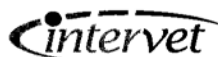




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ISSUE 24

JANUARY 2006

### GREETINGS!

Firstly, may we take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and healthy New Year.

Welcome to all new members that have joined the scheme since our last newsletter. November was a very busy month due to the Land Management Contract deadline on 01 December 2005.

Most of our newest members are from the Highland and Argyll regions.

It has been lovely to meet with some of the mainland members in person. Some have been in Orkney on holiday or business and have called past the office, others we have met while attending events such as the Perth Bull Sales and the Beef Event. So if you know that we are in attendance at a farming event, or if you are in Orkney, do come and say hello!

### STAFF MATTERS

We are delighted to welcome Joyce Henry from Deerness as our new member of staff.

Joyce was brought up on an Orkney dairy farm in Stromness and has a keen interest in animals and livestock farming but has spent most of her working life in a Dental Surgery, latterly as the Practice Admin Manager.

She and Karen Tait will now run the office between them. They will both be in the office on a Monday and the rest of the week will be shared.

As stated in the Chairman's message, the office will now be open every day of the week, but you may contact the mobile number out-with office hours should you need to contact us urgently.

### WEB -SITE

The new HI Health web site is under construction and will be launched within the next month.

It will include a Home Page, Membership information, Cattle Disease Testing information, Latest News, Previous Newsletters, FAQ's, Links, the opportunity to contact us direct, but the most exciting aspect is that it will allow you to advertise your high health status stock. The Sales section will include information of high health sales being held at auction markets, private sales which will

include a bull bank, details of semen and embryos available, a calf bank and even a colostrum bar!

So if you would like stock, embryos, semen or colostrum advertised on our site, please contact us with the details. Advertisements can include photographs, so if you have a digital camera you can e-mail them to us.

Private sale transactions can be conducted between vendor and purchaser or through their preferred auction mart. This can be useful for arbiter purposes or if the member is concerned about bad debt.

We do not charge commission - its all part of our service.

### BULL BANK

OLA members are already familiar with the Bull Bank, but for the benefit of members out-with Orkney here is a reminder of how it works.

If you have a known health status bull for sale or hire you may contact HI Health/OLA with the details. We then advertise him through the web and possibly by newsletter or other media. Customers looking for a replacement bull then have the opportunity to purchase or hire a bull with known health status.

This service has proved very beneficial as unfortunately members sometimes need to find a replacement in a hurry and don't have time to carry out the test and isolation procedures necessary before using him.

The calf bank and other private sales will offer the same benefits.

### OLA SALES

If you are planning to sell stock by auction through OLA please let us know as soon as possible so this can be arranged and they can be advertised.

Sales that have already been arranged are:-

**Thursday 20 April** – Special Sale of Breeding Stock. All breeding stock that are "white" or breeding cattle from clear herds **MUST** be fully vaccinated before sale

**Friday 21 April 2006** - A sponsored show and sale of accredited grazing cattle.

Sale bookings should be made at the office.

## ACCREDITATION CERTIFICATES

Members that have had two consecutive clear BVD screen tests and have had their health plan drawn up with their vet are BVD accredited.

Historically, OLA members received a certificate from OLA to certify their status because the previous HI Health contractor never issued them to Orkney members.

BioBest will now issue official disease accreditation certificates to all accredited herds.

We are currently compiling the list of Orkney herds that require a certificate, and hope these will be issued by the end of next month in time for the spring sales.

If you require an accreditation certificate before then please let us know.

## HEALTH DECLARATION CERTIFICATES

You may already be aware that the format for health declaration certificates that are displayed at events such as the Perth Bull sales has been unified.

This means that every health scheme provider will issue a certificate that looks the same other than their differing logos.

We congratulate NFU in their role of recognising that differing declarations were causing confusion amongst both the buyers and sellers and for co-ordinating meetings so that representatives from each scheme could voice their opinion on their content and layout.

These certificates will be officially introduced at Perth next month but will probably not be in full production until the end of the year, but HI Health can offer these declarations to members wishing to sell stock from next month. They will be produced by BioBest, so if you are planning to sell bulls at Perth, please contact BioBest as soon as possible (0131 445 6101).

## JOHNE'S RISK ASSESSMENT

BioBest have launched a Johne's risk assessment that is available to HI Health members. It was designed specifically for farmers who cannot justify the cost of whole herd testing.

The risk assessment involves a veterinary evaluation of the likelihood of disease presence. The evaluation encompasses purchasing policy, clinical/laboratory history and targeted testing:

- Blood samples from a total of ten animals selected for highest risk (cows aged 4-8 years that are thin, showing poor milk production, signs of scour or weight loss, cull cows and purchased breeding bulls).

- An environmental faeces sample for Johne's PCR.
- A bulk milk sample to test for Johne's antibody (dairy herds only).

Herds are then classified as green, amber or red:

For **green** classification (low risk Johne's status), there have been no clinical cases in the last 10 years; there have been no purchases of breeding cattle of unknown Johne's status in the last 10 years; and targeted laboratory tests were all negative.

For **amber** classification (medium risk), there have been no clinical cases in the last 5 years; there have been no purchases of breeding cattle of unknown Johne's status in the last 5 years; and targeted laboratory tests were all negative.

For **red** classification (high risk or unknown Johne's status), the herd is of unknown status i.e. no veterinary risk assessment; and/or there have been multiple purchases of breeding stock of unknown status from multiple herds in the last 10 years; and/or there has been a confirmed clinical case of Johne's in the last 5 years; and/or targeted laboratory tests produced at least one positive result.

To summarise, the BioBest Johne's Risk Assessment is

- Affordable – a reduced rate of £75 for HI Health Level 2 members which includes all laboratory tests, BioBest veterinary reports and certification.
- Simple and quick
- Use your herd status (green, amber, red) to guide your improving status and replacement stock policy.
- Consistent with Johne's initiative guidelines (DEFRA).

OLA members will recognise that this Johne's assessment is very similar to the testing of all cull cows that was launched by OLA three years ago, but we believe that this programme as devised by BioBest is more robust, provides more credibility and all testing can be done in one veterinary visit.

## LABORATORY FEES

All laboratory fees pertaining to HI Health/OLA are invoiced by HI Health.

This arrangement was agreed with BioBest to keep administration costs to a minimum. BioBest invoices HI Health at the end of each month for the testing they have done. We then invoice the members for these laboratory fees and Level 2 membership on their behalf.

Prompt payment of invoices is very much appreciated.