

# DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR YOUNGSTOCK ARE UP TO?

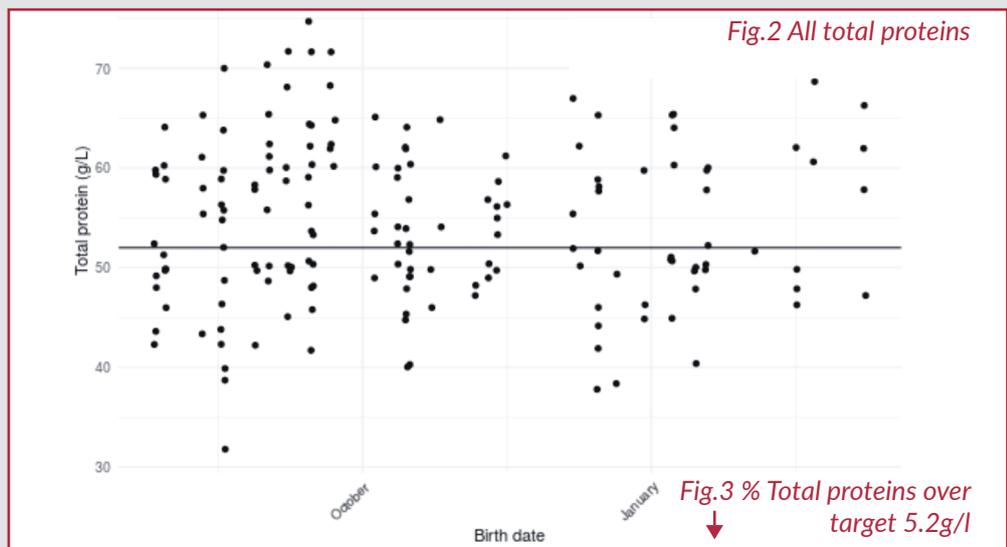
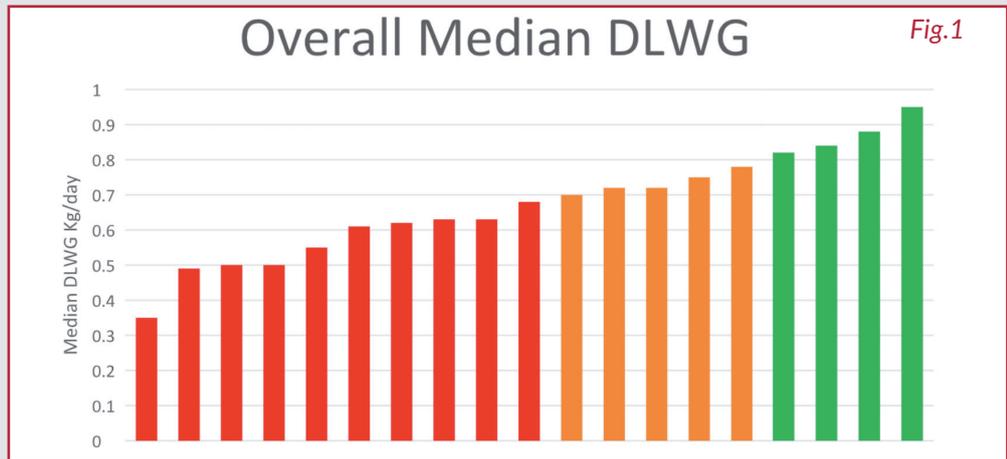
**R**earing replacement heifers is the second highest fixed cost on most farms, with the average cost calculated as being £1819 but ranging from £1073 to £3070 (Wathes, 2017).

There are several things we can and should be doing to monitor the performance of our youngstock. Daily Live-weight Gain (DLWG) pre weaning should be at least 0.7Kg/day and with every extra 100g grown by weaning giving you an extra 100l in the first lactation (Alex Bach, IRTA, Spain) then a more realistic target for helping heifers to achieve their potential would be 0.8-1Kg/day. This is a fairly straightforward parameter to measure and can be really useful to assess any changes to feeding/protocols etc.

Another parameter we can measure is the success of colostrum management and passive transfer. One method of doing this is to take bloods from calves less than a week old and measure the total protein level. Successful passive transfer should result in >90% of total proteins being > 5.2g/l. Do you know what these figures are on your farm and how your calves are performing?

Back in March Torch held an online meeting to present the data we had collected on DLWG, TP, mortality and morbidity rates from farms either enrolled in our youngstock scheme or taking advantage of the free Bovalto switch offer. Here is some of the data we presented and discussed.

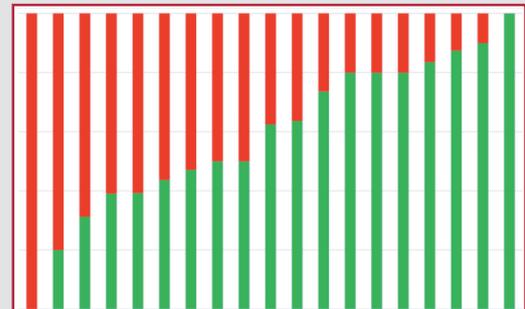
Median DLWG in Kg/day (Fig.1) shows only half of the farms involved were achieving the target and even less are helping heifers to achieve their potential. Fig.2 shows how varied the total protein results were, with only just over half of all calves sampled receiving adequate passive transfer. Fig.3 shows how total protein levels varied on each farm. Having information and data about



your youngstock means you can make informed decisions on where improvements are needed. By continuing to collect this data we can then monitor what effect these changes are having.

**If you would like to know how your youngstock are performing please speak to a member of the youngstock team or your regular vet. We can offer services that include:**

- ✓ Monitoring DLWG
- ✓ Total protein monitoring
- ✓ Morbidity and mortality data collection and analysis



- ✓ Colostrum bacteriology
- ✓ Calf health scoring
- ✓ Calculating the cost of rearing heifers on your farm
- ✓ Benchmarking data collected.

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# GENOMICS TESTING – NEW USER OFFER

**Clarifide Plus is a unique genomic providing tool.**

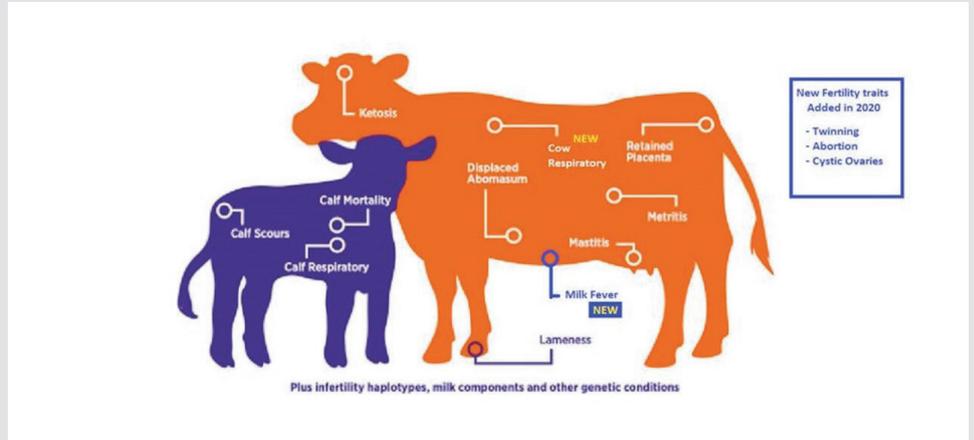
It takes a snippet of an ear notch of a calf or young heifer which is then transformed into a range of production, health and wellness traits to create a wellness profit score. The diagram pictured shows the traits covered by the score. This profit score is balanced to create an index for your herd to ensure not only production but longevity as well – the perfect cow!

The question is ‘Does it work?’ and the answer is ‘Yes!’ A validation study carried out in the United States showed a group of heifers born in 2011 which were followed through to 2017, the top 25% wellness score animals produced over 9000kg more milk than the bottom 25% over their lifetime – a great return on the

investment of testing.

Torch Farm Vets can help guide you through the genomic testing process to ensure you get the best out of your investment and utilise your results to suit your individual needs.

If you would like to take advantage of the new user offer, you can claim **four tests for the price of three** (up to a limit of 100 tests). Please contact **Sophia Elworthy** on [sophiaelworthy@torchfarmvets.com](mailto:sophiaelworthy@torchfarmvets.com) if you would like to discuss this any further.



## CALLING ALL EXMOOR SHEEP FARMERS

**The RDPE are funding a project to tackle sheep scab on Exmoor and the surrounding areas.**

The project is seeking farmers to work in clusters on Exmoor and the immediate surrounding areas to demonstrate the effectiveness of a community-led approach to reduce the incidence of sheep scab.

Led by the the Moredun Research Institute, who have been successful in securing DEFRA / RDPE funding; a col-

laboration between the National Sheep Association and the Exmoor Hill Farming Network, will work to deliver the project in the south-west.

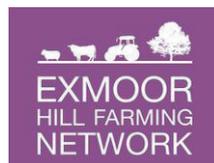
This project will include free blood testing, on-farm veterinary advice and training to enable a coordinated approach to controlling sheep scab.

Find out more about what's involved by attending **one** of a series of farmer focused meetings via Zoom. Details are as follows:

- ✓ Monday 7 June 13:00 - 14:00
- ✓ Tuesday 8 June 19:00 - 20:00
- ✓ Thursday 10 June 13:00 - 14:00
- ✓ Monday 14 June 19:00 - 20:00

If you are unable to access Zoom but would like to find out more in confidence please contact one of the following local coordinators.

Please register for the Zoom link with Katherine Williams (EHFN) [katherine@ehfn.org.uk](mailto:katherine@ehfn.org.uk) / 07970 795808 or Ian May (NSA Regional Manager) [ian@national-sheep.org.uk](mailto:ian@national-sheep.org.uk) / 07913 043234.



## TEAM TORCH NEWS

**F**or the majority of us, the thought of running a marathon feels like an enormous task. But double the distance and then add some more and you arrive at the 64 miles recently run by Torch vet Colin Clarke!

In May, Colin took part in the East Devon Round; an Ultra Marathon run on 64 miles of trails and covering over 9000ft of elevation. Not for the faint-hearted, Colin has been training hard since the start of the year and managed an incredible time of 13 hours and 7th place. He is currently looking for his next challenge... yikes.



## DIY AI COURSES

Hopefully, face to face training courses for essential skills such as DIY AI should be up and running again by the summer months.

If you are interested in a place on a DIY AI course, please contact your local branch or email **Sophia Elworthy** on [sophiaelworthy@torchfarmvets.com](mailto:sophiaelworthy@torchfarmvets.com).