



## Making the most out of the pathway - July 23

Following on from Bea's email last month, this newsletter is to shed some more light on what we at The George Farm Vets can offer our clients with the new Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Scheme, and how best to use the money from the government.

### A quick summary of the pathway and how to apply, for those not yet up to speed:

As a beef farmer you are eligible for £522. The only mandatory thing you have to do to get this money is to test 6 young animals (ideally 9-18 month, but say you're a finisher; your youngest animals will do for BVD. Once you remove the cost of the BVD testing, the money left over equates to approximately 2.5 hours of vet time.

In order to apply you need your SBI and RPA customer relations number (CRN). We are happy to do this process for you at visits or if you give us the numbers over the phone we can do it in the office for you. Once you sign up you will be contacted to let you know that you are eligible, you will then be invited to officially apply. Once you have your Agreement Number you can contact us to book in your visit. We cannot do anything until you have this number.

The funding money will be sent directly to your bank account once you have completed your visit and the accompanying report has been submitted. The government's plan is to use engagement with this as proof that farmers are proactively looking after their stock and potentially it will be needed to access further grants in the future.

Get the ball rolling here <https://apply-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-review.defra.gov.uk/apply/register-your-interest/enter-your-email-address>

### What use is 2.5 hrs of vet time we hear you ask, well, here are some ideas.

This is by no means an exhaustive list and if there is something that you specifically would like or you'd like to talk it through with someone, speak to your vet and they can help make it work for you.

#### Bull fertility test and Report for up to two bulls:

It's said a bull is worth half the herd. A bull firing on all cylinders will give you new genetics, tight calving intervals and calves with good vigour. However, approximately 1 in 5 bulls are sub- or infertile, so investigating the fertility of your bulls, even the young bulls, is well worth your while.

#### Pre Calving bloods to check energy, protein and magnesium levels-

Having a well balanced diet containing the right amount of energy, protein and minerals is a key part of having a productive and healthy herd, especially around calving. The correct diet will reduce the risk of metabolic disease around calving and improve fertility for the next year. Failure to get a cow back in calf can often be due to nutrition issues and this will result in significant economic loss. Blood sampling dams pre-calving to assess their nutritional status with beef herds is a service we recommend to maximise calf and dam success.

## Trace Element blood testing

Trace elements such as cobalt, copper, selenium and iodine are vital for the normal health and function of cattle.

Animals obtain trace elements via their diet and levels can vary with forage quality, soil type and weather. We would recommend annual screening to ensure correct supplementations.



Trace element	Clinical signs
Iodine	Lack of vigour in calves, reduced growth rates, infertility, RFMs
Cobalt	Poor growth, anaemia, reduced appetite, poor coat
Selenium	White muscle disease, heart problems
Copper	Poor coat, poor growth rates, poor fertility, scour

## Pre Breeding visit for heifers including scanning and pelvic measuring

Breeding heifers are your up and coming genetics so checking they are in fine condition and shape can be the difference from an easy calving season and a nightmare.

Scanning and pelvic scoring at 13-20 months of age ensures reproductive organs and ovaries are normal and no freemartins are present.

We are also able to predict based upon weight, age and internal pelvic measurements, the maximum weight of a calf the heifer would be able to birth, this can really help with pairing bulls/semen based on EBVs.



Figure 1Vettimes.co.uk

## Infectious disease screen for Johnes and Neospora

Johnes and Neospora are 2 diseases that can affect the productivity of your animals.

Johnes is a chronic wasting disease and causes reduction in fertility. The disease can be passed from dam to calf in the uterus, in milk and most commonly in faeces. Having an idea of your status and creating a management plan would be a great use of the money from the government.

Neospora is the leading cause of abortions in cattle in the UK. The animals which are positive for neospora are 20 times more likely to abort again. If you have neospora in your herd, you want to know about it so that these animals can be removed.

The main aim of this funding is to improve relationships between farmers and vets. We believe there is a huge benefit in having a vet who delivers bespoke, consistent advice and really knows you and your farm. Give us a call and let the government pay for 2.5 hours of bespoke advice for your farm!

All the best,  
  
Joe Reskelly

