

Dear All,

Welcome to our summer newsletter. We seem to have finally moved from having too much water to worrying about not having enough, especially those who have started drilling! That being said, we had plenty of grass in the spring in most areas, but not of great nutritional value so we did see a spike of spring metabolic issues like grass staggers and white muscle disease where cattle especially weren't picking up enough minerals from grazing.

There's also been plenty of talk this year about Iodine levels, I've certainly attended a lot more calvings purely because the cow wasn't getting on with it and heard reports of slow calves. Low iodine levels can lead to poor fertility and poor-doing calves and can be associated with improved pastures as sometimes increasing the levels of one mineral can lock in another. There are plenty of options to supplement Iodine, and it is possible to test cattle, but you have to be careful about timings of this. Please have a chat with us if you think you might have an issue.

It's not all minerals though, we've been following up some of the pathway grant testing with herds who claimed last year and its good to see levels of BVD in our area continuing to decrease – if you haven't used this funding yet it is still available and you can apply online via the gov.uk website – in beef cattle the focus is on BVD monitoring and in sheep there's a project investigating wormer resistance in your flock.

Hopefully by the next newsletter the Moretonhampstead branch will be back up and running, there's light at the end of tunnel with some remedial work yet to be done but planning and building control approval have been signed off thankfully.

This month Emma has written an article focusing on issues caused by mud (when we came up with the idea there was a lot more mud around) but I think it's timely as recently Foot rot has been a bit of hot topic when doing FABBL reviews, and at our last farmers meeting we discussed the new information and testing about liver fluke.

Looking forward to catching up with people on the 20th of August at Chagford show – maybe with more buckets!

Ashley
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Navigating the Mud: Protecting Feet and Livers

The Challenge:

Persistent moisture is more than a nuisance; it drives lameness and parasitic threats. As the ground remains saturated, bacteria and snails thrive. This month, we look at managing these "wet weather" culprits.

Moisture softens the hoof and skin, allowing bacteria to invade.

- Scald (Interdigital Dermatitis): Red, raw skin between the toes. Spreads rapidly in long, wet grass.
- Footrot: If Scald is untreated, it leads to this painful infection where the hoof horn separates. It has a distinct, foul smell.
- Shelly Hoof: Wet ground causes the hoof wall to separate, trapping mud and leading to secondary infections.

Moorgate's Top Tips for Foot Management



- Avoid "Mud Traps": Bacteria love poached areas around gateways and troughs move troughs regularly or use straw in high-traffic spots.
- The "Three-Day Rule": Catch and treat any lame sheep within three days. Early treatment with topical spray (and injectables if needed) stops the spread.
- Ditch the Trimming: Routine trimming often does more harm than good by causing trauma. Only trim overgrown horn—never trim an actively infected foot.
- Foot Bathing: For Scald, ensure sheep stand on a dry, hard surface for 30–60 minutes after the bath so the treatment can dry before they return to the mud.
- Cull Repeat Offenders: Keep a "three strikes" policy. Removing naturally prone sheep improves flock resilience.



The Changing Face of Liver Fluke



With wetter summers and milder winters, the mud snails that carry fluke are active for longer. NADIS estimates every infected sheep costs a farmer £3–£5 via poor growth and reduced conception.

Understanding the Stages

- Acute (Mass Immature Fluke): Watch for sudden death, lethargy, and anaemia.
- Sub-Acute: Look for rapid loss of body condition and poor fleece quality.
- Chronic: Characterized by "Bottle-Jaw" (fluid under the jaw) and extreme weight loss.

Diagnosis Over Blanket Treatment

Treating without a diagnosis is often a waste of money and can harm the environment, particularly dung beetles and soil invertebrates.

Why Test First?

Symptoms like weight loss and sudden death aren't unique to Fluke; they can also be caused by Clostridial diseases, Johne's, or poor nutrition. A definitive diagnosis is vital.

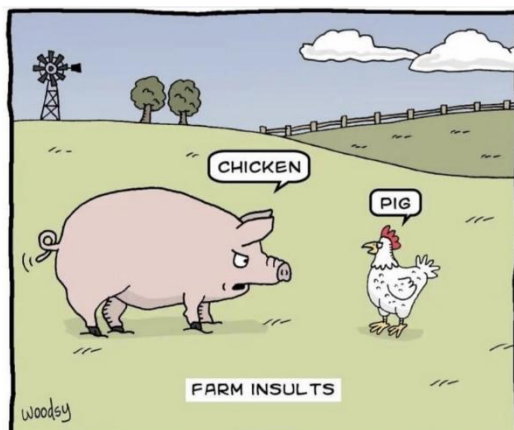
Prevention & Strategy: "Test, Don't Guess"

- Quarantine: Always test and treat bought-in stock to avoid introducing fluke to your land.
- Targeted Testing: We recommend fecal or blood testing to identify the specific risk and lifecycle stage present on your farm.
- Strategic Dosing: Use weather forecasts and vet-guided testing to choose the right flukicide at the right time.

Action Plan

- Does your health plan reflect the latest fluke risks?
- Don't risk unnecessary environmental impact or financial loss.
- Contact us to arrange diagnostic testing or to update your flock health plan.

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Cryptic clue

For yet another chance to win a Moorgate bucket just let me (Ashley) know the answer to the following cryptic clues:

Animal from farm yard, headless chicken (6 letters)

Ovine women's article on extended play record (5 letters)

Constant gravity, fat (3 letters)

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