the range of workshops and talks that have been organised for this Autumn and Winter and look forward to seeing lots of you there.

After the success of last year's on-farm workshop we are delighted to be working with AHDB Beef and Lamb to bring you two further on-farm workshops on Selection of Animals for Slaughter working with industry expert, Tim Bastable.

In response to changes in Red Tractor requirements we have also organised two workshops on 'Responsible Use of Medicines' designed to meet these new recommendations. These morning events at The Saracens Head will cover everything from antibiotic selection to the safe handling of medicines and the legal requirements for keeping, storing and recording medicine use on farm. Upon completion of the course a certificate will be issued. These workshops are £50 per person and include refreshments and a hot lunch.

Our winter talk programme has also been finalised and will be held as normal at The Saracen's Head, Towcester, 7pm for a 7:30pm start and a hot meal will be served after the talk.

To book a place at any of these events, please call the Towcester surgery on 01327 350239.

#### Workshops:

19<sup>th</sup> September 2018 – Selection of Animals for Slaughter (Sheep) – hosted by the kind permission of Messrs MC & M Herbert & Son of Manor Farm, Hinton-in-the-Hedges – 2.30pm start

26<sup>th</sup> September 2018 – Selection of Animals for Slaughter (Beef) – hosted by the kind permission of A Pearson & Sons of Home Farm, Grimscote – 2.30pm start

17<sup>th</sup> October 2018 – Responsible Use of Medicines – 9:45am for 10am start; finish 1pm – £50/person

24<sup>th</sup> October 2018 – Responsible Use of Medicines – 9:45am for 10am start; finish 1pm – £50/person

#### Talks

14<sup>th</sup> November 2018 – Failure of Passive Transfer in Calves and Feeding Suckler Cows in Late Pregnancy

11<sup>th</sup> December 2018 – Neonatal Camelid Care

8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 – What Causes Skinny Sheep?



## FARBENCH

AHDB's Farmbench is a free web-based tool that allows you to input your own data and, importantly, to split your costs between all the enterprises you have on your farm. Costs can be split between beef, sheep, potato and arable enterprises with dairy and sugar beet becoming available in autumn 2018. A report is then generated for each farm enterprise and this breaks down the costs to clearly show you exactly what you are spending and where. The next step is to compare where you are with your peers and this can be done through AHDB on-farm business groups where you can safely share aggregated and anonymised data.

Once you have this level of information about your costs, you can start to make confident and informed decisions about the future direction of your business. The farming industry will experience significant change over the coming years and the knock on effect for your business is exposure to fluctuating prices, currency swings and adverse weather events, to name but a few. Your ability to protect your business by managing these risks and building resilience will become more and more important if you want to remain competitive.

For more information or to sign up to Farmbench visit <https://ahdb.org.uk/farmbench>



# Funding for BVD testing now available!

Anyone who has been reading the farming press (or our newsletters!) over the last few years, can't have missed reading about BVD. This virus has been costing our cattle industry millions of pounds every year and with Scottish, Irish and Welsh eradication schemes underway, England finally made its own move! The national voluntary scheme to eradicate BVD, BVDFree, was launched in 2016 and is continuing to gather support and momentum from breeding herds up and down the country (and especially from farmers in our area!)

For anyone who has been waiting for the right moment to get involved in BVD control now should be the time! The new 'Stamp It Out' project aims to complement BVDFree and has made funding available to get at least half the breeding herds in England engaged in BVD control. This project is open to all breeding herds, no matter the size, and whilst we're keen for anyone who has not done any BVD testing on their farm to use this as an opportunity to start, it is also open to anyone who is already undertaking BVD control work but would like a more in-depth look at their farm situation.

Farmers who enrol with the project are eligible for the following FREE events:

- An initial meeting of your 'group' of 10-15 farms to discuss the disease and the project
- A vet visit to do an initial surveillance screen of youngstock (check test)
- A vet visit to discuss the results of this testing and any control plans
- Limited funding is available for further blood testing if required
- A final meeting with your group to discuss your findings and plans for future control

All meetings will, of course, take place in the pub – with food and drink!

If you would like to enrol your herd in the project or would like any further information about it, please call Towcester Vets on 01327 350239.

## Blakesley Show Round Up!

August has flown past and Blakesley Show now seems a long time ago. It's always a firm favourite in our calendar as we love to spend the day chatting to you all without the pressure of doing any work!

Of course the Towcester Farm Vets game was back and better than ever. This year we asked you to guess which babies grew into the farm vets you know and love. To put everyone out of their misery, the answers are shown here. (Even though EVERYONE guessed Gareth's photo correctly, we thought you would all appreciate seeing it again!) For anyone still deliberating the tie breaker question, we did 25 ram vasectomies in the last year. Congratulations go to Alison Howkins for winning the baby photo competition; Alison won a voucher to enjoy a meal at the Saracen's Head.

We also congratulate Rosie Coles who won the children's competition, correctly guessing the animal body parts and the number of dogs the farm team own. The team currently have a pack of 5 dogs, of which 4 (and a half) are spaniels!



## Fever Tags

Fever tags make monitoring calf temperatures simple. These new and innovative tags have a temperature probe attached to them which, when placed correctly in the ear canal, records the animal's temperature every 15 minutes. If

a sustained increase in temperature is recorded the Fever Tag will start flashing red, alerting you that the calf requires attention. The tag will flash for 6 hours after an increase in temperature is noted.

With the clinical signs of pneumonia only appearing from 19 hours (nasal discharge) and 65 hours (coughing) after an increase in body temperature, waiting for these clinical signs before you start treatment can mean treating an infection is more problematic. Cases may require more repeat treatments and risk causing permanent changes in the lungs affecting overall growth and longevity.

Respiratory disease in calves can cause a 0.2kg/day decrease in weight. Add to this, labour, medicines and veterinary costs and the cost of having pneumonia in your suckler calves can be, on average, £82/calf (dairy calves are £43/calf). Long term effects on growth rates due to lung damage can push this figure even higher.

Using fever tags as an early warning system allows you to treat much earlier in the course of the disease with better responses and fewer long term effects.

Tags can be placed from a few weeks old and have the potential to stay in for up to 6 months when positioned correctly. They have a 2 year battery life so a single tag could be used in 2-3 calves or more are possible if they are used for shorter periods and maintained properly. Reapplication to new calves is simple: cut out the tag in the current calf, wash and clean the tag and reapply in the new calf with a fresh button male tag.

Fever Tags are available from the practice at £20/tag. A vet visit and insertion of up to 10 tags in 10 calves is £50 with additional calves charged at £5/calf. For more information or to discuss the use of fever tags on your farm, please call the surgery.

