

# Livestock NEWS

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## Staff News

We are delighted to have had some new faces join the farm team over the last couple of months.

### Catherine Davies

Catherine joined the farm team at the start of October after Graduating from the University of Surrey this summer. She will be working mainly from Dalston but you may see her venture to the south end of the practice when required. Originally from a pig farm in Lancashire, Catherine is now based near Lockerbie on her husband's family beef and sheep farm.



Outside of work, she enjoys spending her free time beating with her Springer spaniel Pippa, horse riding and playing netball.



### Leanne Graves

We also welcomed Leanne to the farm team in October! Leanne has joined our vet tech team and will be mainly based out of Newbiggin/Tarn. Prior to joining the team Leanne spent the last few years as a Land Agent, after qualifying as a Rural Chartered Surveyor.

Growing up on her family dairy farm near High Hesket, Leanne still helps out as much as possible and hopes to utilise her experience in this new role.

In her spare time, Leanne enjoys socialising with friends, game shooting, working her gun dogs, eventing, open water swimming, and she has recently started playing squash, which is fuelling her competitive side.

### Farewell

We've also recently said farewell to Emily Tinning. Emily joined us over 8 years ago and helped develop and build our vet tech service over that period. We wish you well Emily!



## Is Colostrum Enough?

Feeding plenty of good, clean colostrum as soon as possible after the calf is born has long been known to have positive health benefits, but should we be feeding colostrum or alternatively transition milk for longer?

After the first 24 hours, many producers switch their calves to either a milk replacer or whole milk feeding regime. However, recent research suggests that there may be some benefits of feeding colostrum or transition milk for a longer period, even after the critical 24-hour window has passed.

Feeding milk replacer/whole milk supplemented with colostrum or just transition milk (day 2 and 3 milk) on its own for an extended period improves gut development as it contains important bioactive compounds, hormones, and growth factors for the gut. As the gut develops better, the amount of nutrients the calf can absorb is increased, resulting in calves having greater bodyweights and average daily gains (ADG) at weaning.



Feeding antibody rich milk for longer has long been known to reduce the risk of calves scouring. The antibodies form a sort of “Teflon layer” within the gut, thereby protecting the calf from scour pathogens. The “Teflon layer” also reduces the amount of blood bound antibodies required to fight these infections. Blood antibody levels will therefore persist for longer, therefore reducing calf mortality and respiratory disease risk.



Ideally colostrum or transition milk should be pasteurised to prevent spread of disease. Alternatively colostrum replacer, although costly, could be added to milk replacer/whole milk. Feed the transition milk for at least 4 days, before gradually transitioning to milk replacer/whole milk.

Having a good colostrum protocol is vital, but maybe it should not be the only priority when feeding new-born calves.



**By [Victor Oudhuis](#)**

## Veterinary Attestations

From December 13th, 2023, the European Union (EU) will enforce a new requirement for animal product imports: the Veterinary Attestation. This certification assures that the farm of origin is free from notifiable diseases. The certificate bears a unique Veterinary Attestation Number (VAN) and must be renewed at least annually.



**By Chris Bailey**



Farm assurance program participants already meet EU requirements without needing separate certification. For non-assured species, a Veterinary Assurance Number is necessary.

To provide certification, vets do not need to undertake any further sampling or laboratory tests as they already assess farms during routine visits. Retrospective certificates are possible if a recent visit occurred. The resulting certificate can be used multiple times as long as it is valid in date. Copies should be retained on the farm and in case of significant farm operation changes, revisitation may be recommended.



The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway is a separate program but it does satisfy the Attestation requirements. This program, funds a 2 - 3 hour vet visit to focus on endemic disease. Areas of focus include wormer resistance in sheep and Bovine Viral Diarrhea (BVD) in cattle. The annual review aims to reduce disease, enhance animal welfare, improve productivity, and ensure proper use of veterinary medicines and vaccines.

The funded veterinary visits are available initially for farmers eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme and those with over 50 pigs, 20 sheep, or 10 cattle. Payment rates cover vet time and testing costs: £684 for pigs, £436 for sheep, £522 for beef cattle, and £372 for dairy cattle.

For further information, please contact us at Paragon to ensure compliance with the new EU requirements.



## New TB Hotspot declared in Eden Valley

Many of you will be aware of the increased number of TB reactors found to the east of the Eden Valley, particularly along the fellside. When a reactor was found, radial testing of nearby herds was carried out, but no further actions were required because there was no evidence of TB in the wildlife population. Unfortunately, in November 2023, a badger was found near Melmerby/Gamblesby which was infected with the same TB strain as that seen in cattle in the area.

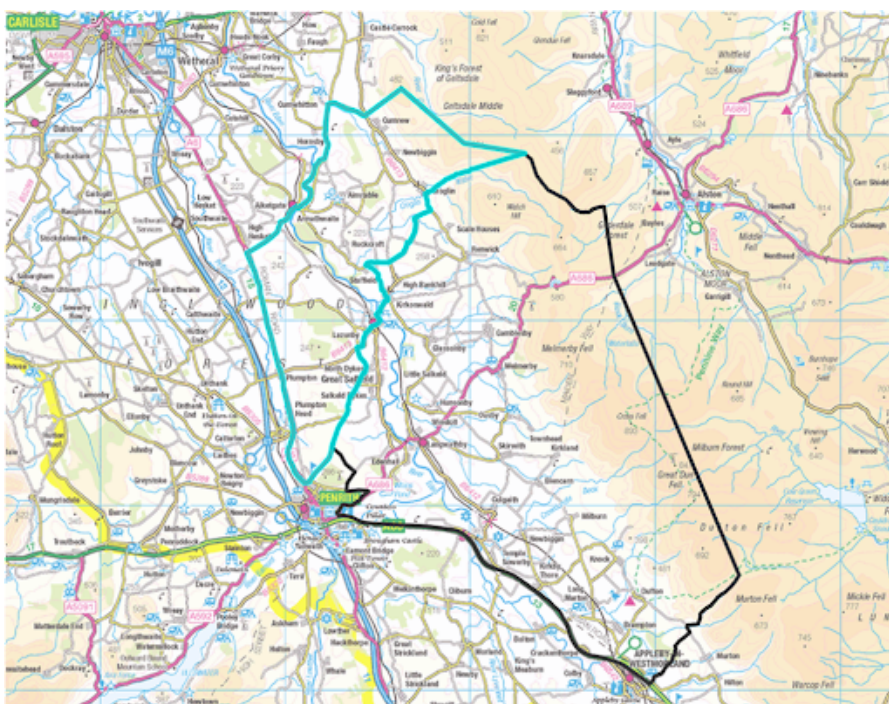


By [Emma Stuart](#)

This has meant a new hotspot (HS29) has been declared which covers an area of around 500km<sup>2</sup> - stretching along the fellside from Cumrew in the north, to Appleby in the south, bordering the A66 to Penrith and up the A6 (see image below). A proposed hotspot was mentioned in April (area within the black lines) but this has been extended to include the blue lined area. Note that this hotspot borders the Shap one (HS21) but the strains of TB are NOT related.

Every farm within this area will need to have a minimum of four six-monthly TB tests (i.e. a period of two years) before testing will be reviewed. If a reactor is disclosed, two short-interval tests (60 days) will be required and the “severe” interpretation will be used. If an inconclusive reactor (IR) is found, the whole herd will remain under restrictions until the IR is retested in 60 days.

Owners of camelids (alpacas/llamas), captive deer and goats will also likely be asked to carry out a check test (skin and blood) although details of this have not been confirmed. Wildlife surveillance also has a huge role to play in monitoring and controlling TB in the area and everyone is encouraged to notify APHA if any badgers or deer are found dead in the hotspot areas (both HS21 and HS29). If possible, they should be submitted to the lab for post-mortem evaluation, so don't hesitate to get in



touch with us or the lab at Penrith for more information or to see about getting a kit for collecting them.

Similarly, wildlife surveys are going to be carried out on all farms near the found badger to identify the location of setts and to establish the social structures and populations. This will help inform decision making regarding policies to help with TB control going forward.

It is also important to remember that good farm biosecurity is one of the best ways of controlling TB, and there are many different things you can do to keep it out. Fully funded TB-focused visits (TBAS visits) are available to all farmers (including goat and camelid owners) to help identify specific things that can be done on your farm.

We have vets trained to do this, so again, please get in touch if you are interested in having one of these visits. Finally, there are two excellent free resource where you can find out more about TB. [www.tbhub.co.uk](http://www.tbhub.co.uk) has the answers to most questions you may have about the disease, while [www.ibtb.co.uk](http://www.ibtb.co.uk) has an interactive map which shows TB outbreaks across the country and may help you make decisions when wanting to buy cattle from a TB-free or low-risk herd.

## **Tackling Dairy Herd Mobility**

Historically, the three biggest challenges associated with dairy cow health and performance have been fertility, mastitis, and lameness. Over the last 20 years, significant improvements have been made in enhancing dairy cow fertility and mastitis control, but the levels of lameness have remained largely unchanged. Lameness on dairy farms is undoubtedly one of the most frustrating issues to address. The most apparent concern with lame cows is the impact on animal welfare, but we cannot overlook its effects on staff morale, the industry's reputation, and financial costs.

There is substantial variation in the levels of lameness experienced on dairy farms. Some farmers manage to achieve remarkably low levels, with fewer than one in 20 cows experiencing lameness at any given time. Unfortunately however, recent estimates suggest that the average level in the UK is one in four cows experiencing some degree of lameness at any given time, with some herds



**By Chris Bailey**

experiencing even higher rates.

Controlling lameness can be divided into four main success factors. Depending on the causes of lameness on your farm—whether it's "white line disease, digital dermatitis, or sole ulcers" - different areas should be prioritised.

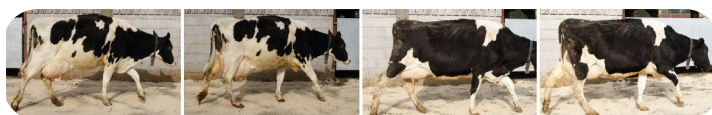
Regular mobility scoring is essential for reducing the level of lameness and monitoring progress. Mobility scoring involves having an independent and trained individual observe all the cows walking past and assign them a lameness score. The cows are scored from 0-3 with a score 2 cow having an identifiable lame leg and a score 3 cow being unable to keep up with the herd, with an arched back. Achievable targets would be less than 15% herd score 2 and less than 3% score 3.



**Good mobility – Score 0**



**Imperfect mobility – Score 1**



**Impaired mobility – Score 2**



**Severely impaired mobility – Score 3**

Recent research has focused on the long-term effects of lameness events on the anatomy of a cow's foot. Even mild lameness events can trigger inflammation resulting in structural changes to the foot, making the cow more susceptible to future lameness events. Detecting lame cows quickly and providing effective treatment is key to reducing the cow's risk of going lame again. Sensible targets would be for all score 2 cows to have their feet looked at within a week and score 3 cows being on straw and trimmed as soon as possible.

## **Upcoming Courses in 2024:**

**Mastering Medicines**  
**DIY AI & Cattle Fertility**  
**Foot Trimming**

If you are interested in taking part in any of the courses, please contact one of the practices to register your interest or request further information.

## Medicine Update

Over the last few years we have had an increase in the number of product supply issues. From time to time we have had to change brands, stockpile certain products and there have been times that we've had to manage without.



By [Philip Wilkinson](#)

The latest issue we have encountered is with PENSTREP. This has recently been removed from the market due to an issue with storage temperatures. In the meantime we have sourced a product called PENTOMYCIN. The good news is that PenStrep is due to come back in to stock in the 2nd quarter of 2024 but with one major licensing change as follows:

**\*Both PENSTREP & PENTOMYCIN will be a fridge only product\*  
requiring storage between 2-8°C.**



This will mean that in the short term our vets will not be carrying any of these products in their cars - if you would like to continue to have the option of using PenStrep on your farm please make sure you keep a supply on farm that can be used by the vet if deemed suitable.

Please speak to one of the vets if you have any questions.

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