

# NEWSLETTER

**The latest from the South Moor Farm team**

## A LOAD OF HOT AIR?



**Good ventilation is one of the most important – yet often overlooked – aspects of cattle and sheep housing.**

From a veterinary perspective, a proper ventilation assessment can make a measurable difference to animal health, welfare, and farm productivity.

A ventilation assessment allows us to objectively evaluate how air moves through a building. Using tools such as smoke bombs, we can visualise airflow patterns and identify dead zones where stale air accumulates. A wind speed anemometer helps measure air movement at animal level, ensuring fresh air is actually reaching livestock rather than passing above them. A laser measuring tool allows accurate calculation of inlet and outlet areas, which are critical for achieving the correct air exchange rates.

Poorly ventilated buildings create the perfect environment for disease. High humidity, heat, and a build-up of harmful gases such as ammonia can damage the respiratory tract, increasing the risk of pneumonia in both cattle and sheep. Damp conditions also promote bacterial and viral survival, leading to higher infection pressure. In youngstock, this can significantly reduce growth rates, while in adult animals it can impact milk yield, fertility, and overall performance.

By contrast, good ventilation reduces airborne pathogens, removes excess moisture, and creates a healthier environment. The result is fewer respiratory issues, improved weight gain, better feed efficiency, and reduced reliance on antibiotics.

In short, a ventilation assessment is a practical, cost-effective way to safeguard animal health and maximise productivity – **we are happy to be able to offer ventilation assessments as part of our services, contact us for more details.**

## FREE VISITS FOR SUDDEN DEATH OR CATTLE ABORTION

Don't forget if you're unlucky enough to suffer sudden death in your stock, or to have cattle aborting, they have to be reported to DEFRA.

They might then want us to come out and take some samples as part of the statutory surveillance to rule out Anthrax or Brucellosis, – but the good news is they will pay for all of that!

**The DEFRA number to call is  
03000 200 301**

## DARTMOOR FARMERS

We had another Dartmoor Farmers Health Club meeting this month, starting off with Julie Williams introducing TB Champions and everything this Charity is hoping to achieve, helping farmers through TB breakdowns.

The discussion then turned to the 'Lamb Tailing and Castrating Consultation', which sparked some great conversation. With the help of a few props, we agreed that rubber rings are a cheap and practical option, but it's important to keep an open mind about how we can improve lamb welfare at this key time. Ideas included using local anaesthetic, pain relief, and alternatives like Clipfitters.

There are no immediate changes to legislation, but it's good to be prepared. Virbac (our sponsors for the evening) then spoke about Multimin and the role of minerals in ruminant health on Dartmoor, highlighting ways to improve performance during stressful periods like calving and weaning. Looking forward to the next one!

## UDDER HEALTH DAY SUCCESS!



On Tuesday 17th March, we teamed up with North Park Vets to host an Udder Health Day at Gooseford Farm. Over 24 of our dairy clients made the trip up to Whiddon Down to join us, where we had four stations covering different aspects of udder health and mastitis control.

It was a great day all round, with plenty of useful discussions along the way. We enjoyed some delicious food (thanks to Boehringer for sponsoring), and finished off with a farm tour led by the Courtier family, who showed us around their setup.

Let us know if you'd like any information on joining the dairy health club to be invited a long to events like these!



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

We have a range of training meetings coming up please give us a call if you'd like to sign up to any of them.

### Faecal Egg Counting Course

- Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May
- Ivybridge Practice
- 10-12pm

### Milksure

- Wednesday 10th June
- Ivybridge Practice
- 12-2pm

### Flock Health Club

- Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July
- Location TBC
- 7pm



## AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!

As some of you know, I was lucky enough to travel to South America recently, and to get a taste of a very different kind of farming. After taking an 11-hour bus from Bogota, Colombia, to the last town on the road, we climbed into a 4x4 and set off across the "Los Llanos" plains that stretch from Colombia to Venezuela. This is proper cowboy country! Cattle ranches that stretch for thousands of acres, where Cebu cattle (the humpy ones!) are grazed really extensively on unimproved pasture; virtually in the wild.



5 hours of dirt road later, we arrived at Buena Aventura and were welcomed by our host Don Victor (pictured below with one of his favourite bulls). He and his family (and his gang of "llaneros" cowboys) run about 200 cattle and several goats and pigs,

over an immense area of wetland and woodland. The cattle are rounded up on horseback twice a year for "purga" (a basic kind of wormer!), and are otherwise left more or less to their own devices, roaming land they share with giant anteaters, caimans, anacondas and capybaras, to name just a few. What they definitely don't see very often is a vet!

Weaned youngstock are sold to neighbouring ranches, but otherwise it's almost a subsistence system; a fit animal will be slaughtered from time to time to feed the gang, and nothing goes to waste. I met one of the farm hands carrying a 2L bottle of blood (for blood sausages) and the bottom half of a leg (to make gelatine from the hoof for puddings!). Scraps were kept for bait too; when the day's work is done, there's always the option to take a fishing rod out onto the water and catch yourself a few piranhas!

**Buen apetito!**  
**Ben**

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