

issue 1

farm.

Your Pig & Poultry magazine from **VetPartners Ltd**



Biosecurity in Poultry Enterprises: A Brief Review

Biosecurity comprises all the measures that we take to reduce the risk of exposure of a flock to infectious diseases

vetPartners

welcome



Welcome to the inaugural edition of the VetPartners farm magazine.


As well as bringing you a healthy mix of seasonally relevant content, how-to-guides and practical on-farm advice for our clients, inclusive of all species, we will also be covering the bigger issues that are currently affecting us all (did someone say Brexit? Covid19?).

With over 30 veterinary businesses within the VetPartners group involved in farm work, we are committed to supporting UK agriculture to grow, and continue to be successful. For farm veterinary practices, the current climate is challenging with fewer vets embarking on a career in our sector. Collectively we are working hard to create transparent career progression, with a breadth of opportunities for vets, as well as continuing to be an awesome place to work. Although, we are obviously not the only sector struggling within the farming and agricultural industry, with vital farm labour roles failing to be recognised in the most recent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) Shortage Occupation List (SOL) 2020 was a challenging year for all of us. We may not know what 2021 will bring for our industry, but what remains is our commitment to you, our farmers and clients, that we will continue to provide you with clinical excellence and innovative solutions that will make your business more productive.

Ian Cure

LLM Veterinary Surgeon & VetPartners Farm Director

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African Swine Fever
Update with NPA

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Responsible use
of Antimicrobials

VetPartners Ltd

Spitfire House
Aviator Court
York
YO30 4GY

T: 01904 202228

W: vetpartners.co.uk

E: farmmarketing@vetpartners.co.uk



Did you know?
We also have
a general farm
edition

Covid-19

Think social distance when calling out your vet



Ian Cure, Farm Director at VetPartners, urges farmers to follow government guidance on social distancing and self-isolation when vets are practicing on farm.

“Like farmers, farm vets are categorised as key workers due to being involved in food production. Farm practices are working incredibly hard to continue to provide essential services during this difficult time,” he says.

“Our priority is to maintain animal health and welfare while helping to ensure sustained production of safe food as well as minimising the risk of transmitting Coronavirus between vets and farm clients.

“The latest guidance from the BVA highlights various elements of farm veterinary work that can be carried out remotely, such as health planning and medicine reviews. Diagnosis and medicine dispense can also happen without the need for a visit, with the aid of video calling and a thorough conversation on the signs and symptoms.

“Those working in the supply of veterinary medicines are included in the key workers list released by the government, so we do not expect any major issues maintaining medicine supplies,” he adds.

Vets will assess each situation, and when a visit to the farm is deemed necessary, it is important that social distancing guidance is followed, for the safety of both the farmer and vet.

“Government guidance applies as much in rural areas as it does in cities, and following advice is going to be imperative to ensure we can continue farm calling where necessary,” says Ian.

“When a vet is on farm, make sure animals are restrained to allow a 2.5m distance between each

person for the entire visit. It’s best if visits take place in a well-ventilated area, preferably outdoors, with only one person from the farm present.

“If someone is self-isolating on the farm, it is essential to let the practice know ahead of the visit so extra precautions can be put in place. For example, two members of the practice could attend, with one handling the animal, so the farmer can maintain self-isolation.”

We have now implemented the government backed lateral flow Covid testing in our practices. This regular testing program helps add another layer to our rigorous risk assessments which ensure that we are taking all measures possible to keep our teams, and you the clients, as safe as possible.

STOP

**We are all working
in a critical food
production industry.**

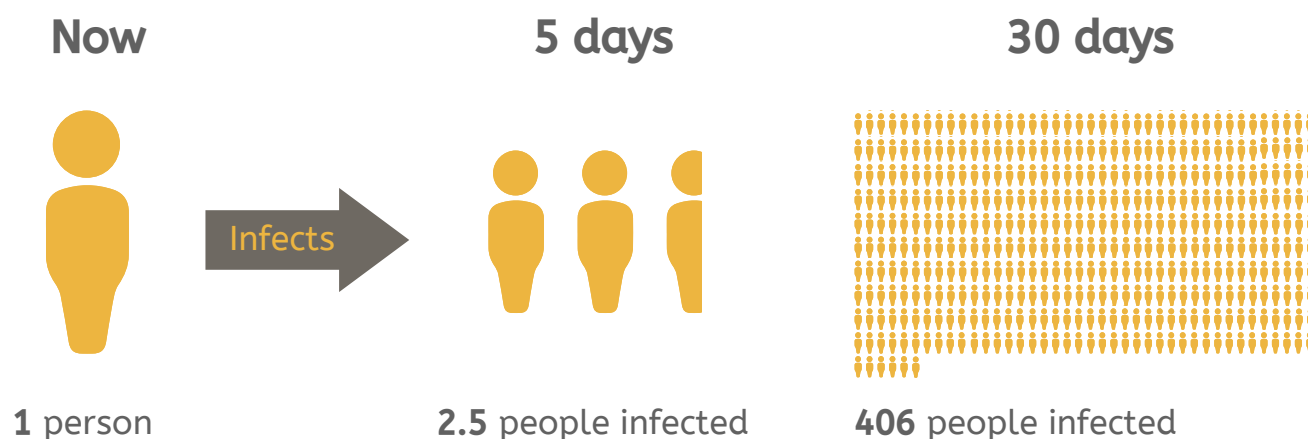
**Help us all to keep safe
by maintaining a 2m gap
at all times.**

vetPartners



Why social distancing is important

Social distancing of 2m significantly decreases the exposure and spread of Corona Virus (COVID-19). Help us all to stay safe during this time and respect the 2m distance from your vet and team members.



50% less exposure



TB testing & COVID-19

To ensure the safety of both farmer and vet, APHA will support the decision to leave a test incomplete if it is not possible to safely maintain a 2 metre distance. We have also clarified with APHA that farmers will receive an amnesty on financial penalties if the test must be postponed, rearranged or abandoned directly due to COVID-19.

For more information visit: tbhub.org.uk

African Swine Fever

The biggest risk of the disease entering the UK pig population is by pigs eating infected pork or pork products derived from infected pigs or wild boar.



The ASF virus can survive for months – smoked, cured or frozen. It also survives in faeces and blood so vehicles, equipment and clothing can be readily contaminated. Stringent biosecurity measures are strongly recommended.

ASF has continued its steady spread across Europe and as predicted made the jump into Germany in 2020. On the 22nd of December 2020, the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) approved and published the “all swine” free status of Belgium, which was regained on 1 October 2020. This shows that with a determined effort it is possible to eradicate these incursions into new areas but it is far better to prevent entry in first place.

Back in September of 2019, Farming Minister George Eustice, addressed the National Pig Association in response to a letter from the NPA chairman, Richard Lister. After the startling admission from Mr Eustice that in the UK “an outbreak is expected in a year”, the NPA is calling for more of a robust approach from DEFRA and the UK port authorities to keep the disease out of the UK. At the time NPA Chief Executive Zoe Davies, said “We don’t think the UK Border Force is taking this seriously enough. We are not seeing the posters being displayed with any consistency or prominence at ports and airports, and there has been little interest shown in helping DEFRA to promote these crucial messages.” She continues, “if a Government Minister really thinks the virus will be here within a year, it is patently obvious that more resource and effort is needed to keep it out. Border Force needs to demonstrate that it understands the

With the news breaking that African Swine Fever (ASF) has been found just 12km from the German border, representing over a 300km leap westward, it is unnerving how prevalent the disease is still spreading.

“I predict ASF virus will remain endemic for some time in East Asia and eastern Europe, with constant introductions around the world” says Dirk Pfeiffer, Veterinary epidemiologist at City University of Hong Kong and expert on ASF. The disease can last for several weeks on anything from clothes to vehicles, allowing for it to easily travel long distances.

The latest update from the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) highlights how ASF is continuing to spread in Asia, with government figures showing that the Chinese pig herd has declined by 40% since 2018. Rabobank estimated the herd has fallen from in excess of 400 million, prior to August 2018, to around 200 million, as result of disease and herd liquidations.

The government has estimated it could cost the country £90million – which the NPA believes is a gross underestimation as it does not take into account the loss of export markets, currently worth £470million a year. Ms Davies says “the pig industry is doing everything it can to minimise the risk, including the widely publicised **#MuckFreeTruck** campaign, increased bio-security signage on pig units and contingency planning on farms. But if we are going to keep this disease out, everyone needs to take responsibility. It’s our job to stop the virus getting into pigs – but it’s the governments job to keep it out of the country.”

While Covid has significantly reduced the passenger volume and hence risk, this remains the Achilles heel of the pig industry.

If you have public footpaths running alongside your farm, you need to make sure everyone is aware of the rules and risks of feeding food scraps to pigs. To help with this, the AHDB are offering free fence signs to remind passers-by not to feed your pigs. You can order these by emailing comms@ahdb.org.uk.

AHDB also have posters available for download that can be printed at home, which you access in Chinese, Romanian, Lithuanian and Polish, as well as English - reminding staff not to bring items containing pork onto the farm, which is perfect for the staff room. We have included an A4 copy on page 29. Should you require more copies, or one in a different language please visit pork.ahdb.org.uk.

Reduce the risk of African Swine Fever (ASF) reaching the UK

- Pork products which are salted or dried rather than cooked, can carry viruses such as ASF for up to 150 days
- The major risk is the possibility of pigs eating these products
- The risk is greatest from pork products originating from countries where ASF is already present
- Don't bring pig meat products on to the farm
- Don't feed scraps to cats and dogs as they could take them into the pig areas
- Dispose of food waste in secure containers through the normal domestic waste collection
- Store food in a designated canteen area with hand washing facilities
- Ensure that any friends and family visiting from abroad are aware of the risks

Reduce the risk of African Swine Fever (ASF) reaching the UK



African Swine Fever is a disease that affects only pigs, but it has a devastating impact on productivity and the ability of a country to sell pork so it is vital we keep it out of the UK. The point to stress most is the importance of biosecurity which is the first line of defence against disease. That applies not only on the farm but also when travelling, particularly to and from areas where ASF has already been confirmed.

- Pork products which are salted or dried rather than cooked, can carry viruses such as ASF for up to 150 days
- The major risk is the possibility of pigs eating these products
- The risk is greatest from pork products originating from countries where ASF is already present

It is illegal to feed raw or cooked catering/household kitchen waste to pigs

To reduce the risk:

- Don't bring pig meat products on to the farm
- Don't feed scraps to cats and dogs as they could take them into the pig areas
- Dispose of food waste in secure containers through the normal domestic waste collection
- Store food in a designated canteen area with hand washing facilities
- Ensure that any friends and family visiting from abroad are aware of the risks

ASF has been confirmed in a number of countries including, Russia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Poland, Belgium, Romania and Czech Republic. These areas represent the biggest risk to the UK currently.






For more information contact:
AHDB Pork,
Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth,
Warwickshire, CV8 2TL
T: 024 7647 8883
E: pork.kt@ahdb.org.uk
W: pork.ahdb.org.uk

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For more information contact:

**AHDB Pork, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth,
Warwickshire, CV8 2TL**

T: 024 7669 2051

E info@ahdb.org.uk



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Garth Pig Practice Ltd, including Integra Veterinary Services



Based in East Yorkshire, Garth Pig Practice, including Integra Veterinary Services in East Anglia, has been established for over 70 years. During this time the business has become the largest veterinary supplier to the UK Pig Industry, servicing clients in all areas of the UK from the South West right up to the highlands of Scotland as well as Europe and other parts of the world.

Garth's strength lies in its diverse and talented team of veterinary surgeons and the staff who support them. The veterinary team comprises of 12 vets who between them have a wealth of knowledge to offer. Some of Garth's vets have been pig farmers themselves managing large units for many years, whilst others have worked in the wider pharmaceutical world. From the very experienced through to fresh, newly trained vets, Garth and Integra can offer their clients a complete and tailored service to match their business needs.

Working closely with the client, Garth develops health improvement strategies to maximise welfare, production efficiency and financial return. Services include advisory and assurance visits, clinical inspections and investigations, environmental and biosecurity assessments, scanning, export certification, post mortems, laboratory testing and disease diagnosis and trial work. Garth is also a recognised training centre, providing unit staff and manager training on the farm, on line and in the classroom.

Medicines are supplied competitively and responsibly to the client via a variety of secure and efficient routes. The business has just invested in two very large walk-in fridges to enable increased stocks of products to be held to help keep a continuous supply for clients.



The veterinary team are assisted by an experienced and well qualified support team who take care of all the administration, dispensing and commercial aspects to ensure that operations run smoothly for the client.

One of the main differences between a specialist practice like Garth and other veterinary practices is that Garth deals with the whole farm and business instead of simply providing reactive treatments of individual animals. An example of this whole farm approach is biosecurity – an increasingly important consideration for all pig businesses. Things which are looked at include stock purchase and integration, staff movements,

bird and vermin control, entry and exit procedures for both individual buildings and the whole farm, disinfectant types use, cleaning and disinfectant procedures, hospital pen policy, visitor policy, loading and unloading procedures, hygiene rules and equipment movement.

Another advantage enjoyed by Garth's clients is that they are at the front of the line when it comes to learning about the latest industry thinking. Garth's veterinary surgeons are involved in many research trials and projects and Garth also holds its own pig clubs, seminars and webinars for clients to exchange ideas and discuss topical issues with each other as well as and learn of the latest developments in the pig world from leading industry speakers.



If you would like any more information on what we do please email our commercial director Mark Stanton on mark@garthvet.co.uk and he will be only too happy to help. Also if you would like to keep up to date with industry events and topical issues please sign up for our free monthly Newsletter using the link on our website www.garthvet.co.uk.



Love Pork Campaign

Love Pork has been created with the principle aim of providing recipe inspiration to encourage people to cook with pork at home, and to provide information about pork, pork cuts and how healthy pork can be. Recipes can be found at lovepork.co.uk

AHDB WebHAT

Whether pigs are kept in straw yards or slatted houses, tail biting is a common problem. Producers are reminded that the AHDB WebHAT online platform allows you to build a personalised risk report for each unit. It identifies major risk factors and suggests measures to improve them in order to reduce incidence of tail biting.

It is recommended to be used as a checklist and is helpful for Red Tractor audits to prove producer action in tackling the problem of tail biting on farm. It is also useful to use as a guideline the section on recording of tail biting and has links to templates to help record tail biting incidence.

You can find the information at: webhat.ahdb.org.uk

NPA Pig awards 2020

The 2020 awards were held on line in a Covid secure way. Whilst this diminished some of the fun of the event it did not stop our customers having as much success as usual. We are pleased to be able to congratulate all of our customers who were nominated and who won awards. These awards included Pig Producer of the Year, Outdoor Producer of the Year, Unit manager of the year, Stockman of the year and Trainee of the Year. Hopefully the 2021 event will again be an in person event and we can once again celebrate the fantastic work being done on our Pig farms.



Poultry laboratory: To test or not to test



We have all become familiar with Coronavirus PCR testing in the last few months; but how many of you knew that we have been testing for Coronavirus in chickens for over 20 years?

Infectious Bronchitis (IB), a disease well known by poultry farmers, is caused by Coronavirus. There are different strains and variants and therefore, proactive blood and PCR testing is crucial to formulate the appropriate vaccination programme for the farm.

At Poultry Health Services we have an integrated laboratory service, that allows quick results that are accessed directly by the poultry vet who can then interpret the results and advise on treatments, vaccinations or other preventative measures.

Rapid laboratory results allows also for rapid diagnostic when the health of the birds get affected or when egg production is sub optimal; for instance- a bacteriology test in your dead birds allows the vet to ascertain what bacteria was the cause of the death and through an antibiogram test, the vet can use the most effective antibiotic against the bacteria isolated.

On the same way that water for human consumption is tested, the water that your chickens drink needs to be of good microbial and mineral quality. Any contamination in the water system can result in inflammation of the gut, which leads to reduced growth or decreased egg production. Pseudomonas, the main bacteria responsible of biofilm (the layer of sludge that grows inside the water pipes) can be found by testing the water. Other bacteria that can be found in water are Salmonella, Staphylococcus, Enterococcus and Coliforms all of which can have a negative effect in the health of the birds or in the marketability of the meat or eggs. Borehole water can have high mineral content or residues



of fertilisers through filtration and therefore it is important that it is tested on a regular basis, or at least every 6 months.

The negative effects of worms and coccidia can be reduced by testing the chicken faeces every 6 weeks in layers and every week in broilers. By doing regular faeces testing you can be proactive and treat with wormer or coccidicides before the level of parasites becomes so high that causes irreversible lesions in the birds. Again, speed of testing is the key; an integrated poultry lab allows to have results in 24 hours, have the results interpreted by a dedicated poultry vet and reported to you with the relevant advise.

For more information about the range of poultry test that we offer, please email yorklab@biobest.co.uk



Biosecurity in Poultry Enterprises: A Brief Review

by Joaquin Percebal

Biosecurity comprises all the measures that we take to reduce the risk of exposure of a flock to infectious diseases



Biosecurity comprises all the measures that we take to reduce the risk of exposure of a flock to infectious diseases. Certain pathogens may severely affect the performance and increase the

mortality of the birds and in the case of notifiable diseases (i.e. Newcastle disease and Avian influenza) the consequences can affect not only a particular farm, but the whole industry.

Bio-security is one of the best management measures to avoid problems on farm and it includes different areas where we can intervene.

Eggs and live animals

Some poultry diseases can be transmitted from the parent flock to the offspring, either within the egg or due to contamination on the shell (e.g. Salmonellosis, Mycoplasmosis).

In the case of day-old chicks, they should come from reputable sources and if necessary, tests should be carried out on the parent stock to ensure that they are free from certain diseases.

In the case of laying hens, the health programme followed from day-old chicks until the transfer to the laying site at 16 weeks old, should be made available to the farmer, including all the vaccines received, de-worming treatments, tests carried out and any other intervention.

People

Pathogens can be carried to farms through the movement of persons (e.g. workers, visitors, catchers). It is recommended to limit the number of people who get into a farm and as a minimum, they should sign the visitor's book providing details about the last poultry farm visited and be provided with footwear and overalls before entering the spaces occupied by the animals. The use of sanitary barriers is a good system to separate the "dirty" and "clean" areas where visitors must put on different clothing.

There should be lidded foot dips filled with disinfectant at the entrance of the shed and the disinfectant should have activity in the presence of organic matter (e.g. Phenols, Oxidising agents mixed with surfactants) and be renewed periodically.

Depending on the value of the animals present in the farm and risk for the company who owns the flock, these measures can be stepped up (e.g. shower in/shower out, 72 hours free of contact with poultry before arrival to the site).

Vehicles

Private cars, feed lorries, animal transport vehicles are a possible source of contamination. Ideally, feed lorries should be able to fill the silos up from external service roads and other vehicles should be left out of the perimeter of the farm. If this is not



possible, wheels and mud flaps should be washed and disinfected using a spray or a disinfectant bath.

Lorries delivering feed or coming to collect birds should be cleansed and disinfected before going to the farm.

Equipment

Items of equipment and protective clothing should not be shared between different farms and it is recommended to be exclusive for each shed. Crates used for the collection of birds or trays used for the collection of eggs should be cleaned and disinfected before being returned to the farm.

Pest control

Insects, rodents and wild birds can be carriers of poultry diseases (e.g. Salmonella, Pasteurella, Mycoplasmosis, Avian Influenza, Newcastle disease). Every site should have a pest control programme in place with bait boxes, bait plan, COSHH data for the products used and regular visits to monitor pest activity.

Buildings should be pest-proof; vents and inlets should have meshes to screen out pests, cracks and holes on the walls should be repaired and windows and doors kept closed. Although this will not be possible to achieve in free-range production systems, where the animals have access to the outdoors: Regular deworming of free-range flocks is especially important as they are more likely to be infested by internal worms.

The surroundings of the buildings should be clear of anything that may attract the attention of pests such as overgrowth, standing water, spillage of feed or dead animals, which should be promptly removed and correctly disposed of.

Pest control should also be taken into account during the disinfection of the shed after depletion, some arthropods (e.g. red mite, litter beetle) can be carriers of poultry diseases and might be particularly difficult to eliminate once they are present in the sheds and different or additional products and procedures might be necessary to use and implement during the cleaning and disinfection of the sheds at turnaround.

Feed

Feed can also be an important source of infection for our flocks. Raw materials and feed must be protected against the risk of cross-contamination by pests, wild animals and fungi. Therefore, it is important to source the feed from reputable feed mills that follow the best practices for the storage and manufacturing of the feed.

Water

The water lines should be properly sealed with covers on the header tanks so as to avoid any risk of contamination from pests or wild animals. Ideally, the supply of water should be mains water and if the supply is from borehole, it is important to regularly collect water samples for bacteriology and physico-chemical analysis to ensure that the water



is wholesome as groundwater can be contaminated by surface runoff and infiltration.

It is always recommended to sanitise the water before it is given to the animals.

Location, location

Some poultry pathogens can be transmitted through the air and local or migrating wild birds. The knowledge of the location of other farms, slaughterhouses, prevailing winds, roads frequently crossed by livestock transport vehicles, lakes or rivers used by resident or migrating waterfowl, etc can give you a better idea as for the best location, orientation and layout to minimise the risk for disease transmission.

Unfortunately, these circumstances are not always taken into account when a new farm is built and in any case we cannot change the location of a farm that has already been built. In the majority of the circumstances we can only try to mitigate the risks inherent to where our farm is located.

All-in all-out systems

Ideally, all the animals on site should be of the same age and leave the site at the end of their productive life altogether. The presence of flocks of different

ages provokes lack of uniformity in the immune status of the animals and biosecurity risks related to the arrival of new animals when there are already other birds on site.

When the sheds are empty, we also have the opportunity to deep clean the site, carry out maintenance works, clean the drinking lines and if possible, the feeding system as well.

The cleaning of the sheds at turnaround should include the removal of all organic matter, washing the sheds with water and then with detergent and disinfection of the sheds (once or ideally twice) before the arrival of the next flock. In the case of deep litter systems (e.g. broiler chickens, fattening turkeys), the litter material must be stored in dry places protected from cross contamination and therefore, it should also come from a reputable source.

Conclusions

Biosecurity is an essential management tool to keep our animals healthy and productive. There will always be some biological risks inherent to our activity and we should identify them and adopt measures to prevent them. Some of the necessary measures might be easy to implement, some might require some level of organisation and communication among different people and others might be too expensive for some enterprises but what we cannot do is just to ignore the risks and do nothing about them; breaches in biosecurity may have important economic and reputational consequences for a farm, a company or even for the whole industry.

poultryhealthservices.com

Joaquin Percebal, DVM, MSc, MRCVS

Joaquin is a Poultry vet at PHS. After graduating from Zaragoza University, he worked at a large animal practice. During this time, Joaquin completed a MSc in poultry applied science.



Responsible use of Antimicrobials

by Tim Potter



The concerns over antimicrobial (antibiotic) resistance in human medicine are frequently reported in the media, and with this amount of attention the use of these products in animals remains under scrutiny. The recent announcement that sales of antibiotics for use in food-producing animals have continued to fall over the last year is testimony to the work that has already been done to ensure responsible use, but we still have a way to go.

The term “responsible use” is frequently used, but what does it actually mean? **“As little as possible, as much as necessary”** is one phrase been used to describe the approach to responsible use of antimicrobial drugs on farm. Antimicrobial drugs are just one of the available tools for managing disease in livestock and it is essential they are used alongside good husbandry, biosecurity and preventative medicines such as vaccination. In the face of a disease outbreak there may well be a place for antimicrobial drugs for immediate management, but it is important to identify the cause of the disease and formulate a management plan which will help reduce the risk of recurrence.

Antimicrobials should not be seen in isolation from the disciplines of animal management, animal welfare, husbandry, hygiene, nutrition and vaccination. Diseases must be controlled to reduce the need for antimicrobial drug use, and they can only be controlled successfully through a holistic approach. Prevention is always going to be better than cure; avoiding the need for the use of antimicrobials will be better for the animal in terms of health and welfare, better for the producer in terms of the economics of their business and better for society as a whole by reducing the potential risk of the emergence of antimicrobial resistance.

One of the cornerstones of responsible use is ensuring products are used correctly; it is important that producers always use medicines in accordance with the guidelines given to them by their veterinary surgeon and provided with the medicines. Producers should ensure that they always give the appropriate amount for the animal’s weight and should not be tempted to under-dose. It may appear to save money in the short term but will frequently work out more costly as there is an increased risk of treatment failure. Similarly always complete the entire course as it is prescribed; missing out that final dose because the animal is seemingly recovered increases the risk of the disease reoccurring; which will require another course of treatment.





Another key principle of the responsible use of antimicrobials is using the correct drug for the disease

condition. Milk samples from clinical cases of mastitis or cows with high somatic cell counts can be used to identify which pathogens treatments should be targeted against and which control measures should be implemented. For diseases such as pneumonia there are a number of vaccines available which can help prevent the disease and by using diagnostic tests it is possible to come up with bespoke vaccination plans to reduce the risk of the disease occurring.

Antimicrobial drugs are an important tool in the treatment of disease and it is essential that everyone involved in their use works to ensure they are used responsibly to help preserve their availability and effectiveness. The responsible use of antimicrobials means reducing the need for them through a holistic approach to disease control, and when they are required ensuring that they are used correctly.



Dr Tim Potter BVetMed PhD MRCVS

Tim graduated from the Royal Veterinary College in 2003, followed by a farm animal residency. In 2011 Tim was part of the group which created the National Youngstock Association, to help promote best practice in calf rearing.



EU exit - what do new UK rules for overseas workers mean for Agriculture?

Free movement of labour between the UK and EU ended on 31 December. The UK Government has started to operate a new points-based immigration system. This system treats migrant workers from the EU and rest of the world the same and there looks to be some challenges ahead if the government don't change some of the rules.



How important are migrant workers to agriculture?

AHDB reported that:

- 20% of the permanent workforce in agriculture and horticulture were EU nationals.
- In addition to this, 95%+ of the circa 60-70,000 seasonal, casual and gang labour were from the EU
- 40% of the food manufacturing workforce, were migrant workers. This include areas as diverse as livestock slaughter and meat processing to potato and vegetable packing.

The conclusion was that the EU provided a pool of labour which was willing to undertake work which had become unattractive for UK nationals. Many of the roles filled were seen as physically demanding, dirty and with unsociable hours.

Did COVID-19 see recruitment drive?

2020 was a challenging year in so many ways. Among the challenges has been the disruption COVID-19 restrictions caused to travel, which has limited the availability of migrant workers. Only a small proportion of the usual EU seasonal workforce were able and willing to take roles in the UK.

According to a study 71%-86% managed to source adequate labour last year from the UK labour force. With an end to furlough and changes as we come out of Covid restrictions will this be the case in the future. There will definitely still be the demand for EU labour as before.

How will roles in the food supply chain fit with the new migration system?

The new points based system offers a number of routes for migrant workers to enter the UK. Of these, the most relevant for year round work in the food supply chain is the skilled worker route. This awards points based on a set of criteria and a minimum of 70 points is required.

A key criteria here is the 'job at appropriate skill level' requirement. To qualify the Government stipulates that jobs require at least level 3 qualifications (i.e. A level or equivalent). This would cover roles such as farmers, skilled agricultural trades, horticultural trades, farm managers and production managers in food processing.

There is potential for some jobs to attract bonus points due to their presence on the Migration Advisory Committee's (MAC) shortage occupation list. However, here, the food supply chain will be



disappointed to see there are only a few sector roles feature. Many in the industry would argue that these roles are skilled, even though they don't require a high level of qualifications.

An extension to the Seasonal Workers Pilot

Seasonal farm or horticultural worker and picking roles are not viewed by Government as sufficiently skilled for the skilled worker route. However, on

22 December, the Government announced a Seasonal Workers Pilot for 2021 with an expanded quota of 30,000 places. This represents an increase from the 10,000 quota of last year's pilot. The Government announcement acknowledges that the new quota will not be sufficient to fill all seasonal roles, highlighting that the recruitment of UK workers from 2020 should continue.

Practice Spotlight: Oakwood Veterinary Group



Based in Harleston and East Anglia, Oakwood veterinary Group has been providing veterinary care to farms for over 100 years. Covering a large geographical area, the team regularly visits clients in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire. The team boasts a good mix of experienced vets, some with post-graduate qualifications and an in-depth knowledge of their chosen species, and younger vets with recent training in newer techniques and ideas.

The vets at Oakwood are actively encouraged to continue developing their knowledge and expertise through post-graduate training courses to ensure that they can offer farmers the very latest developments in farm animal veterinary medicine. The Oakwood team prides themselves on being at the heart of their farming community and taking a real interest in the issues that face the modern-day farmer.

It was, however, the extra-curricular assistance that landed Emily Craven, Ruminant Clinical Director at Oakwood and winner of the BVA Young Vet of the Year 2019. Emily stood out to the judges as she went above and beyond, balancing her full-time role at Oakwood whilst supporting a neighbouring practice that was facing a particularly difficult period. As Emily juggled the two jobs over 5 months, her nominator said that she “raised the teams’ spirit to no end”, and at a time when they were “really up against it”.

Congratulations on your win as the British Veterinary Association, Young Vet of The Year. How did you feel when you heard that you’d been initially named as one of only three finalists?

In all honesty, totally shocked. I am a typical perfectionist vet, complete with all of the

associated anxieties and imposter syndrome. I have always worked to do my best for my colleagues, clients and patients, with no real desire for recognition other than knowing we did our best and got the best possible outcome so being nominated was a complete surprise!

What initially attracted you to join the Oakwood practice?

I never actually planned to move to Oakwood - I started offering to cover some routines and somehow never left. It was the best decision I ever made to take on the routines as I get to work with a great team of people that are friends as much as colleagues and provide a great support network. Mixed practices don’t always get the credit they deserve, and despite never wanting to grace the small animal clinic, having the team around is really nice even if the farm vets do end up as the butt of all the jokes!

What was it that made you want to specialise in farm veterinary medicine?

I was always destined for a large animal practice (I think my college lecturers would testify to the trauma of getting me through small animal!) I love population medicine, health planning

and preventative work and am inherently very pragmatic, so farm animal medicine suits my way of thinking and wants in life. Plus, I really do love cows!

What part of your job do you find most rewarding?

Nothing beats a good outcome on farm, either for me or watching a less experienced vet achieve something tangible for the first time. Those moments are what we all get up for on a cold day.

What is the most difficult?

Learning to deal with bad outcomes has been hard as we don't get lucky all the time. Losing animals will always hurt, and I feel that the day it doesn't is the day to retire, but learning not to dwell on it is a skill that takes time. Finding TB reactors is also incredibly painful as the implications are so widespread and the associated devastation is very hard to comprehend.

Do you have any tips for our farmers through the wintry months?

Keep smiling - spring will come, daylight will be back, and the weather may always be better next year!

Is there anything you wish people knew about farm veterinary medicine?

There's so much more to being a farm vet than sticking your hand up a cow's arse!, but on a cold day, it is the warmest place to be!

Do you have a special interest in one area of veterinary medicine?

Officially it would be feet! I have ended up as the Origin working group lead and VetPartners Special Interest Group lead in mobility, but I do love health planning and official vet work as well. I also do a lot of export work.

What do you think is the best thing about working at Oakwood?

The team! Any organisation is only as good as the individuals within it, and at Oakwood they're all pretty special!



Pictured is (left) Jo Malone, CEO of VetPartners and (right) Emily Craven, BVA winner

Oakwoodvets.co.uk
Admin@oakwoodvets.co.uk
 01379 852146

It's Not All Doom and Gloom

CATCH – which stands for ‘Community Action to Create Hope’ – is an award-winning registered charity in Leeds, West Yorkshire.



Based in Harehills, the charity has been working with adults and young people in the community for over 10 years. Currently deemed one of the most impoverished areas in the UK, with over half of the local children living below the poverty line, CATCH is a lifeline for their visitors and volunteers.

The charity's most recent venture was an educational farm which was built entirely from the ground up by volunteers in the area, and solely using donations from local businesses. The farm's first residents are comprised of 4 young Anglo Nubian goats, although there is already talks to add to the herd due to their popularity with the entire team at CATCH.

Ashley Marshall, practice principal and veterinary surgeon at Westpoint Farm Vets, was there from the start. From guiding the team on the best breed to introduce to the farm; down to help, advice and guidance on how to raise the ‘kids’.

How did the relationship with CATCH begin?

Ash [PC Asad Razzaq MBE, founder of CATCH – but known to all as Ash] contacted Westpoint through Twitter about a collaboration in setting up a small farm on their premises to be looked after by young people in the Harehills area of Leeds. This area has a reputation for a lot of serious crime and has a high level of poverty. They were looking at goats to start off with and wanted some veterinary advice and input.

How long have you been working with the CATCH team?

We first went across to meet Ash and the team at CATCH in August, to have a look at the building that was being constructed by the young people, and to figure out how we could help with what they were trying to achieve. We had a look around and stayed for a chat afterwards, where they treated us to the most delicious homemade samosas!

What made you feel compelled to work with this particular charity?

Vets have traditionally been part of the community, but as things modernise our relationship with the local area has changed. I felt really passionately about giving back to something nearby, where we could be physically involved on a regular basis and help to be a part of something that is changing lives and helping the local people. The things these young people have gone through and overcome was truly inspiring and really made me re-evaluate my own struggles and perceptions.

How have you supported the charity so far?

So far, I have been out with groups of volunteers to look at goats, and help them to make the final decision on a group of 4 young Nubians which moved in a couple of months ago. I was there to make sure they arrived safely and have made sure that they are fully vaccinated. I also organised for them to spend a morning at Askham Bryan College looking at building design and discussing the best ways to feed and manage the goats. It was a great privilege to be invited



to their launch event for the SuperStars App as a representative for Westpoint Farm Vets, along with other companies and influential people, such as Leeds FC, Wickes and Leeds City Council. The app records hours volunteered at CATCH and the young people can work towards prizes and rewards. We are also sponsoring a reward for young people, that is based on a set of completed tasks with the goats.

What has been the most rewarding aspect of working with the charity?

Seeing the reaction of both the younger and adult team, to the goats has been really wonderful. The goats are bringing so much joy and are really helping people, some of whom are from violent pasts, in learning how to care for and look after these animals. On a personal level, being exposed to a group of people that I only read about or see on the news has been an experience that has brought me back to earth and made me check my privilege.

CATCH is incredible. Ash and his team provide a safe and stable place for young people to grow and develop. They work with local companies to provide life experiences and opportunities for people that would commonly become involved in crime and violence.

For more information or if you too would like to help visit: [CATCHleeds.co.uk](https://catchleeds.co.uk) or call **0113 235 0614**



@CATCHLeeds



@CATCHLeeds



@catchleeds



In the news...

With so much going on in the world right now, 2020/2021 has had many serious issues to report. However, there is always the need for a little humour, and our porky pals never fail to entertain us. We're sure you won't be 'boar-ed' by these..



Hogging the Spotlight: One Pig's Claim to Fame

Greek news reporter Lazos Mantikos, was trying to report live on serious flooding in the town of Kineta. His broadcast was repeatedly interrupted due to a sizable sow, that was chasing Lazos and nipping at his 'hocks'. As it cut back to the studio the presenters could be seen doubled over, snorting hysterically. Some might say they were 'hogging' the laughs.



Pigs in Space!

Not muppets - but real pigs are on the moon right now - I kid you not! Nit-pickers would insist on calling them tardigrades; tiny, pig-like invertebrates, but believe me, it's a pig Jim - but not as you know it! They are Moss Piglets, the most indestructible creatures on the planet. They can survive cooking, drowning, freezing, squishing, line-dancing and radiation. So, when the Israeli Luna probe crashed into the moon scattering piglets everywhere, scientists are in no doubt that they are still alive and thriving!



Party-Going Pigs?

Drug dealers were forced to crack open their piggy banks after wild boar in Tuscany, sniffed out £17,000 of cocaine. The feral hogs destroyed, and partly devoured, the class A drug which was discovered strewn across the Valdichiana valley. The destruction of the stash by the passel of hogs, led to the incarceration of four wanted felons. Italian police have praised the pigs, although some were left disputing that the criminals were just trying to 'bring home the bacon'.

First Aid Pigs

Pigs may not always wear a cape but there are numerous tales of humans owing their lives to their fearless fatteners.

Take Lulu for example; this courageous cutter took matters into her own trotters when her owner had a heart attack. Lulu rushed out of the house (definitely qualifies as an essential journey) and laid down in the road to attract attention - she could have become pressed ham at any moment -but she only had thoughts for her beloved owner.

Algie the Pink Floyd Pig

Pink Floyd were famous for flying huge, inflatable pigs during their concerts - but "Algie" (their firstborn) unwittingly created a national incident - and publicity beyond Pink Floyd's wildest dreams!

Algie, a forty foot helium balloon was to be flown over Battersea Power Station for their new "Animals" album. Health and Safety was paramount and a trained marksman was employed to shoot Algie out of the skies if he misbehaved - however the marksman neglected to turn up for day two of the stunt and Algie took this opportunity to break free. He quickly rose to thirty thousand feet, entered the path of aircraft and upset several airline pilots. Many flights at Heathrow Airport were cancelled before Algie voluntarily made his descent that night.





VetPartners Farm Practices

VetPartners Ltd

Spitfire House
Aviator Court
York
YO30 4GY

T: 01904 202228

W: vetpartners.co.uk

E: farmmarketing@vetpartners.co.uk