

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.

Ram Vasectomies

Plan ahead to make sure you have enough teaser power ready for the Autumn!

Vasectomised rams (teasers) are a really useful tool for ensuring a successful sheep breeding season. Teasers are particularly useful for:

- Early lambing flocks, to encourage ewes to start cycling early in the season
- Ewe lambs, to encourage them to start cycling before the rams are introduced
- Teasers can also be used to synchronise ewes at the start of the breeding season

To be safe to use without risk of unwanted pregnancy, teasers need to be vasectomised a **minimum** of 6 weeks before they are introduced to the ewes, so the sooner you can get them done the better!

Most rams or well grown ram lambs are suitable to be vasectomised - when choosing them consider that although they aren't serving ewes, you are investing in them for the future and their effect relies on them behaving and interacting like rams. It's therefore important to pick sound sheep with good teeth and feet, and adequate bodyweight and testicular size.



Finally, it is advisable to permanently identify (e.g. management tag) teasers as the time of surgery - this will help to avoid the chance of any mix-ups that could be costly!

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.

Flies, flies, flies!

The sun's out, and so are the flies! Far from just being a nuisance, flies can have a surprisingly large impact on growth, production and welfare. Research suggests flies can cause a decrease in cattle growth rates of up to 0.3kg/day, and a reduction in milk yield of up to 0.5l/day. In addition, flies also transmit a number of diseases including summer mastitis and new forest eye. In sheep, flies lay eggs on wet or dirty fleece resulting in flystrike - this is an extremely painful and unpleasant condition which can result in death if not picked up soon enough.

Our top tips for keeping flies under control this summer:

- Get fly protection on early - by doing this you can reduce the rate at which flies breed, helping to keep the population under control for the whole season. Products like Spot On or Swish are available for cattle, and for sheep options include Crovect (for prevention and treatment of fly strike) and Clik (long term prevention only).
- Keep livestock away from areas with high densities of flies, such as stagnant water and muck heaps.
- For sheep, plan your shearing in good time - especially this year as shearers are in short supply due to travel restrictions!
- Keep on top of your worm & cocci status - as well as helping growth rates this will reduce faecal staining which attracts flies
- Keep a close eye out for fly-borne diseases and catch & treat any individuals affected by summer mastitis, new forest eye or flystrike promptly - the sooner they are treated the faster they will recover, and the less chance they will have to spread disease around the group!



SEEKING PARTICIPANTS FOR SHEEP & BEEF RESEARCH PROJECT

The University of Liverpool is running a project to investigate Johne's disease on UK beef and sheep farms. Ovine Johne's disease is much more common than most people realise and this project will investigate the risk factors and effect of the disease on the productive lifespan of ewes and farm economics. Furthermore, little research has been done on cross species transmission and a major aim of this project is to better understand the risk posed by sheep to cattle for Johne's infection and vice versa.

We would like to invite sheep only, beef only and mixed beef and sheep farms to participate in this practical research, whether you think you have Johne's on your farm or not. If you wish to take part, please complete the short questionnaire which can be found here, <https://liverpool.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/johnes-disease-copy> along with further information about the project and a consent form. A follow up, **free of charge** visit for flock and/or herd-level sampling and further data collection will be arranged for later in the year for approximately 100 suitable farms. Each enrolled farm will receive a detailed diagnostic report from the samples collected, free of charge. Please feel free to email Laura Taylor at L.Taylor11@liverpool.ac.uk for further information.

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