



## Merry Christmas



We would like to thank you all for your loyalty and custom and wish our clients a very happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.

### Office opening hours:

24 <sup>th</sup> December	8:30 – 12:30
25 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> December	Closed
29 <sup>th</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> December	8:30 – 12:30

Open as normal Tues 4<sup>th</sup> January

Evan will be away from 11<sup>th</sup> December until January spending the Christmas break with family in America. Please contact the office directly during this time.

### Avian Influenza Housing Measures

New rules came into force on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021 which require all poultry keepers, whether you have just a few birds or thousands, to keep birds indoors or otherwise separate from wild birds. You should also reinforce your biosecurity - e.g. by cleaning and disinfecting clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles before and after contact with birds, and ensure all feed and water is not accessible to wild birds.

Avian influenza can be high pathogenic (HPAI) or low pathogenic (LPAI).

While the high pathogenic type is more severe, the signs to look out for are similar with both types:

- Respiratory signs e.g. coughing, sneezing, gaping or other strange noises
- Changes in appetite and production
- Swollen or discoloured head
- Unexplained mortality



Anybody who keeps poultry, from commercial producers to those with a couple of pet hens, has to keep a close eye on their birds and if you have any concerns you must contact the practice. If you find dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks) or other dead wild birds, such as gulls or birds of prey, you should report them to the Defra helpline (03459 33 55 77).

## Managing the 'downer cow'

There are many reasons that cows can become downer cows. It is important to identify as soon as possible what is causing the cow to be unable to stand, as this will affect how you treat her and whether she has a reasonable chance of returning to full health.

Some of the common reasons that we see include:

- Metabolic, e.g. milk fever, grass tetany. If caught early, appropriate treatment of these cows (e.g. calcium into the vein) can help these cows to make a full and rapid recovery
- Trauma, e.g. doing the splits. These cases will benefit from pain relief and anti-inflammatories, and a prompt assessment of whether catastrophic injuries have occurred. Catastrophic injuries in adult cows include fractures or dislocations of the limbs, and there is no way we can effectively treat these so we would recommend prompt euthanasia.
- Infections e.g. toxic mastitis. Severe infections can cause cows to become downer cows - in these cases the cow requires rapid treatment with anti-inflammatories and antibiotics, as well as fluids given either orally or into the vein.

In addition to identifying and treating the underlying cause of the downer cow, it is essential that all downer cows receive excellent supportive care to keep them as healthy as possible and prevent further complications. The most important aspects are ensuring the cow has access to a palatable diet and plenty of clean water within easy reach. She must also be kept on a well bedded area and be turned regularly to minimise the muscle damage that inevitably occurs from the pressure of the cows weight onto her muscles.

If hip lifters are used they should be only applied for short lengths of time and the cow should be able to place all 4 feet on the floor, so they support her to stand.

Whilst downer cows can occur at any time, the period around calving is particularly high risk for all of the causes listed above. It is therefore worth thinking about actions you could take during this period to reduce the risks. Keeping yards clean and well bedded and ensuring diets for heavily pregnant and freshly calved cows are appropriate (including mineral supplementation) are often the most important factors.

### Face masks

Please can all clients wear a face mask when in the practice, thank you.

(This is now a requirement unless exempt)

Follow us on Instagram @norcalvets



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