

Vet student skills in livestock population medicine can be improved utilizing a hybrid teaching model.

An innovative and interactive on-farm experience: Putting population medicine theory into farm animal practice

INTRODUCTION

- An essential part of modern farm animal veterinary practice is management of the health of the population.
- The seasonality of UK beef and sheep farming, and the time it takes to acquire such specific farm information means that students may not fully develop population medicine skills.
- **The aim of this project is to improve vet student application of population medicine principles in real-life farm-settings to produce farm health plans.**
- Supported by a clinician, this practical class will utilise digital technologies to produce a realistic experience of the application of population medicine in a repeatable way.

METHODS

- **This all-day session started on a beef and a sheep farm with 12 final year vet students.** Groups of 4 students collect and collate the information they need to develop a health plan for the farm. They were guided through collection of information by visiting key locations around the farm using an electronic app. Interviews with the farmer, production and health data were linked with locations via an app on a tablet (figure 1).
- **Complimented by the tablet app, students collected additional themselves at each farm locations.** For example, they assessed feed, facilities and disease risk.
- **Back in the classroom, groups of students developed health plan calendars.** The instructor clinician will facilitate a peer comparison of health plans at the end of the day.
- Development of this session was through the University of Edinburgh Innovations Teaching Grant.

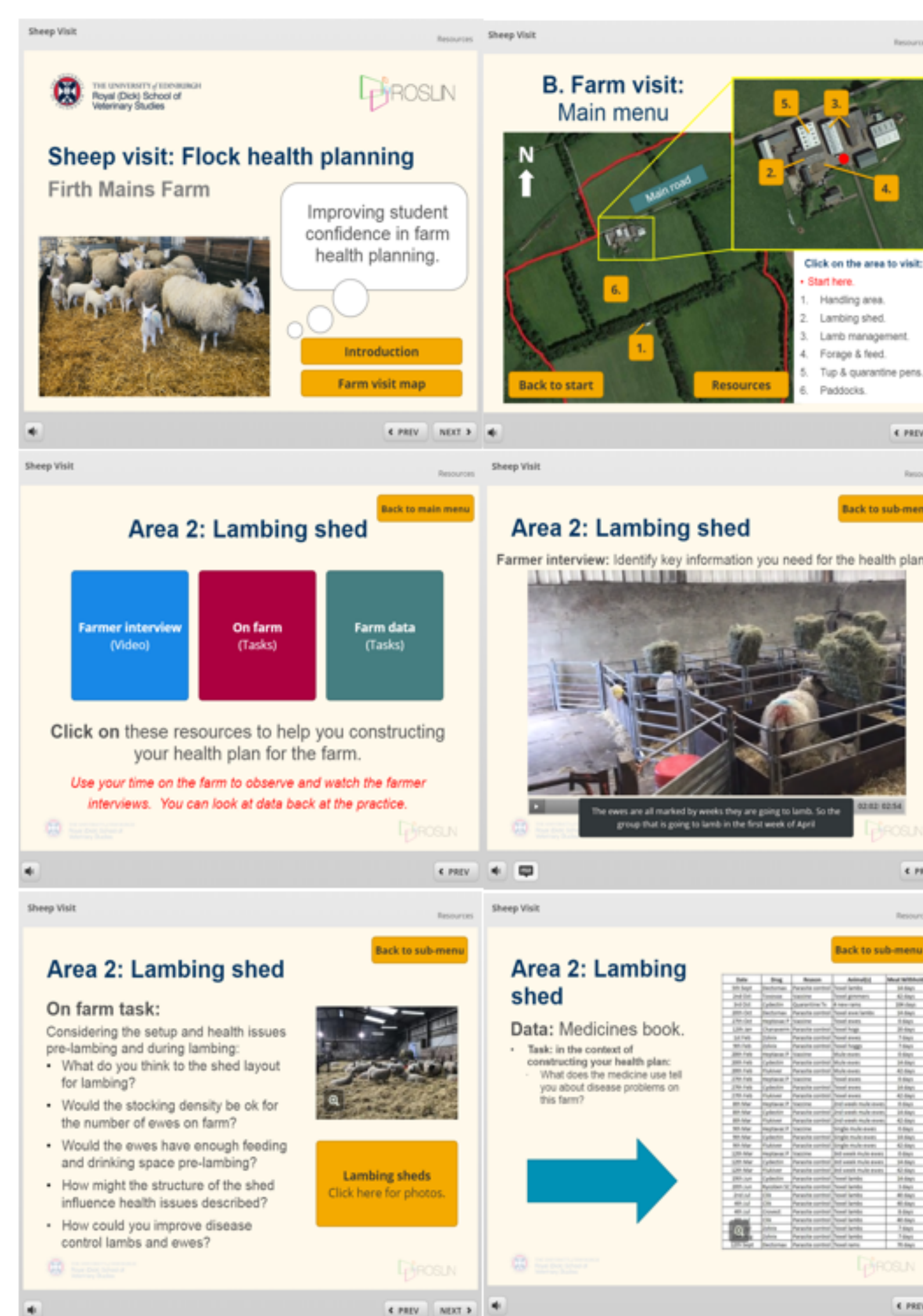


Figure 1. An example of app pages for the sheep farm.

DISCUSSION

- The new structure of the class has freed up teaching time to focus on the interesting discussion where students construct health plans.
- **Students felt more confident with health planning and use of farm data.**
- Its important to make sure students don't get distracted by technology and focused on the task.



Figure 2. Ewes housed at lambing time in spring, however the class runs in June-December when these animals are out. Images and videos on the iPad facilitate the students seeing how these animals are housed and assessing housing areas during the visit, despite animals being out at grass when they visit.



Figure 3: Student using interactive resources to assess the sheep flock during the farm visit.



Figure 4: Student constructing farm health plans (as a calendar) back in the classroom, ready for the discussion comparing different groups approaches.

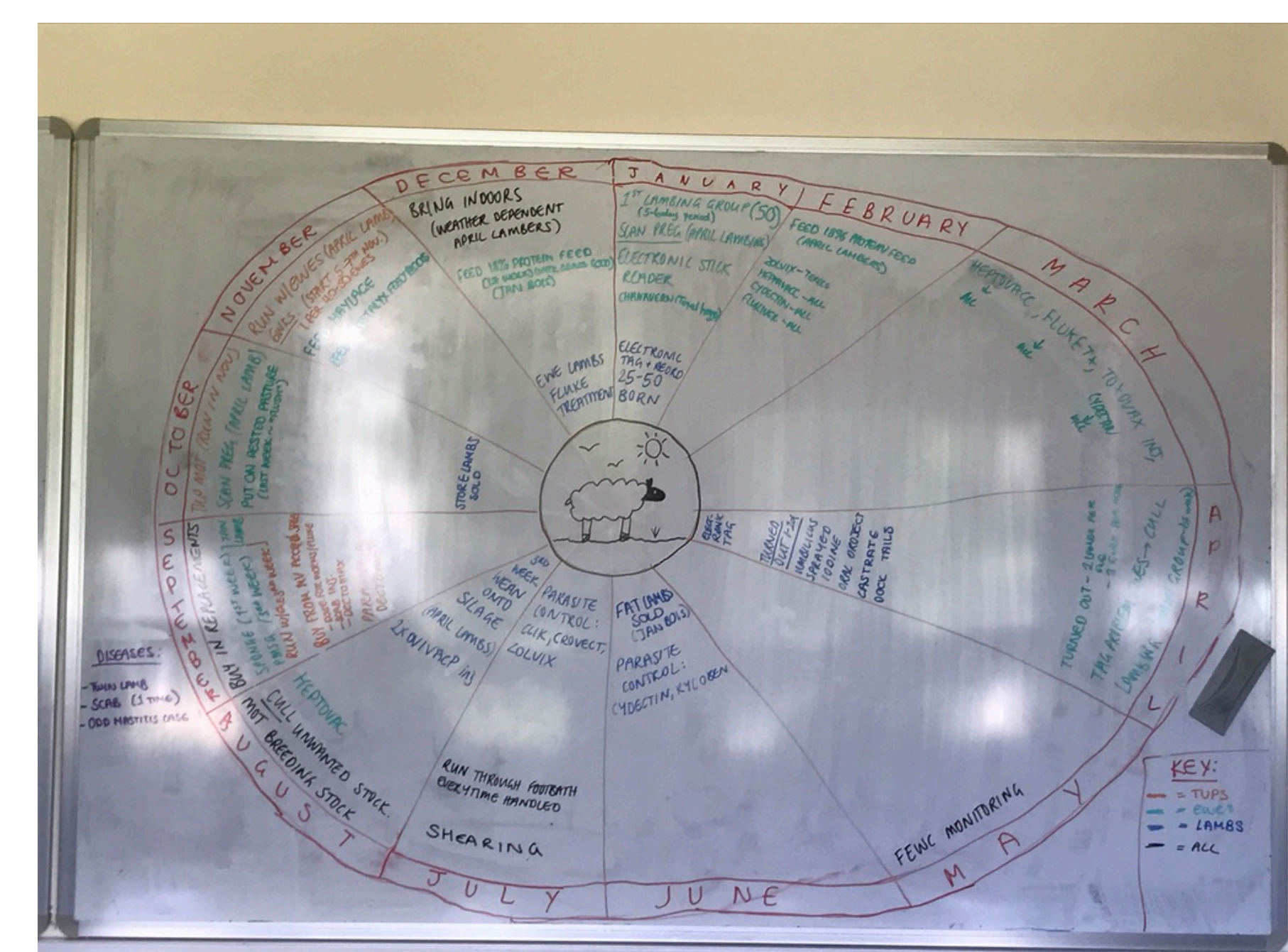


Figure 5: Example of a final farm health plan.



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