



**With summer coming to an end I'm sure many of you will be busy making the most of the dry days to get the harvest home. The coming months will see some staff changes within the practice. We are excited to welcome two clinicians, Paul Wood and Rob Kelly, to the team and sad to say goodbye to Alex, although he will remain within the vet school in the Dairy Herd Health and Productivity Service, providing consultancy advice to farmers across the UK, and also to Jenny who is heading off to sunnier climes in New Zealand.**

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### Paul Wood

Paul graduated from the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in 2005 and spent 18 months working in mixed practice across Herts, Beds and Bucks. He then moved around doing small animal and exotic animal locum positions before starting a year long MSc in Wild Animal Health with ZSL London. After completing this degree he returned to the RVC as a Farm animal clinician working in both the ambulatory and referral practices. During this time he completed a Post Graduate Certificate in Veterinary Education as well as being heavily involved in all aspects of the RVC curriculum. After three years at the RVC Paul had a brief foray into industry, providing maternity cover as an Area Veterinary Manager for Pfizer Animal Health. In 2012 he joined the farm department at the University of Cambridge and alongside a significant teaching role developed the ambulatory, referral and consultancy ser-

vices. During his time here he achieved his Diploma in Veterinary Education. In October 2016 Paul is moving to the Farm Practice at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, Edinburgh as a Lecturer in Farm Animal Practice and Senior Clinician. Paul's interests lie in Fertility and Obstetrics, Individual and Smallholder farm animal medicine, surgery and management, Veterinary Education and Student Support. He is looking forward to meeting all of the clients of the practice in the near future and finding out about your farms and how we can best support you.



### Rob Kelly

Rob grew up in the rural Vale of York and graduated from the University of Liverpool Veterinary School in 2009 with an MSc in Veterinary Parasitology. He started out his years in mixed practice mainly working with cattle and sheep, as well as chasing a few goats and alpacas, in Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire. Rob has also been involved with various livestock clinics and development projects in Latin America, North and sub-Saharan Africa. Jumping at any excuse to travel Rob took up a clinical overseas research post at the R(D) SVS, University of Edinburgh. The post was predominately based in Cameroon for 2 years, looking at the epidemiology of bovine TB and impact of liver fluke co-infection in nomadic cattle, being the project vet and coordinator. He is a much better 4x4 driver for the work and also submitted his part-time PhD on the subject last month. He then took up a post at the Universi-

ty of Glasgow Veterinary School in 2014 as a Farm Animal Clinician to combine his interests in clinical live-stock medicine and global veterinary education. Rob is returning to R(D)SVS as a clinician to continue developing his interests in clinical practice, parasitology and is looking forward to getting his hands dirty with you all. Outside work, fuelled by Yorkshire tea, Rob is looking forward to getting back to cross-country/ half marathon running, gin making and finding time to fix up his flat in Edinburgh



## Liver Fluke in Cattle

In Scotland, this time last year, the Food Standards Agency reported that 27% (1 in 4) of all cattle sent to slaughter had their livers condemned due to fluke damage. AHDB Beef and Lamb estimates the parasite can cost cattle farmers as much as £90/head, based on an additional 27 days finishing time, a 10kg reduction in carcass weight, and carcass conformation which is half a score lower. Liver condemnations at the abattoir further increase the costs with lost income from the “fifth quarter”. Given current profit margins and changes in carcass grading, can you really afford to have your head in the sand/bog about fluke burdens on your farm?

Detection of liver fluke infection in cattle is easier than in sheep. To begin with, there is no urgent need to detect juvenile fluke, for which diagnostic tests are limited. Secondly, access and sample collection is easier for animals once housed. Finally, the value of the individual animal may justify collection of blood samples. Detection of liver fluke infection can be done at the farm or individual animal level and in addition, the farm-level risk factors such as management, land type and weather should also be taken into account when deciding to undertake treatment or not. The below table outlines some fluke detection methods to aid in identifying if your animals are at risk of fluke burdens this autumn. A combination of these testing/monitoring methods is often required to ensure losses due to liver fluke are kept to a minimum.

Test	Advantages	Disadvantages
Post Mortem inspection	Happens routinely at slaughter houses and diagnostics labs	Too late—losses already occurred
Blood sampling	Herd level diagnosis of exposure and risk	Can be historic
Faecal testing	Egg counts and/or copra antigen can demonstrate active or early burdens	Can miss chronic infections Egg counts only detect adult fluke

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## Preparing for Topping

Ram fertility is key to next year’s lamb output, especially for single sire mating groups, maximising ram use or when deciding how many rams to buy in the autumn sales. A thorough ram MOT can pick up most problems before these can have an impact on the length of lambing and total lamb crop.

Buying new rams is always a gamble, in order to limit this give your potential new blood a check over before you part with any money. Many ram fertility problems can be picked up without any specialist equipment: obvious things like lameness, limb conformation and eyesight can be assessed from a distance; once you have selected a few potential candidates get into the pen and check them over more, paying particular attention to: Body condition (avoiding those that are too fat or thin), Brisket (checking for sores), Teeth (Can he survive on grass? Are there any undesirable traits that could be passed onto lambs?), Penis (Is there a foul smelling discharge? Any painful lumps?) and finally Testicles (in September scrotal circumference should be 32-34 cm, dependant on age and breed – 28cm is acceptable for some native breeds), each testicle should be smooth, even and springy like ripe tomatoes, with a small lump at the bottom).

Once you have your new recruits, ewes as well as rams, keep them away from all other stock for a minimum of 3 weeks while you monitor for disease. During this period treat them to avoid bringing in sheep scab, resistant gut worms and liver fluke – before your new stock arrive on farm speak to us for details.