

Oxfordshire bovine TB Cluster Pilot project - Thame-Chinnor Cluster area

(APHA) have identified a number of 'clusters' of TB infection in the county. A cluster is a group of TB breakdowns which are linked geographically and in time and for which the *M.bovis* (the causative agent for TB in cattle) that has been 'isolated' in the laboratory is closely related genetically. In the Thame-Chinnor area alone there have been around 7 closely related breakdowns.

The aim of the Oxfordshire Bovine TB Cluster Projects (there is another one in the Deddington area) are to look at a number of locally relevant ways to add to the existing TB controls, to understand what is driving the genetically-linked clusters of disease and get on top of the problem. Defra will assess the project's success after a year but if it proves effective and if they retain the interest and involvement of farmers, vets and others in the area it's likely to continue for up to five years. Ultimately, Defra would like to see if this approach is replicable in different areas with their own genetically linked bTB cluster issues.

The project will not replace existing measures to tackle bTB but will complement them.

A steering group for the cluster has now been established. It is made up of people that know the territory, including farmers, farm vet practices (including NorCal), the NFU and other individuals with key local knowledge. Ideas and decisions for how the project will run will come from the group members, with Defra and APHA providing funding and support.

If you are interested in this project, please email oxfordshirecluster.project@defra.gov.uk to receive project updates including a monthly newsletter or share your mobile number to receive text alerts about upcoming events.

The next meeting will be held on *8th November 6.30pm-8.30pm at Thame Market.*

TBAS Visits Reminder

A reminder that Alex, Becca and Kathriona are now all trained TBAS advisers and can come out on farm free of charge and discuss TB in relation to your individual farm regardless of whether you are currently experiencing a breakdown or not. Please give the office a call to book in or get a vet to discuss what a visit involves.

Badger carcass collections

Please note the APHA have reached their target of badger carcasses in Oxfordshire and will not be accepting any more carcasses from this area. However, they are requesting for people to continue to collect suitable carcasses found in *Hampshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire.*

Vaccinations Before Winter Housing

Now that we are entering a risk period for pneumonia some of you may be thinking about vaccinating for pneumonia. Stress is one of the biggest predisposing factors to cattle developing pneumonia and housing is one of the most major stressors on cattle especially if there is mixing of different groups and changes in diet. While labour wise it is easier to give the second dose of vaccine at housing it is important to consider that calves/cattle will not be fully protected until at least two weeks into the housing period with a lot of vaccinations.

Please call us to speak to one of the vets to discuss a vaccine plan in advance of housing.

Toxovax Supply Issues - An alternative solution if needed

There is now a production issue with Toxovax which will continue until at least mid-October and possibly last for the rest of the year. If you have not already vaccinated or got your vaccine and know toxoplasmosis is a risk in your flock the feed additive Decoxx (decoquinate) can be used in the last 14 weeks of pregnancy.

If you are trying to plan ahead and want to know what's involved the following guidance can be used:

- Administer medicated feed at a rate to provide the target intake of 2 mg decoquinate/kg body weight daily, according to the rate at which the product has been incorporated in the ration, e.g.:
 - Mid pregnancy: add 6.68 kg of premix per tonne, feed at 250 g/50 kg body weight daily
 - Late pregnancy: add 3.34 kg of premix per tonne, feed at 500 g/50 kg body weight daily
- If ewes are to be fed at other rates, the level of incorporation in the feed should be adjusted accordingly. Medicated feed should state the feeding rate required to achieve the target intake of decoquinate
- Feed continuously for the last two-thirds of pregnancy (i.e. for the final 14 weeks prior to lambing)

Tapeworm in Sheep - Who needs to be dosed?

Adult tapeworms live in the small intestine of cattle and sheep - segments containing eggs detach and are passed and easily seen in faeces of sheep and less commonly cattle. Although not very nice to see *Moniezia* tapeworms are not considered to be harmful as they are only attached to the gut wall by a pin head sized sucker and do very little damage. There are reports of gut blockages caused by very heavy burdens in small lambs but this is extremely uncommon. Therefore, worming at the sight of tapeworm is unnecessary and will lead to resistance as other worms are being exposed to the dosing products.

On the other hand, there is another tapeworm species that needs to be dealt with however these will not be seen passed in muck. Tapeworms carried by dogs and passed to sheep cause cysts and other organ damage which will lead to condemnation and losses in abattoirs. These can be seen on reports as *Cysticercus* and Hyatid cysts among others. Your own dogs are usually the source of the problem unfortunately as dogs will need to eat meat/dead sheep with these cysts to become infected. We recommend farm dogs should therefore be wormed with Drontal every 3 months minimum and if kill sheets are showing damage due to tapeworm, we may recommend increasing to every six weeks but please check with one of us first. Please note that spot on treatments for fleas and most roundworms e.g. Moxiclear will not cover dogs for tapeworm.

Vitamin D For Alpacas

Alpacas in their natural South American environment will be exposed to much higher levels of UV light compared to the UK. Since removing them from their natural sunny environment they now have a lack of UV exposure during winter months. It is therefore important to supplement Vitamin D to prevent poor calcified bones similar to those seen in human Rickets disease.

- Younger, growing animals will require up to three doses (November, January, March)
- All animals should be given one dose in November.
- Pregnant females should receive two doses in November and January.

Vitamin D can be given by injection - please give us a call to discuss.

Follow us on Instagram @norcalvets

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We are now officially recognised as a Chicken Friendly Vet!

This means our vets have undertaken training with "The Chicken Vet" and we will now be stocking "Chicken Vet" products and will be able to seek further advice from specialist poultry vets if required.