

Table of Contents

Page 1

-Beef Expo 2024

-CHECS TB update

Page 2

-HiHealth Herdcare

Wordsearch

Page 3

-Bluetongue update

-Scot Sheep 2024

-Sustainable Farming
Schemes

Page 5

-Meet our Vet Team

Page 8

-Stirling Bull Sales

Page 9

-CHECS Johnes update

Welcome to our HiHealth Herdcare autumn newsletter. It's hard to believe that autumn has arrived already. Did we have a summer this year?

Within this newsletter we provide updates on the CHECS Johne's and bTB schemes, pertinent information for those who are entering animals into Stirling bull sales and an introduction to some of our vets. We hope you enjoy our health scheme themed wordsearch. If our chosen words remind you of any queries about the schemes or your membership, then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

There is an opportunity for you to give us your feedback by following the link to our survey. We want to provide the best service possible and would love to know what you think. If you can spare a few moments to complete this, it would be very much appreciated.

<https://surveymonkey.com/r/BY7VVJR>



Beef Expo 2024

On Saturday 27th April 2024, Anna a member of our farm animal team and Susan, one of our vets, attended the National Beef Association's Beef Expo event at North West Auctions, J36, Cumbria. It was a great day allowing us to speak to farmers about our services and current issues, along with meeting some of our HiHealth Herdcare members face to face. We also enjoyed colouring in pictures of farm animals with children that visited.

There were 4 seminars during the day with different focuses. We both attended the seminar named Food, Farming & Finance, the chair of this seminar was Neil Shand (CEO, National Beef Association) and on the panel were Sir Mark Spencer MP (Minister of State for Food, Farming and Fisheries), Daniel Zeichner MP (Shadow Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), Tim Farron MP (Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and Prys Morgan (Livestock Procurement Director, Keypak). This led to an interesting discussion about the future of farming and all agreed on the need for a long-term approach to agricultural strategy.



Update – CHECS TB programme

Over 180 members of HiHealth Herdcare participate in the CHECS TB programme. Farmers choose to pursue CHECS TB accreditation for 3 main reasons:

- Earned Recognition - Herds with a CHECS score of 1 or above can qualify for 'Earned Recognition' (ER). In qualifying herds, ER allows whole herd testing to be carried out at annual rather than 6-monthly intervals. CHECS score 1 is awarded when 12 months have passed since the last TB breakdown ended.
- Risk based trading - To indicate when selling animals that the risk of the sale animals is low, even if they come from a more frequently testing TB area. For example, although a herd is in the 'high risk TB area', if it has a CHECS TB score of 10, this means it is at least 10 years since the herd had a TB breakdown. There is a low risk of buying in TB when sourcing animals from this herd.
- Assist disease control – The CHECS TB programme is designed to support herds that are currently undergoing a breakdown. Members of the scheme must adhere to good biosecurity measures to reduce the risk of spread into and within the herd. Many of these are 'no regrets' measures that involve little financial investment



If you would like information on CHECS TB accreditation, please get in touch with us to discuss it further.

HHH Wordsearch

Words can be found in any direction (including diagonals) and can overlap each other. Use the word bank below.

C P S C S I S O R I P S O T P E L U H Y
F N E O S P O R A R O O V O W S Z W I K
M P I X X X B P P K R J W E X K N W H S
W K K E Y P K A H I X S S Y Z Q E I E T
N D F V D K A H N Y E P W E S H J H A A
N Y B O U N D A R I E S E B S Y T M L T
D E K W Q A C C R E D I T A T I O N T I
E I G K F H A A P E B W X L K L D C H S
T W U P I H S R E B M E M R Z E U N H T
A U E R B F Y F A L M U S F T T Y Y E I
L J X J B I T K O T A B B A Y G U J R C
O C P F F I I G G L V M N F P X H S D A
S N F S L Z R A S D Q I I V E W B C C L
I V X E I S U E J O C T J N K Q N E A S
Y W P N S S C V A C O I P B A U S H R A
Z L W H Y G E L A W A P G H J D I C E M
O N C O Y F S V G I X E L E A C E Q Z P
O R D J T O O U F I O Y Z H B P G D S L
C E R T I F I C A T E B T B X S R F D E
V R T E S Z B B E L P M A S D O O L B A

Word Bank

Accreditation

Added Animal

Biosecurity

Blood Sample

Boundaries

bTB

BVD

Certificate

CHECS

HiHealth Herdcare

IBR

Isolated

Johnes

Leptospirosis

Membership

Neospora

Statistical Sample

Vaccinated

Bluetongue

It is with much concern that we have been following the developing situation around bluetongue in the south-east of the country. Our thoughts are with all those affected. For the most up to date information please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bluetongue-information-and-guidance-for-livestock-keepers>

Scot Sheep 2024

In June, Vicky and Emily, two of our vets, headed east to Aikengall Farm near Dunbar, to attend Scotsheep.

Although the wind was whistling through the tents, the rain mostly held off and visitors to the event were not deterred. A great day was had by all, as we had the chance to catch up with old acquaintances, as well as making new ones.



We enjoyed welcoming visitors to our stand to chat all things sheep while our younger visitors were kept entertained with our pipetting game.

Please come and say hi if you see us out and about at events, we always love to meet our members in person and it's great to put faces to the names.

Update on sustainable farming schemes across the devolved administrations

Wales – Sustainable Farming Scheme

In May, the Welsh government announced that the introduction of the Sustainable Farming Scheme will be in 2026.

The scheme will be based on Universal Actions (UAs) followed by optional actions and collaborative projects.

There are 17 universal actions, which include: animal welfare, biosecurity, training, pest management and soil health planning to name a few.

Only UAs applicable to the farm by the relevant dates need to be completed. Some on-farm activity already completed could count towards the UAs, where appropriate, but no UAs need to be completed before entering the scheme.

<https://www.gov.wales/sustainable-farming-scheme-guide>

Scotland – Preparing for Sustainable Farming (PSF)

This scheme is currently in its second year and has three main components – Carbon Audits, Soil Sampling and Analysis and Animal Health and Welfare Interventions.

As part of the Animal Health and Welfare Interventions, funding is available for farmers to carry out investigations into a wide range of diseases, with the aim of improving the health of the animals under their care and subsequently increasing efficiency.

There are 4 interventions available to choose from in cattle (bull fertility, calf respiratory disease, liver fluke and round worms) and 5 for sheep (sheep scab, iceberg diseases, lameness, liver fluke and roundworms). Investigations should be planned and undertaken with your expert advisor (e.g. your farm vet or agricultural consultant).

Evidence of investigation and action advised is required for payment, with £250 available for each intervention (Maximum of 2 interventions a year). A further £250 can be claimed for development activities if it is your first application. Actions must be defined by your expert advisor and an expert advisor form must be completed to support your claim.

This part of the scheme is coming to an end and all investigations and actions for the year must be completed by 31 December 2024 and claims must be submitted by 28 February 2025. It is possible to claim for actions already taken this year in a single claim at the year end.

<https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/preparing-for-sustainable-farming--psf-/preparing-for-sustainable-farming--psf--full-guidance/>

England – Animal Health and Welfare Pathway

Eligible farmers must apply digitally and agree to complete their review within 6 months. A review must be completed before endemic disease follow up is performed.

In cattle, the required testing within the annual review focuses on BVD with £522 available for beef herds and £372 for dairy herds. The follow up again focuses on BVD with a different level of funding available dependent upon whether BVD was identified in the herd at review. £215 is available if the review result was negative and £837 if the review result was positive.

In sheep, the required testing within the annual review focuses on the effectiveness of medicines to treat worms. £436 is available for the review. For the endemic disease follow up, a wide range of investigations into a variety of endemic diseases qualify for funding. You should discuss with your own farm vet what the priorities are for your flock, to determine what testing would be appropriate. £639 funding is available per flock for endemic disease follow up.

It is important that all guidance is followed when performing the review and endemic disease follow up to ensure that you receive the available funding. Specified labs must be used for testing. At present, the proposed end date for the service is 19 June 2027. All reviews and follow-ups must be completed by this date.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/funding-to-improve-animal-health-and-welfare-guidance-for-farmers-and-vets>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sheep-testing-required-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-review-and-endemic-disease-follow-up/vets-laboratory-requirements-for-sheep>

A number of grants and other funding to improve productivity, manage your land and benefit the environment are also currently available. Information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-for-farmers>

Meet Our Vet Team

Our vets interpret lab results and write the comments on the reports sent out to customers. They are also on hand to offer advice to farmers and vets via phone or email. There are 9 vets in the Biobest team. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce some of them, who many of you will have come across over the years.



Susan Duthie-Veterinary Manager-21 years at Biobest

In addition to her role as a vet, Susan also looks after the vets and the farm animal team here at Biobest.

Kate Cheeseman-Veterinary Advisor-8 years at Biobest

Kate lives and works in the USA, so if you receive reports late at night, it is because she is working while we all sleep!

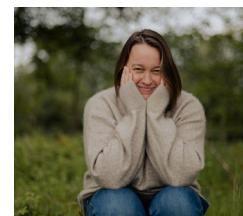


Heather Nicholls-Veterinary Advisor-3 years at Biobest

Heather has worked in a variety of settings during her veterinary career - First opinion practice, equine hospitals, small animal locum work and now Biobest.

Emily Anderson-Veterinary Advisor-3 years at Biobest

Emily loves singing as part of her choir and is part of the Alpaca clinical interest group with Vet Partners.



Lucy Fletcher-Veterinary Advisor-10 months at Biobest

Lucy still works in Farm animal practice for part of her week, in addition to her role as a Veterinary Advisor at Biobest.

We asked them all some wide-ranging questions to help get to know them better. Here's what they said:

1. What is your favourite thing about working at Biobest?

Emily Anderson says 'My lovely colleagues, who always provide biscuits and support.'

'The team of people I work with and being able to problem solve and assist farmers with improving the health of their herd or flock' says Heather.

2. What is your favourite animal & why?

Lucy says 'My dog – because dogs are better than people'

'I like them all! I do have a soft spot for Brown Swiss cows - they are so pretty. And golden retrievers - they are just so sweet.' – Kate

'A cat. Because they just do what suits them. And I have a very affectionate ginger cat.' - Emily

3. Would you rather live for the rest of your life with the head of a cow or the body of a sheep?

Kate says 'Haha - body of a sheep for sure - I'd rather keep my noggin, thanks, and plus - built-in woolly jumper!'

Susan would rather have the head of a cow because they generally have lovely eyelashes.

'Body of a sheep – always surprised at how fast they can move when I'm trying to catch one' - Lucy

4. What are you most proud of in your career so far?

Heather says 'How I've been able to adapt to different veterinary roles!'

'Gaining my Masters degree.' - Emily

'Endurance! – development of the farm animal team at Biobest.' - Susan

5. If you could have any superpower what would it be?

Susan would like to be able to fly. It would be fantastic to be able to soar & look down on what is happening below.

'Time travel would be very cool! And also to be able to travel long distances in a split second, so I could see friends all over the world whenever we wanted!' - Heather

6. What is the one thing you wish people knew about your job?

'That we always want to know more - I'm sitting at my computer thinking about that cow or sheep or alpaca & wondering exactly what their symptoms are and how it is doing, and love to get follow-up stories, both for the information of whether we were on the right track, and just to hear how they are doing.' - Kate

Emily would like everyone to know that all added animals should be quarantined and tested after 28 days unless they are direct from accredited herds!

'People can't understand when they realise I am a vet, that I don't see any animals generally in the course of my work'- Susan

7. What's one thing that surprised you about your current role?

'That I could keep doing it even after moving abroad - I love my job & was so glad I could keep working here even after moving to the USA... I'll be back to Scotland someday, though!' - Kate

Lucy says that what surprised her most about her role here is how rewarding it is to work with farmers and vets in practice to be part of a wider team controlling endemic diseases on farm.

8. If you had three wishes what would they be?

Kate says she would use one of her wishes to change the sheep-body (question 3) back to her human one. 'The woolly jumper is nice, but I do like having opposable thumbs!'

Susan only has 1 wish – 'to make the house I live in eco-friendly & warm without any effort! It's a lovely old house, constructed at a time when 'climate change' had not been invented.'

9. What was your first job as a vet?

Lucy's first job was to blood sample 10 cows, it took an hour and many more than 10 blood tubes...

'Traditional rural mixed practice with beef, sheep, small animal and horse work' - Heather

10. What piece of advice would you give your younger self?

'Start yoga! I do yoga regularly now, however wish I had started years ago.' – Susan

'Don't sweat the small stuff...and its all small stuff!' – Heather

'Accept that it is ok to make mistakes and learn from them. And that everything will work out ok.' – Emily

11. What's one thing that people don't know about you that they would be surprised to find out?

'I worked at a farm near my home in Vermont in summers, growing up, and part of my job was making cheese – but this was before I had the surname 'Cheeseman' (Got that when I married my husband - Guess it was meant to be!)' – Kate

Lucy does not like horses and has a strong passion for trashy TV!

12. What was your alternative career choice if you hadn't become a vet?

Heather says 'I always wanted to be a vet! If I couldn't have been a vet I suppose I might have been a journalist as I love writing!'

'Dog walker – can't imagine a better life! Exclusively to dogs larger than cats though.' - Lucy

13. If you could have dinner with any 3 people in the world who would you choose & why?

Susan would have dinner with:

Nicole David – former world womens number 1 squash player & ambassador for squash in the 2028 Olympics

Frances Tophill – presenter on Gardeners World so that I can ask all my gardening questions

Kamala Harris – as I'm sure that would be entertaining

Lucy says 'Adele, Richard Hammond and Peter Kay. They'd probably do all the talking so I could focus on the eating!'

Stirling Bull Sales – 20-22 October

The October Stirling bull sales will take place on 20th - 21st October. If you require sale cards for this sale please complete the sale card request form (available on our website) in plenty of time.

- Where less than 2 weeks' notice is given we cannot guarantee that we will be able to produce a sale card at all
- Additional charges will be applied where less than 2 weeks' notice is given for a sale card where no testing is required
- Where testing is necessary, at least 1 months' notice is required
- Where animals are at livery the herd status of the herd of origin will not be presented on the sale card unless the animals are maintained in isolation at livery (signature required)

Update – CHECS rules on Johne’s disease.

Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHECS) is the regulatory body for cattle health schemes in the UK and Ireland. HiHealth Herdcare, the cattle health scheme run by Biobest, provides Johne’s accreditation to members who test for Johne’s in accordance with CHECS rules.

Under the CHECS rules, for an annual herd blood screen, samples from all animals of 2 years and over are tested for antibodies to Johne’s disease and follow up testing can be carried out on any animals with positive blood results. An independent review of the CHECS Johne’s programme has proposed that a new level be brought into the Johne’s classifications denoting those herd that have no blood positive results at the annual herd test. This recommendation has been discussed at length and agreed by all the health schemes, representatives of the beef breeds, and the CHECS Board. From 1st October 2024, the CHECS Johne’s risk level 1 will be further qualified to Risk level 1* (1 star) for those herds that achieve Johne’s risk level 1 without any blood test positive results. This recognises the fact that such herds with no serological suspicion of infection are lower risk than those which record some serology positives. Risk level 1* status will appear on herd accreditation and sales certificates from 1st October 2025.

It is recognised within all these discussions that Johne’s accreditation is difficult and that for this reason we provide a risk level for Johne’s disease rather than accreditation of freedom from Johne’s. Understanding of this and of the information provided on the herd Johne’s certificate is critical for the successful operation of the scheme. The information given on the herd status certificate includes the current risk level, how long a herd has been at that Johne’s risk level and the number of animals tested at the most recent herd test including the number of these, if any, that were blood test positive / dung negative animals. For example, it would be reasonable to assume that for 2 herds that have been risk level 1 for 2 years and herd 1 has achieved level 1 with 50 animals and no blood test positives, whereas herd 2 had 3 of 50 animals blood test positive / dung negative then purchasing from herd 1 carries a lower risk. However, if herd 1 has been risk level 1 for only 1 year, and herd 2 had been Johne’s level 1 for more than 10 years then the herd that had been risk level 1 for the longer period could be considered the lower risk herd.

If you have any questions regarding the current rules of the Johne’s health scheme, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank You!

