

Vet's Viewpoint- Julian



I suspect there is no shortage of topics of concern for farmers at the moment, not least the gradual spread of the Bluetongue virus, the change in farm subsidies and the tax changes in the budget. It may be time to wash off the tractor ready for a trip to Downing Street. It is very hard to foresee the long term effects of the tax changes on the farming community as a whole, one can hope that there is a sliver lining to that particular cloud. Jeremy Clarkson certainly has some choice phrases in the weekend's press about the measures.

The Bluetongue meeting in Chieveley was very well attended and we hope that it provided useful information if not the answers you wanted to hear, the restriction zones are continuing to expand and until we have a cold snap there will undoubtedly be further cases. So far the restriction zone seems to have spared most of the practice catchment area but there have been implications for stock movement to slaughter. Many of you will remember the outbreak in 2007 for which a good vaccine was developed, this stopped the virus quite swiftly. The disease has continue to grumble on the continent ever since then without troubling us, although a further outbreak in the UK has always been fairly inevitable. Sadly an effective vaccine to prevent infection does not appear to be on the cards and there is no successful way of completely preventing infection.

On another disease issue, APHA have put quite a lot of effort into establishing the current status of Schmallenberg Virus in the country this year. This undoubtedly caused a lot of problems when it first became widespread with some herds and flocks having many deformed calves and lambs. The virus has not gone away and is indeed quite widespread but it would seem that many herds/flocks now have a good level of natural immunity and although clinical disease is still evident affected births are more sporadic. Animals infected when not pregnant may not show obvious symptoms but become immune and so maintain a certain level of herd immunity; it is when a new virus appears there is no herd immunity and this is when the effects are worst. Hopefully the Bluetongue episode will resolve without significant losses; we are happy to advise or visit as usual if there are any animals with suspicious symptoms.

Sheep

Autumn is the time that we usually start to see sheep scab outbreaks, as people have bought-in sheep (with scab mites on them) and the falling light levels and rising humidity favour the mites. However, sheep scab is not the only cause of itchy sheep, so rather than treating blindly- do ask us to come and examine the sheep, rather than wasting time and money on misdirected treatment.

With the autumn and the muddy conditions, plus the movement of new sheep onto farm, we tend to see more cases of lameness. A reminder that routine foot-trimming is not necessary, and that sheep with footrot, scald or CODD should not have their feet trimmed but require appropriate antibiotic therapy (and beware, CODD does not respond to long-acting oxytetracycline e.g. Alamylin LA). Make sure you are treating correctly: bit.ly/AHDB-sheep-lameness. If you aren't sure, ring us!

Control of footrot requires an integrated approach: correct and prompt treatment, isolation of lame sheep, measures to reduce transmission in high traffic areas, good quarantine procedures, culling of repeatedly lame animals and potentially use of the vaccine.

With a ratio of 1:40-50 ram:ewes, a 35 day tupping period should result in 98% or more of the ewes getting in lamb. However, implantation of the embryo in the wall of the uterus only occurs at 16 days after conception. Until this point it is very vulnerable to disruption, so try to avoid stress e.g. changes in diet, for 16 days after the tup comes out.

Now is the time to take samples of your silage or hay for analysis. This is inexpensive, but allows much better planning of your pregnant ewe diet.

NSA South East region field day: 7th November. 10.30 - 16.00 Near Maidenhead. This meeting will focus on getting the most out of forage with your sheep. For further details or to book, see : bit.ly/NSA-071124



Bluetongue Awareness

Thank you to everyone who attended our Bluetongue meeting in October – it was wonderful to see so many familiar faces and to have a good discussion on the subject. As things stand on 30th October:

- 149 confirmed cases in the UK so far.
- As of 25th October, the whole of Northamptonshire is now included in the Restriction Zone.
- The RZ now includes Bedfordshire, Berkshire (part), Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, City of Kingston upon Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire, East Sussex, Essex, Greater London, Hampshire (part), Hertfordshire, Kent, Leicestershire (part), Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Suffolk, Surrey, and West Sussex.



Credit: The Pirbright Institute.

- Please visit the APHA Interactive Bluetongue Virus Map to see which areas are affected: bit.ly/bluetongue-map
- There has been a change to the licence required for BTV-3 vaccination. A general license can now be used for all counties in England. The license can be found online: bit.ly/BTV-vacc-licence

If you are concerned, please give us a call.

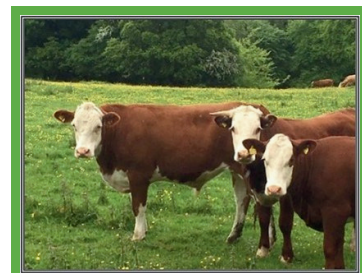
There is useful species relevant sources of information available:
Bluetongue Virus - Ruminant Health & Welfare: ruminanthw.org.uk
Bluetongue virus latest news | AHDB: ahdb.org.uk/bluetongue

Dairy Cattle / Beef Cattle

Mycoplasma vaccine:

There is a new vaccine on the market in the UK for Mycoplasma pneumonia protection: Protivity. This means soon we will no longer be able to import the vaccine we use at the moment, Myco-B one dose.

Protivity can be used in cattle from 1 week of age. Importantly, 2 doses are required 21 days apart to achieve protection. If you have any questions about this or would like more information, please speak to one of our vets.



Pigs

We have been seeing a few flare ups in Glassers Disease on some farms recently. This disease is predominantly seen in pigs 2-3 weeks post weaning. Unfortunately it can be so acute that the first signs can be sudden death. In more chronic cases pigs can present with increased respiratory effort, weight loss and general malaise. In an acute outbreak, pigs must be medicated promptly to limit disease. There is also a vaccine which can be used to help prevent disease. It is usually effective against the most common serotype causing disease in the UK.

Occasionally we see mange in pigs. This presents as intense itching with affected pigs often seen rubbing against fixed objects in their pen. They can make their ark doorway very shiny in doing so. Mange is caused by a mite called *Sarcoptes scabiei* var *suis*. It can't be seen with the naked eye (unlike lice). Diagnosis can be tricky and involves identifying mites or eggs in skin scrapes or ear wax samples taken from affected pigs. Eradication is possible on an affected unit using avermectin treatments.

Please give us a call if you have any concerns.



Medicine Updates

- Betamox RTU 100ml- Sporadic supply until 2025
- Cevac Chlamydia- Not due back this season
- Gletvac 20d- No date
- Heptavac 50ml- No date
- Heptavac 100ml- Sporadic supply
- Heptavac 250ml- 25th January
- Heptavac 500ml- No date
- Spotinor 250ml- Not due back this season
- Synulox 100ml Inj- End of 2025
- Toxovax- contact the office to order



🎄 Christmas Quiz 🎄

Our annual Christmas Quiz will take place this year on the **11th of December** at the George Hotel in Wallingford starting at 7pm. This is a light hearted quiz evening hosted by us and we'd love you all to come along! Either make up your own team (6 is ideal) or just let us know you're on your own and we'll add you to a team. Buffet supper provided.

RSVP: Tel 01491 651479, Email farm@larkmead.co.uk or WhatsApp 07429 488124



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