

NorCal News...

Invoices / Statements

We are moving towards email invoices / statements, if you would like to receive them in this way please email wantage@norcalvets.co.uk to confirm the email address you would like to receive them to.

COVID 19

We thank you for your patience with covid-19. The measures we have put in place at the practice are for your safety, and ours. Our aim is to ensure that should any of us fall ill it will not be at the same time, allowing those of us that are well to continue working. The British Cattle Veterinary Association has issued a directive that we should continue to deliver TB testing and 'essential work', which includes fertility work, as this is essential to maintaining the food supply chain. Where at all possible we will be aiming to maintain a 2M gap between you and ourselves. This is more for your protection than ours.

APHA have said that we are able to extend test windows without financial penalties if you think you will be unable to complete your TB test on time. Please do contact us if you have concerns that you may not meet the deadline due to self isolation or lack of availability of helpers.

Finally, it is your decision whether or not we attend your farm. If you would prefer that we don't come please contact us to talk about it. We will do our best to help, within the constraints of keeping everybody safe.

Flock Health Check 2020



Have you noticed a large number of barren ewes this lambing season OR are you having more abortions than usual?

MSD are offering their annual FlockCheck testing scheme for our breeding ewe clients. Finding out the cause of this years lambing losses and taking action now will help reduced losses next year.

FlockCheck will offer to test 6-8 blood samples from flocks with over 100 breeding ewes. These can be from barren and/or aborted ewes. The subsidised test checks for antibodies from the two main causes of abortion; **enzootic abortion (EAE)** and **toxoplasmosis**.

Results will be reported back to our practice and will show if a flock has been exposed to EAE and/or Toxoplasmosis. We can then plan for the next years lambing which may be adding in a vaccination protocol. Often when abortion rates are above 2% within a flock, a vaccination programme more than pays for itself.

The flock health check is running from 1st Feb to 30th June. If you are interested in checking your ewes then call one of us at the practice.

Nematodirus in Lambs

Nematodirus is a nematode worm that typically affects lambs early in the season, between April-June. The main risk factor for Nematodirus is grazing young lambs on the same pasture for consecutive years, as the eggs can survive on the fields through the winter and then hatch once there is adequate moisture and the temperature is consistently over 10C.

The important difference between Nematodirus and other sheep worms is that Nematodirus causes disease **before** any eggs are detectable in faeces - so you can't rely on egg counts to warn you of a problem. Instead, if you are grazing lambs on the same fields as last year and/or you know you've had Nematodirus in the past, keep a close eye on the SCOPS Nematodirus forecast at <https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/> to see what the risk is in your area.

You can reduce or eliminate your Nematodirus risk by rotating which fields are grazed by young lambs in the Spring. However, where this is not possible it may be necessary to treat lambs - the recommended treatment for Nematodirus is a white drench. As always, it is important to minimise the development of resistance to wormers by avoiding underdosing - weigh a few lambs and ensure you are dosing for the weight of the heaviest individuals in the group, and calibrate your dosing equipment regularly.

White Muscle Disease

White muscle disease in cattle and sheep is caused by a deficiency in selenium and/or Vitamin E, meaning that muscle cells become easily damaged. Typically, this is a result of grazing or feeding forage produced from land that is selenium deficient.

Signs - selenium deficiency can cause stillbirth or very weak calves, or it can affect calves aged 1-4 months. Typically, we see white muscle disease after turnout, when calves have a sudden burst of exercise. The exact signs seen depend on which muscle are affected, but include inability to stand, stiffness, breathing problems and sudden death.

Diagnosis - we can take a blood sample from suspicious cases to check selenium levels. Blood sampling can also be useful as a management tool to check the levels of selenium and other minerals, rather than waiting until there is a problem. A good time to check mineral levels is before the start of the service period, so that any problems that may affect fertility or pregnancy can be addressed.

Treatment - Injectable Selenium & Vitamin E can be used to treat affected calves. Nursing care will also be required, particularly for calves that can't stand.

Prevention - knowing the mineral status of your forage can allow you to proactively supplement your stock to prevent this disease and other deficiencies. Selenium can be provided in many formats, including boluses, free mineral, licks, long acting injections etc.

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NorCal Vets Thame

Pearces Yard, Aylesbury Road,
Thame, OX9 3AS
Tel: 01844 260 616
Mob: 07725 039 093 (Evan)
thame@norcalvets.co.uk

NorCal Vets Wantage

Unit 8a Elms Farm Business Park, Grove Road,
Wantage, OX12 7PD
Tel: 01235 429 767
Mob: 07711 923 909 (Jono)
wantage@norcalvets.co.uk