



Welcome to Ruminant Health & Welfare

Welcome to the latest issue of the RH&W newsletter.

Spring is in full swing with the intense colour filling the landscape, albeit the rain needed in places. The world has changed in the last three months in many ways; the tragic events of Ukraine continue to be in our thoughts, while food and energy security are again mainstream issues. Despite world changing events and the pressures the industry faces, on farm, day-to-day animal health challenges are still with us. It's key our community continues to focus on how we can work towards improved livestock health. A healthy animal will always add value in economic terms, with health being one of a relatively small group of mitigation measures which can not only reduce the carbon cost of production, but in some cases reduce total emissions.

It's key our community continues to focus on how we can work towards improved livestock health. Health is one of a small, but important, group of key mitigation measures available to reduce the sector's environmental footprint, and in particular, methane emissions.

This is the focus of our latest report and this newsletter. Launched this week, the 'Acting on methane' report has been designed to be a conversation starter how we can go further than reducing the carbon intensity of production to reducing total emissions by focussing on conditions which impact food conversion efficiency, growth rates and the involuntary or premature culling of breeding stock.

While this is not always an easy conversation, improved health is something we can act on NOW with the knowledge and tools already available.

As ever, please do get in touch with your thoughts or feedback via secretary@ruminanthw.org.uk

With best wishes,

Nigel Miller
Chair
RH&W



Acting on methane – RH&W report launch

RH&W's latest report 'Acting on methane: opportunities for the UK cattle and sheep sectors' launched this week.

Produced in conjunction with Dr Philip Skuce, principal scientist at Moredun Research Institute, the report follows the [Global Methane Pledge](#) formed at COP26 to reduce methane emissions by 30% by 2030 and builds on our initial work in this area.

The focus of the report is animal health, which has been identified as one of a small, but important, group of mitigation measures to reduce ruminant methane emissions. Improved performance in this area lays down the groundwork for other interventions – precision nutrition, feed additives and the breeding.

Baseline work on GHG diseases, funded by Defra and the Scottish Government, found that improving livestock health and welfare could reduce methane emissions by 10%.

In a readable five-page format, the report looks at the key health and welfare-related causes of additional methane emissions and is designed to provide a starting point for discussions between the farm team – farmer, vet, nutritionist, animal health adviser and others – about the health status of the flock or herd with methane reductions in mind.

To read the full report click [here](#). Read more about RH&W's other work in this area [here](#).

You can read more about the report in [AgriLand](#), [Farmers Weekly](#), [The Scotsman](#), [Farm Business](#) and [NSA](#).

Why not join the conversation on Twitter? #actinonmethane



Impact of the rise in Schmallenberg virus on 2022 lambing season

With the support of UK vet colleges, we've been working with members including the National Sheep Association (NSA), Sheep Veterinary Society (SVS) and the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) to identify whether Schmallenberg Virus (SBV) is impacting the 2022 lambing season.

Through the support of host farms, we asked vet students that are on lambing placement to capture data through a survey on deformities seen in lambs over the lambing period. This will provide evidence of the spread of SBV, offering an insight into the national picture.

Look out for our summary report which will be published in early summer.

Read more of the story [here](#). Our news release was also reported by [Farmers Weekly](#), [Farming UK](#), [Vet Times](#), and [MRCVOnline](#).

Other news from the industry

General

- Defra Animal Health and Welfare Pathway sets out its [priorities](#)
- DAERA has launched its [Future Agricultural Policy](#) for Northern Ireland
- AHDB's '[Shape the Future](#)' survey has now closed. Levy payers who registered will now have until 9 May to complete the online form
- AHDA has launched a campaign to take a closer look at the prescribing process for POM-VPS products, with a particular focus on anthelmintic resistance [Enhancing Responsible Prescribing - AHDA](#)

Sheep

- Launch of a new [free forecasting service](#) for sheep farmers to protect new-born lambs
- Project aimed to [develop vaccines effective](#) in preventing coccidiosis

Cattle

- [New post-mortem TB](#) test aims to identify infection quicker
- Free tests are now available to help cattle farmers [tackle M. bovis](#), one of the most common causes of pneumonia in the UK
- In Scotland, [compulsory cattle EID tagging](#) will start from January 1 2024
- Wales has launched an [industry project](#) looking to boost both the profitability and environmental credentials of beef farms

We are an independent, industry-based body tasked with helping farmers and stock managers tackle sheep and cattle disease, and build the health and welfare status, resilience and production efficiency of our national flock and herd. See more about our aims [here](#).



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Ruminant Health & Welfare
(c/o AHDB),
Unit 201 5th Street, Stoneleigh Park
Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2TL
United Kingdom

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