

RETIREMENT AND SUCCESSION LEADS TORCH BRIGHTLY INTO 2021

At the end of 2020, Martin Hume retired from Torch Directorship and as a member of the equine clinical team. Our farming clients on the east side will remember Martin well who looked after many farms for over 20 years. For the past 9 years Martin has worked solely on the equine side of the practice but has remained integral to the success of Torch as a whole.

After 34 years of full clinical practice, Martin's retirement was already planned for 2022. However as many of you may be aware Martin fell from his bike and sustained a complicated fracture of his femur 18 months ago. This was compounded by the fact that this was the leg which he had a successful hip replacement on 2 years previously. Retirement has been brought forward to 2021 due to the risk of reinjuring the leg again whilst dealing with an unpredictable equine patient, something which the surgeons have said he can't afford to do.

Martin's love of travel, socialising and sports will mean that his retirement will be very full

and over 30+ years he has built up a large number of friends in North Devon to share these times with.

Despite the challenges of corporation in the veterinary profession Martin's desire has always been to hand ownership of the practice on to veterinary colleagues. He is immensely proud that ownership of the practice will remain with local families, reinvesting locally and ensuring the strong values of Torch can continue.

We are delighted to announce that Rebecca Cavill and Jennifer Rodliff (nee Green) have become owners of Torch Vets as Associate Directors on the Farm and Equine teams respectively.

Reb (pictured) will be familiar to many of you having joined the team in 2014. She graduated from the Royal Veterinary College in 2010 and moved from Somerset to Devon to start in mixed practice before moving to Torch. Having completed her Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (cattle) in 2016, she was elected on to the British Cattle Veterinary Association board in 2017 and is currently their lead on TB.



Outside of work Reb has been a keen member of Young Farmers and although now too old to participate, continues to hold an advisory role and started the 'Too Old for Young Farmers' skittles team that she remains a member of. Reb has a particular interest in fertility, youngstock and mastitis and is a Dairy Co Mastitis Control Plan deliverer.

This planned succession within the practice leaves us in a healthy position, able to ensure excellent continuity of care. Vet ownership ensures continued personal responsibility and pride in the reputation and ongoing success of Torch Farm Vets.

A NOTE FROM MARTIN

It has been my enormous privilege to have enjoyed my veterinary career in what I believe to be the best part of the UK.

I will miss all the clients who have become friends over the 30+ years with the practice and I will also miss many of my patients who I have been tending to for large parts of their lives.



My decision to retire slightly earlier than originally planned has been prompted by a genetic progressive arthritis which led to an initial hip replacement followed by a serious fracture of my leg and arm in a bike crash.

It has become apparent that I am not quite nimble enough to continue as an equine vet in the way I would want. So it's out to pasture for me.

My decision has been made significantly easier in the knowledge that I am leaving the practice in such excellent hands. We have always been able to attract some of the most talented vets and nurses and I believe that our current support staff and overall management is the best that I have seen over my 34 year career. Your animal's health will be in good hands.

PROBLEMS GETTING THROUGH?

We have recently been updating and making a few changes to our IT systems which may have affected some incoming calls. If you have tried unsuccessfully to get hold of us, we are sorry.

Our phone lines are fully up and running and you can reach all of our surgeries using the numbers at the bottom of this page.

Our out of hours service for emergency care is operational 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



In an emergency please dial your usual surgery phone number and your call will be automatically diverted.

Independent vets, dedicated care

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01409 331007

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CALF SCOUR AND REHYDRATION – WHAT SHOULD WE USE AND WHEN?

As the weather continues to get colder and wetter, our young calves are more susceptible to disease. Scour is the most common problem affecting calves less than 4 weeks old and whilst prevention is better than cure, knowing how best to treat them and with what is important.

Calves sick with scour can lose a lot of water, electrolytes and bicarbonate which can lead to high levels of acid in their blood. It is a combination of this acidosis and dehydration which is often the cause of death. Aggressive fluid therapy, regardless of the pathogen causing the scour, to buffer this acid level and provide appropriate rehydration is the key to success. Oral electrolyte solutions help calves regain lost electrolytes, improve gut absorption, support gut health and are more digestible than milk or milk replacer.

The other key factor that can affect a calf's recovery from scour is energy. Although most electrolyte solutions provide rehydration, very few products contain enough energy to fulfil a calf's maintenance requirements.

Therefore, we must continue to feed small milk/replacer feeds, ideally 1.5-2L twice a day with an electrolyte feed 3 hours after each milk feed. Alternating milk and electrolyte feeds in this way provides the best combination of nutrition, rehydration and rebalancing electrolytes, with the aim to provide 4 small feeds per day.

Oral replacement therapy should be started at the first sign of scour. This might be a calf that just has a wet behind but is still bright and suckling. Products like Rehydion are fantastic for milder cases before dehydration occurs, but once calves are dehydrated products such as XL Lytes are more appropriate, as these act to rebalance and rehydrate and so are very useful in these milder cases. A gold standard electrolyte would act to rebalance electrolytes and buffer acidosis, rehydrate calves and give enough energy to aid gut healing and an example of this is HydrFAST, which we have just added to the shelves.

It is also important to know when it is too late for oral solutions to be effective, as very sick

calves are unlikely to benefit from oral electrolyte therapy alone. It's time to call the vet if the calf:

- Is unable to sit up by itself (maintain sternal recumbency)
- Is depressed with no suckle reflex (but could still be standing)
- Still looks dehydrated after 48 hours of oral therapy.



Calling the vet early to provide intravenous fluid therapy is much more likely to result in a positive outcome. If you need to give oral fluids using a tube it may be too late for oral therapy and so it is worth checking the above list and calling for veterinary attention if the calf fails to improve/deteriorates – again acting earlier rather than later.

For more guidance about which electrolyte solution is right for your calves, contact your vet and ask for a copy of our Rehydration Therapy Best Practice leaflet.

MOBILITY ACTION GROUP

We are looking to introduce a new format for bringing cow mobility to the forefront. Farmer action groups have been used with great success in other parts of the world and are starting to be run more and more in the UK. We'd like our farmers to be part of the success story.

Lameness is a problem within the dairy industry that is coming under increasing scrutiny from both milk buyers and consumers. Our aim is to set up a working group to look at real problems on farm and tackle them using real life experiences.

The format for the groups would be as follows:

- 5/6 farms sign up to take part

- The first host farm takes the other participants on a farm walk, introducing their farm and the problem(s) they are experiencing.

- Lunch! Followed by a discussion where the host farmer and remaining farmers share ideas and offer advice and suggestions to tackle the problem based on their experiences.

- These meetings are repeated on each of the 5/6 farms

So if you're a dairy farmer who is willing to share ideas and learn from others then please get in touch! **Contact Emily Linton on 01237 870456 or Emilylinton@torchfarmvets.com.**

COULD YOUR BULL BE SUB-FERTILE?

Approximately one third of bulls are sub-fertile. This will often mean cows won't get in calf as quickly and sometimes not at all, having a profound effect on profitability.

There are numerous reasons for sub-fertility that can be addressed, resulting in a useful breeding animal in the future. A soundness examination undertaken two months before the breeding season will allow appropriate action to be taken. The examination is a review of the health status and previous breeding performance of the bull. This will give an indication of their suitability for breeding. It will include:

Physical Examination: size, body condition, legs, feet, eyes, teeth, heart and lungs.

Examination of the penis and testicles: a scrotal circumference measurement is a good indicator of sperm output.

Rectal Examination of the accessory sex glands.

Semen collection and microscopic examination: an assessment of sample volume and density is made before viewing sperm motility and the number of abnormal or damaged sperm under a microscope.

Libido and serving assessment: watching the bull when working will give an assessment of how keen he is and his ability to serve cows.



A PLAN FOR THE UNPREDICTABLE

The Torch Lambing Club is a straightforward way to help budget for what can be a really unpredictable and stressful time of year.

Membership offers the reassurance of one single fee to cover all lambing related clinical work at our farm animal clinics.* Lambing Club covers work carried out over any consecutive three month period and runs 08:30-17:30 Mon-Fri and 08:30-12:30 Saturday, with any work undertaken outside these hours chargeable at a discounted rate.

What work is included?

- ✓ Lambings
- ✓ Sick/downer ewes
- ✓ Entropion
- ✓ Sick lambs
- ✓ Caesarians (excl. surgical pack charge)
- ✓ Prolapses (excl. epidural charge)
- ✓ Post-mortems.



If you are interested in finding out more about our Bull Soundness Examination Service or the savings you can make with the Torch Lambing Club, please speak to your vet or give your local surgery a call.

*Bideford, Holsworthy and Bude area clients, please call us to discuss your Lambing Club options.