

The
GEORGE
Farm Vets



The annual health plan review is something you will all be familiar with, although sadly for many it has become a tick box exercise and not something that is valued. The main aims of a health plan are to identify any issues on farm, outline actions to take as a result and to trigger procedure change that will benefit everyone involved.

As vets, we want to see a **proactive approach to health plans** - the cost of fighting disease once present is far more than the cost of preventing it in the first place. For example, using data from ADAS 2013, it is estimated that:

- The cost of one lame sheep is £90.
- A single case of sheep scab costs you £12.30
- One calf scouring costs on average £58.
- Pneumonia in one calf costs £82

If you were to do a cost benefit analysis, the money saved from prevention of a scouring calf is £47, and for respiratory disease in a calf £76.

For **flock health planning**, the more data you have the more useful the meeting will be. For example, the number of tups per group, how many scanned empty, how many lambs scanned, dates regarding lambing period, plus any additional information you may have on mortality. The more data we have, the better we know your farm and therefore the greater impact we can have on productivity. The best time for the meeting depends on you and your system, but for a lot of our farmers pre-tupping is a perfect time as we can look back at a complete

Getting the most out of Health Planning May 21

cycle, with enough time to make changes for the coming year.

Additionally, it is crucial to have discussions with your vet if you are unsure of which **wormers** should be in your protocol. Only **2%** of farms have no resistance to any wormer! **94%** of farms have some resistance to white drench, and **68%** have resistance to levamisole. Worm egg counts are really important, and the timing of these can save you huge amounts of money, rather than drenching unproductively. If you are not seeing an improvement on scouring animals after drenching, this is end stage anthelmintic resistance. We can detect this with appropriate use of worm egg counts and wormer rotation- let us help you to avoid this scenario!

An example of how efficient health planning can be productive: if a 500-ewe flock scanning at 180% with 900 lambs expected, had an enzootic abortion outbreak causing 5% of ewes to abort:

- 25 ewes = 45 lambs lost
- The cost to the farmer for producing the lamb before it is even born is £25.62, therefore variable cost of abortion at this stage = £1152.90.
- With the investigation cost on top, the overall cost, without taking into account the productive life of the lambs, is £1172.90.
- The cost of a flock health plan lasting 90 minutes is roughly £150, giving preventative vaccine to replacements (20% flock) at £2 per head = £200, therefore cost of vaccination to prevent this happening again is £350+time.

For the cow side of things, a **herd health plan** can really help visualize where improvements can be made. Reducing antibiotics is on everyone's minds, and the health plan can help work out what they are being given for, and how to reduce.

Key points we can help identify and improve on include the body condition of your cows, nutrition status, trace element status, interventions in calving and fertility.

We can look at your bull, discuss fertility testing and EBVs - a £200 herd health plan may prevent a £300-400 caesarean!

One thing in particular that we discuss with our cattle farmers is pneumonia. There are over 12 vaccines available and finding the right ones for your herd is essential to your calf health and ongoing productivity. The cost of vaccination is between £3 and £15 per calf. On top of this, we can walk around your calf sheds and advise on housing, ventilation, stocking density, lungworm likelihood.

We want to emphasise that health planning should be seen as an investment, not a cost. The farming industry is really moving forwards with regard to iceberg disease problems and getting ahead of the game with disease prevention is at the forefront of what we're trying to achieve.

If we can shift our collective thinking to using the right product at the right time, with less 'blanket' use, we will be using our medicines in a much more responsible way and helping the environment.

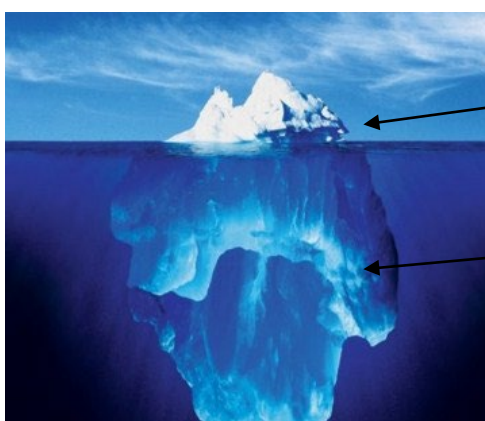
We advise including all those involved in working with the stock to take an active role in health planning – everyone has a viewpoint and an opinion! It is not set in stone; the best health plans are ones that have been tea stained, scribbled on and updated throughout the year.

We believe vet continuity is important. Whoever did your plan last year is probably the best person to do it this year. We aim to consign everyone a vet to help with consistency- if you don't have one, that you know of, let us know! Give us a ring at the office if you have any questions or queries. Or have a chat with your session vet about getting the most out of health planning.

Cheers,
Lucy



Some recent staff changes: We have sadly said goodbye to Ian Cardiff, Cathy Morris and Georgie Nixon and wish them all the very best for the future. We have also welcomed Keir Hamilton (below) onto the team whom some of you have already met.



Symptoms
Mortality

Feed intakes
Growth rates
Carcass weights
Fertility
Milk yield

