

Beth Wells

Beth was brought up on a hill sheep farm where she obtained lifelong interests in livestock, Highland ponies and parasites! After degrees in Biological and Environmental Science at the University of Stirling, and a Graduate of the Institute of Biology qualification in Animal Production Science at SAC Auchincruive, she moved north to Strathspey to bring up her family and set up rural businesses - a Highland pony stud, pony trekking operation and a riding school, alongside a parasite diagnostics service for local veterinary practices, further developing her experience and knowledge of livestock and equine parasites.

In 2009, Beth got the opportunity to study for a PhD at Moredun in sheep scab diagnostics with the late John Huntley, Al Nisbet and Stew Burgess, which she absolutely loved (but not sure they did!) and completed in 2012. Being a huge fan of Moredun, with its solutions-based approach to research and close ties with farmers and the wider livestock industries, Beth was delighted to be offered a post-doctoral position at Moredun working on the zoonotic parasites *Cryptosporidium* and *Toxoplasma*, during which time she developed an interest in a One Health approach to disease control.

Throughout her time at Moredun, Beth was very active in communicating research, so when an opportunity arose to join the Communications Team, led by Lee Innes, she jumped at it! Her remit was to develop interdisciplinary, collaborative research projects, bring in alternative sources of funding, and develop innovative knowledge exchange activities. She worked across many research groups and stakeholders increasing research impact and ensuring scientific outputs were communicated effectively to improve livestock health, welfare and production.

During her time at Moredun, Beth has particularly enjoyed two stand out projects. The first of these due to her interest in working with the land management sector, specifically in tick and tick-borne disease control. This led to being part of a multi-disciplinary team generating a successful fundraising campaign. This was a novel, but successful way of funding the development of a new vaccine for tick-borne louping-ill in sheep. This has involved working closely with the moorland industries through Scottish Land and Estates, Estate owners, managers and gamekeepers across the UK; the sheep industry through the National Sheep Association and the UK and Scottish Governments.

The second project involved the opportunity to lead a multi-disciplinary team on a fresh approach to unravel the causes and risk factors associated with Equine Grass Sickness, a devastating, mostly fatal disease of equines. Exploiting her experience and interest in working in the equine industry and with multi-disciplinary teams, this project has led to multiple sources of funding, the development of an extensive equine biobank, a research programme at Moredun based on organoid technology and many projects at partner universities all working to solve this complex disease. Now a member of the Equine Grass Sickness Fund committee, she is pleased to remain actively involved.

Beth has loved every minute of her time at Moredun and has highly valued the many wonderful colleagues she has had the opportunity to work with. She feels privileged to have been a small part of a fabulous team and to have made so many friends along the way!