

PCHS NEWS

Premium Cattle Health Scheme



2018 Issue

Welcome to our 2018 issue – we hope that you find our articles useful and informative. Topics include details of the new BVD eradication projects in England and Wales, CHeCS Bovine Tb Herd Accreditation and amended CHeCS Neospora protocols. We also feature a useful biosecurity reminder which is timely as CHeCS are in the process of carrying out herd audits!

We look forward to seeing you when out and about as we attend events around the country.

Do contact us if you would like someone to speak about Health Schemes at a farm walk or Breed Society meeting.

CHeCS to carry out Audits on members of Health Schemes

CHeCS 'field audits' will be carried out this year on a proportion of members from each health scheme. PCHS is no exception and 198 herds with accreditation will be audited. This equates to 81 in England, one in Ireland, 85 in Scotland and 31 in Wales. PCHS welcomes this new initiative as we feel it provides another level of quality assurance to the CHeCS accreditation process.

Our message is be prepared – we suggest you refer to the CHeCS Technical Document at www.checs.co.uk if you are unclear about any of the rules. Also see our useful guide on biosecurity on page 6 of this issue.

NEW BVD eradication project launched in Wales September 2017

Welsh dairy and beef farmers will be encouraged to participate in a 3 year voluntary BVD eradication scheme funded by the Welsh Government's Rural Development Programme (RDP). Blood samples will be taken from five animals in each herd aged between nine and 18 months when they are tested for TB. Samples can be sent to any relevant laboratory

and the results will be ready with the reading of the TB test. The youngstock samples will be at no cost to the farmer and subsequent testing to identify PI animals will be supported to a maximum of £500. Farmers will be expected to support the scheme by paying for any testing above the £500 limit during the identification of PI animals, removing the PI animals and any costs associated with protecting the farm from reinfection. Existing Welsh scheme members can take advantage of this as we will send relevant invoices to either vets for eradication scheme testing or farmer as required.

Vaccination explained for the IBR Scheme

A member can use a marker vaccine in both Vaccinated Monitored Free (VMF) and accredited herds but they can't bring animals into the herd where a non-marker vaccine has been used. This is because differentiation between non-marker vaccine antibody and field infection antibody is not possible. In CHeCS Technical Document 3.1 for VMF all cattle over 12 months of age must be vaccinated with marker vaccine although up to 5% of breeding stock can be left unvaccinated e.g. to provide antibody-free colostrum and bulls are exempt from vaccination to maintain their eligibility if used in semen collection stations.

Important News about changes to wording on Health Declarations for Johne's Accreditation

Health Declarations will be amended to reflect the total numbers positive over 3 years and the number of animals tested in the last test. This is because there is a big difference in risk for example in one positive animal in a herd of 10 as compared with one positive animal in a herd of 100!

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John Scholefield Editor

PCHS, SAC Consulting Veterinary Services, Greycrook, St Boswells TD6 0EQ

T: 01835 822456 F: 01835 823643 E: pchs1@btconnect.com W: www.cattlehealth.co.uk

SAC Consulting is a division of SRUC. SRUC is a charity registered in Scotland, No. SC003712



BVDFree welcomes CHeCS accredited herds to register for 'free' on their database

BVDFree England is a voluntary scheme set up to provide a 'one stop' platform to display BVD status for herds in England, allowing any farmer buying cattle to independently verify if individual animals have been tested for BVD or if the herd has a status for BVD. Scotland has used a BVD database for a number of years and SAC Consulting Veterinary Services welcomes the opportunity to support an English initiative and is an approved lab for the scheme.

BVDFree England aims to eliminate BVD virus from cattle herds across the country by 2022 and is working in co-operation with cattle industries throughout the UK.



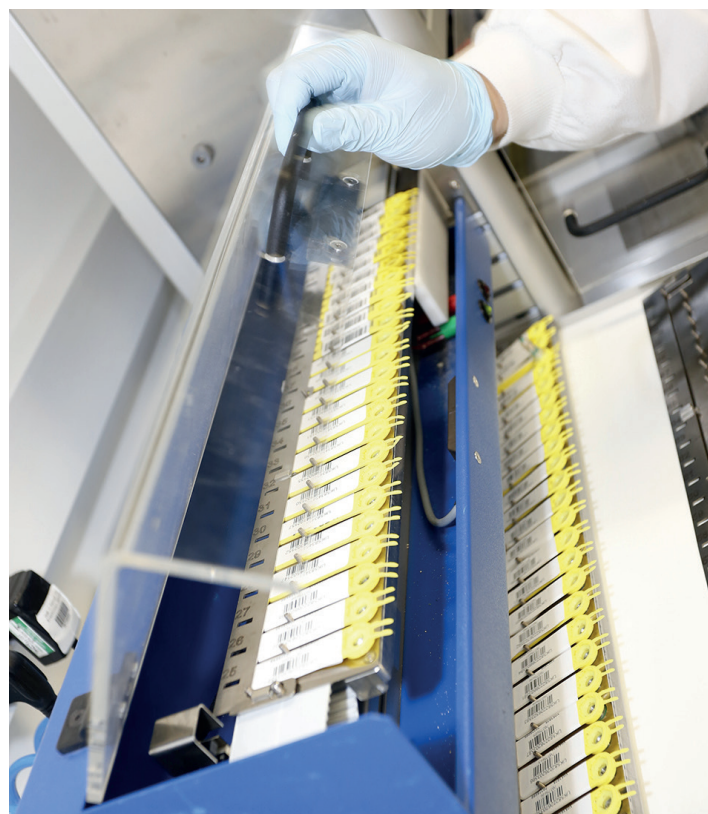
Or to register individual animals

2. Join BVDFree England as a full member

This means that you can display individual animal results at 50p to add each antibody result and 25p to add each virus result. Historic results (back dated a year) can be uploaded onto BVDFree England database. PCHS will invoice you for this fee although this charge is imposed by BVDFree England. Your BVD herd status will also be updated if appropriate.

Further details are available here at www.bvdfree.org.uk including useful FAQs or email them at help@bvdfree.org.uk

Please contact them direct to join and NOT PCHS.



How can PCHS members get involved?

Either

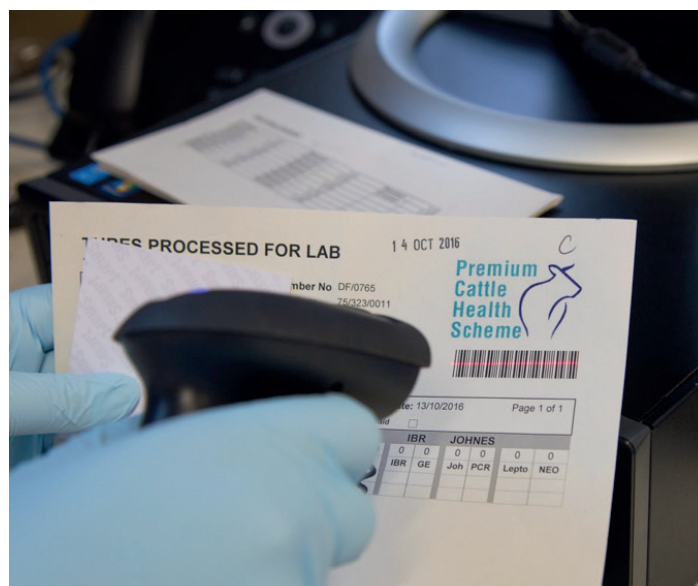
1. Give PCHS permission to upload your BVD herd status for 'free'

BVDFree would like CHeCS accredited herds (from all over the UK) to register and display their **BVD herd status for 'free'** on their database. To do this you do not need to be a member of BVDFree.

You will however need to complete an electronic form giving us permission to upload your BVD herd status for free. This form is available at www.cattlehealth.co.uk/bvdfree

Useful to know

- ✓ If you become a BVDFree England Scheme member BVDFree will contact PCHS to let us know you are in the Scheme. If you are already a member of the Premium Cattle Health Scheme this will allow us to upload the previous year's BVD results.
- ✓ Please note that results generated from our diagnostic system CANNOT be uploaded to BVDFree England. Also please note that ScotEID is not connected to the BVDFree database.
- ✓ You must submit samples on BVDFree England paperwork – THIS IS ESSENTIAL FOR NON PCHS MEMBERS
- ✓ Always use full UK ear numbers – only results with a full UK number can be uploaded
- ✓ SAC Veterinary Services reduces the PCHS membership fee (50% off current price) for client's who only test for BVD.



PCHS Advisory Group

The PCHS Advisory Group meets in August each year to discuss a range of issues related to cattle health and the running of our national scheme. We are extremely grateful for the time and effort that the group commit in support of PCHS.

From left to right: **George Caldwell** (Head of SACCVS), **Simon Bainbridge** (Commercial beef farmer), **Helen Carty** (SACCVS Veterinary Investigation Officer), **Alison Braddock** (SACCVS Marketing and Business Development Manager), **Gareth Mulligan** (Afon Vets), **Wanda Hobbs** (Aberdeen Angus Cattle Society), **Harri Parri** (Stabiliser Cattle), **Neil Shand** (Simmental Cattle Society), **Graeme Richardson** (Thrums Veterinary Group).



Website

Are you familiar with the Premium Cattle Health Scheme website? You can find everything that you need to know about the scheme at www.cattlehealth.co.uk and it's mobile compatible.

On our website you will find:

- **Downloadable versions of all our health scheme forms** and documents, for sample submissions, health plans, up to date CHECS rules, past copies of our newsletters and more
- A **new FAQ section**, where we have added answers to the questions that we are asked most often by our members
- The **PCHS Member Database**, listing all of our members who have opted in either by geographical area or breed of cattle. The database shows up to date accreditation status for BVD, Johne's Disease, IBR and Leptospirosis, making it an invaluable tool for marketing your stock as well as for sourcing animals that match your own accreditation status.



Changes to *Neospora* testing protocols within CHECS

Within CHECS, the *Neospora* programme is moving to risk-level certification (similar to the Johne's programme). This change has been made in light of reviewing the latest research and to make the programme achievable for all herds to participate. Herds will be assigned a risk level, from 1 to 5 as below, with 1 being associated with the lowest risk of being a source of *Neospora* infected stock.

Level 1: Three or more consecutive clear annual herd screens.

Level 2: One or two consecutive clear annual herd screens.

Level 3: The number of test positive animals does not exceed 5% of the herd eligible for testing in the *Neospora* programme.

Level 4: More than 5% of eligible animals identified as test positive animals at the most recent test.

Level 5: These herds may be carrying out a testing programme, but are not adhering to the mandatory requirements of the programme.

Annual blood testing of all eligible animals is required. All testing can be carried out on the same day or it can be carried out at intervals throughout the year to fit in with management purposes. All breeding females over one year of age must be tested. In addition to annual testing, there are mandatory control elements of the programme. These are to ensure that infected females are not retained in the herd for breeding. A health plan must be in place to ensure that farm dogs cannot acquire or pass on infection to cattle. Abortions must be investigated. Herds can choose how quickly they wish to progress through the risk levels. It is possible for example to retain high genetic merit test-positive cows to breed bulls. If doing this however, the herd cannot progress above level 3 until the test positive animals are removed. For further information contact the PCHS team.

Action Johne's Update



SAC Consulting helped deliver the National Johne's Management plan (NJMP) last year. Twenty-six milk purchasers representing 82% of GB milk production are signed up to support the plan. It is encouraging to see that in Phase 1 around 86% of farms who completed the Johne's survey reported that they are testing their herd for Johne's disease and 83% report that they are using one of the specified control strategies.

Phase 2 of the Action Johne's is now well underway. PCHS dairy members are leading the field as most are already implementing Strategy 1 - Biosecurity protect and monitor as part of the CHeCS programme of testing.

Phase 2 requires the following (see bullets below) and applies if your milk purchaser has signed up to the NJMP.

- **Signed declaration**

All milk purchaser members of the NJMP will require their associated farmers to obtain a signed declaration by a BCVA Johne's Certified Veterinary Adviser every year for the three year period of the Plan. The declaration states that the farmer has an appropriate and robust Johne's management plan in place, as discussed with their farm vet. Questionnaires will be circulated via all milk purchasers signed up to support the National Johne's Management Plan in April 2017 with data gathered in December 2017, 2018 and 2019. Details of purchasers who have signed up to the plan is available at www.actionjohnesuk.org

- **BCVA Johne's Certified Vet**

All declarations and plans need to be signed by a BCVA accredited Johne's Certified Vet. It's worth having this conversation with your vet who should be well informed about this national programme. Around 640 vets are certified to do this in the UK.

Did you know we now offer Johne's Risk Level Certification Programme for Sheep and Goats?

See www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk for more details

The latest list is available at www.actionjohnesuk.org

Johne's Disease Risk Level Reminder - CHeCS

If you are looking to buy or sell stock it is important to know your own herd's Johne's disease risk level, as well as that of any cattle that you might add to your herd.

Level 1 – There have been at least three clear annual herd tests and there is a Johne's Disease herd health plan in place. This is the lowest level of risk

Level 2 – There has been at least one clear herd test but the herd does not yet qualify for Level 1 status. There is a Johne's disease herd health plan in place

Level 3 – Three per cent or less of the herd were identified as reactors at the most recent herd test. There is a Johne's disease herd health plan in place

Level 4 – More than three per cent of the herd were identified as reactors at the most recent herd test. There is a Johne's disease herd health plan in place

Level 5 – This includes herds without a health plan for Johne's disease, herds that not adhere to the mandatory elements of the health plan and herds that do not carry out the required testing. This is the highest level of risk



PLEASE NOTE: IMPORTANT RULE ABOUT BUYING AND SELLING AND RISK STATUS!

It is important to remember that if an animal of a lower risk level status is added to your herd, if it is ever sold on from your holding it must be sold as its original risk level status (i.e. **a Risk Level 3 animal added to a Risk Level 2 herd must remain as Risk Level 3 if sold again**).

However, animals added from a higher Risk Level Status herd to a lower Risk Level Status herd take on the status of the herd that they are added to and must be sold as such (i.e. **a Risk Level 1 animal added to a Risk Level 4 herd would then have to be sold as Risk Level 4 in the future**).

CHeCS bTB Scheme



The CHeCS Bovine TB Herd Accreditation Programme provides herds with a risk based approach to the disease when trading cattle and focuses on biosecurity measures. There are potential benefits to farmers in high risk areas who can promote their herd's TB free status, as well as reduced risks of buying in disease for herds in low risk areas.

Farmers can opt to join just the bTB scheme or bolt it on to the Premium Cattle Health Scheme. The herd's test results will be provided by APHA (who co-ordinate the statutory testing for bTB) and matched with an on-farm risk reduction management programme. This is open to herds in Scotland too. The membership fee for the bTB scheme is £30 per year. More information is available at www.cattlehealth.co.uk

Herds will be awarded a starting Herd Status based on the last 10 years of test data. This means homebred animals marketed from these herds can then be sold with that status, subject to a signed declaration from the herd's vet.

To move up through the scores within the programme, herds must meet the requirements of the statutory scheme and be deemed to be adhering to CHeCS standards.

The CHeCS programme differs from statutory bTB control in several ways:

- It is recommended that all **added animals are placed in quarantine upon arrival**; if any then fail the bTB skin test, this should not affect the CHeCS bTB Herd Accreditation – although APHA will still record an official breakdown.
- **Added biosecurity measures apply**, such as preventing nose to nose contact with cattle of a lower health status over fences or walls
- **Some additional pre and post-movement testing** may also be required

All relevant forms including the PCHS Price List, Application Form and Compliance Declaration are available at

www.cattlehealth.co.uk

Additional testing requirements can be found at

www.checs.co.uk

Scoring System

10 – This score is awarded to herds that have had 10 years or more since their last bTB breakdown. This is the lowest level of risk.

9 to 1 – The score corresponds to the number of years since the herd regained Officially TB Free status after a breakdown.

0 – The herd is Officially TB Free at this point but has had a bTB breakdown within the past year. This should be considered as high risk.

Unclassified – The herd is not participating in the bTB scheme, or the animal is bought-in and cannot use the herd status. This is the highest level of risk.



From left to right: John Scholefield (SACCVS Marketing and Business Development Officer), Wayne Powell (SRUC Principal and Chief Executive), Willie Rennie (Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats) at the Royal Highland Show 2017. John explaining about the importance of health schemes!

We attended the events opposite in 2017. We will be exhibiting at many of the same events in 2018, keep up to date with where we will be by following us on [Twitter @SRUCVets](https://twitter.com/SRUCVets) and make sure you come and meet our team.



Shows and Events

- UK Dairy Expo – Borderway Mart, Carlisle
- NSA Welsh Sheep - Talybont-On-Usk, Powys
- NBA Beef Expo – Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire
- NSA Highland Sheep – Contin, Strathpeffer
- NSA North Sheep – Tow Law, County Durham
- Scotland's Beef Event – Earlston, Berwickshire
- NSA Sheep South West – Tiverton, Devon
- Royal Highland Show – Edinburgh
- Great Yorkshire Show – Harrogate
- Westmorland Show – Milnthorpe, Cumbria
- UK Dairy Day – Telford, Shropshire
- Borderway Agri-Expo – Borderway Mart, Carlisle
- Agrifest South West – Westpoint, Exeter

Biosecurity Reminder

When it comes to maintaining accreditation, having appropriate biosecurity measures in place is as important as following testing protocols. This article provides a check list of the main biosecurity measures that should be in place, as well as highlighting the differences for each disease. Please refer to the CHeCS technical document for further biosecurity and testing regulations.

Farm Boundaries

Farm boundaries must prevent cattle from straying off or onto the farm and must prevent nose to nose contact with cattle of a lower health status over fences or walls.

- **BVD** and **IBR** accreditation requires at least a **3 metre gap** between cattle in the scheme and those that may be of a lower status, using double fencing or similar boundaries
- Herds that can comply with all of the biosecurity rules apart from the 3 metre gap can apply for **vaccinated monitored free** status

Isolation

Any non-accredited animals or any previously accredited animals that have come into contact with non-accredited animals must be isolated and tested before being added to your accredited herd

- For **BVD**, **IBR** and **Leptospirosis** accreditation, these animals must be isolated for at least 28 days and tested at the end of this period and can only join the rest of the herd once negative results have been received
- For **Johne's Disease** accreditation, these animals must be isolated until blood and faecal tests come back with a **negative result**. If faecal culture is being performed, this can take up to 8 weeks. Remember that a blood and dung test is required for all such animals, regardless of age

Cases where previously accredited cattle would have to enter isolation include:

- If they have strayed off the holding and come into contact with animals of a lower status, or if animals of a lower status have strayed onto the holding and come into contact with the accredited cattle
- If they have attended a show or sale that doesn't have a designated section for accredited cattle. This applies to your own animals that may be returning to your holding, as well as animals that have been purchased from an accredited herd
- In the case of **Johne's Disease**, accredited animals that have been at a show or sale for **less than 7 days** can be returned to the accredited herd without first being isolated
- If cattle have come into contact with non-accredited animals during loading, transport or unloading

The isolation facility should be a dedicated building or paddock that prevents contact with other stock. No air space, drainage or manure storage may be shared with other cattle.

Grazing, Feeding & Bedding

- For **BVD** and **IBR** accreditation, cattle must not be grazed on pasture that has been grazed by non-accredited

animals in the previous **2 months** and co-grazing with other ruminant species or camelids is advised against

- For **Leptospirosis** accreditation, cattle must not be grazed on pasture that has been grazed by non-accredited cattle, other ruminant species or camelids in the previous **2 months** and co-grazing is not recommended
- For **Johne's Disease** accreditation, cattle must not be grazed on pasture that has been grazed by cattle of a lower status in the previous **12 months** and there should be no co-grazing with other ruminant species or camelids
- The same time restrictions apply if slurry or manure from non-accredited cattle has been used on the pasture
- Manure from isolated animals must be stored and only spread on land once the animals have tested negative. If manure or slurry is spread before testing or after a positive result then the same time restrictions as above apply
- When buying feed and bedding, care must be taken to avoid the risk of introducing infection into the herd. Feed and bedding stores should be protected against access by vermin and wildlife

Water

- For **Leptospirosis** and **Johne's Disease** accreditation, piped mains water should be used rather than natural water sources and animals should not have access to water courses that have flowed through other farms or grazing areas
- Best practice also advises that for **Johne's Disease** accreditation, any water sources such as ponds and streams that cattle would be able to access should be fenced off, in order to prevent animals drinking from water contaminated with faeces

Equipment

- Farm equipment including machinery, livestock trailers and handling facilities that are shared between accredited and non-accredited cattle must be **cleaned and disinfected** before use with the accredited cattle. For herds in the **Johne's Disease** programme, a Defra-approved product at the dilution recommended for tuberculosis control must be used
- Veterinary equipment such as drenching guns, surgical instruments and hypodermic needles must not be shared with cattle from another herd. Veterinary surgical instruments must be sterilised before use

Colostrum & Genetic Material

- Colostrum from herds of a lower status must not be brought into an accredited herd
- Accredited herds should only source new genetic material such as semen and embryos from reliable sources e.g. semen collection centre approved for intra-community trade.

Farm Assurance – More Than Just a Label

For many the horsemeat crisis of recent years acted as a catalyst for rising consumer expectations of food and drink providers. And while it would be fair to say the scandal has certainly highlighted issues around traceability, provenance and food quality, both consumers and retailers in the UK have long been concerned with what they buy and sell.

Just last year, a Defra survey found that half of consumers would pay more for food and drink that is produced in the UK and Ireland while about 40% of buyers check to see exactly where their food is produced.

The most obvious way to signpost a products provenance and quality is to use a relevant consumer label. These of course exist in their multitude depending on the product, retailer and type of food, yet several stand out as true market leaders and trusted brands.

Perhaps the most prestigious and best established of these consumer labels are the Red Tractor logo and Scotch assured logos connected with the Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) brands.

Both can be considered market leaders in the UK, but are also recognised internationally where their impact on the consumer consciousness here has not gone unnoticed.

For a product to gain one of these labels, it must of course undergo a rigorous and robust assessment as it moves along the food chain from farm to processor and then retailer.

This all starts at farm level where specific assessments are made for crops, livestock, dairy and fresh produce producers. No matter what the farm assurance scheme, all standards are developed with input from industry experts at all levels, including farmers. This ensures that while they remain robust, they are also practical and focused on the key areas of interest for each farm type.

Areas covered depend on the nature of the farm, but can include everything from traceability and animal welfare, to the use of fertilisers, biosecurity and crop management.

Successful assessments to the standards lead to farms receiving the relevant certificate, which in turn demonstrates to buyers both big and small that they adhere to, and often surpass best industry practice in their sector.

So, what's in it for the farmer?

The main benefit is that they should gain greater access to market for their product. Many butchers, food manufacturers and retailers require certain farm assurance standards to be met before they will purchase from a supplier. The UK's leading farm assurance standards are longstanding and

seen as the global benchmarks, so success requires farmers to adhere to set standards and can improve their own practices and productivity. Additionally, where the market is competitive and quality is prized, assured products can also receive a higher price, meaning that the extra work pays off over the course of a year.

The other core benefit of being farm assured is that revenue raised through the farm assurance schemes are used by the label owners to lobby on behalf of their members and promote the

industry through focused advertising and media campaigns.

These campaigns have been highly effective in bringing the work of the farmer to the fore with consumers. The knock on is that purchasing decisions which once may have hinged on price are often made on the provenance and quality of the product. A product which can only be identified as such through the use of a label which starts life on the farm.

Acoura are part of the Lloyd's Register Group. Each year they undertake around 30,000 farm assurance assessments across the UK. They work in partnership with both standard owners and producers to ensure that their brands are protected.
www.acoura.com



Damaged BVD Tissue Samples

We are seeing an increased number of tissue samples for BVD testing that have been damaged during postage, even when posted in a padded envelope.

Once a tube is damaged and the tissue inside is exposed to the air it cannot be tested for BVD. Please make sure that you add extra padding with bubble wrap, cotton wool or something similar to give your samples extra protection.

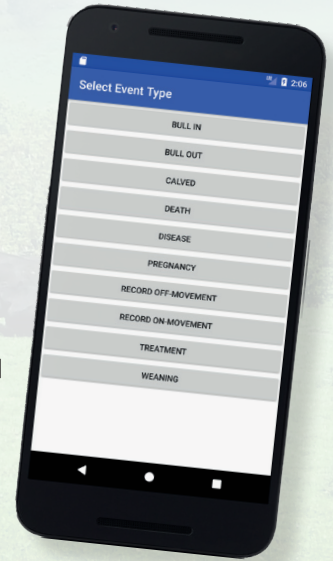
Proactive Health Planning for Higher Returns!

Animal Health Planning System (SAHPS) is a web based software system providing a structured approach to collecting data and is an interactive interface for vets, farmers & consultants to work together to manage herd health and productivity. The system's development has been fully funded to date by the Scottish Government. The SAHPS is free to Scottish vet practices and farmers. It is also available to farmers in England, Wales and Southern Ireland for a competitive fee through their vet practice.

Data is collected for the physical performance of the herd/flock together with the existing medicines used. Vet and farmer work together to form a tailored and comprehensive health plan to prioritise areas requiring attention. Targets are set and actions implemented to maximise herd health, performance and economic returns. The plan is reviewed and updated as information becomes available.

Useful features:

- SAHPS is a web based system where live information is accessible 24/7.
- You can upload documents such as lab reports and abattoir reports making information sharing easy.
- The calendar feature helps you and your vet manage events and schedule treatments via a work list to make planning easier.
- The Veterinary medicines selector automatically inserts the essential product data saving time sourcing information.
- You can benchmark your farm with similar enterprises locally and nationally to highlight production shortfalls and view and compare your flock/herd production and disease data year on year. SAHPS can also demonstrate the financial benefit of achieving production targets.



Mobile App available shortly!

A new mobile app is being launched in late October 2017 to allow penside collection of production data in beef cow herds. Registrations, movements and deaths can be recorded once and uploaded to BCMS. Data will also be sent to SAHPS herd health plan generating a real-time assessment of herd performance with early notification of problems to the herd's vet consultant. Individual and/or group disease incidents and treatments will be recorded and saved in the SAHPS e-medicine book. More information and online enquiry form is available at www.sahps.co.uk



Alison Braddock
Marketing and Business
Development Manager BSc (Hons)



John Scholefield
Marketing and Business
Development Officer BA

Meet the Team



George Caldwell
(PCHS Veterinary Manager)
BVM&S, MSc, CertCHP,
Dip ECBHM, FRAGS, MRCVS



Colin Mason
BVM&S, BSc,
Cert CHP, MRCVS



Tim Geraghty
BVMS, MVM,
Dip ECBHM, MRCVS



Helen Carty
BVM&S,
Cert AVP(cattle),
MRCVS



Julie McDiarmid
(Senior PCHS
Administration Manager)
BSc (Hons)