

Reflection on 2022 – Evan

NorCal has been going from strength to strength this year with the expansion of our new AI service and gaining new local clients and also further afield towards Leighton Buzzard. We hope to continue this growth next year and get to know all of our new clients as well as we feel we know our existing clients. We would like to see many of you at meetings which we're planning to get back to pre-covid levels in the New Year.

Thank you for all your support and patience this year, myself and all the team love and appreciate that you trust us with your business and fingers crossed that 2023 brings rain, cheap fertiliser and feed and better livestock prices than ever.



(our version of Spotify wrapped!)



AI

As many of you know this year we launched a hugely successful AI service run by our Vet Tech Jenni. Both dairy and beef herds have benefitted from this service and we are starting to see the first calves on the ground! This has shown that using AI in beef herds is worth the time and effort due to the quality of the calves being produced and is a great way to introduce new genetics into the herd. We are constantly expanding the selection of bulls we stock and if there are any that you would want to use in particular, we can arrange this. If you are a small herd or want to change things up a bit without the disease risk, AI might be the way forward for you. Give Jenni a call on 07542941022 to discuss options and what's right for you.

Alex 5 years!

For those of you not on Instagram and did not see in October Alex reached a big milestone as he celebrated five years at NorCal!





Spastic paresis

Becca and Kathriona performed salvage surgery on a steer who was considered to be more of a pet due to having the neurological condition known as spastic paresis. This causes the animal to walk on their tiptoes as they can't flex their hindleg muscles. This obviously worsens as they get older and is an incredibly painful condition. As Bluey had gotten to an age where it had become difficult for him to walk normally, a decision had to be made on whether he was to be put to sleep or to perform surgery though due to his age and size at this point did mean he wasn't the ideal candidate. Each leg was done in separate procedures - with the first leg the results were seen almost immediately. Unfortunately, the second leg was not as successful but has made a considerable difference to his quality of life and months later he has gained weight and been able to keep up with the other cattle until fit for slaughter.

Hernia operation

Back in May Kathriona and Becca combined equine and cattle surgery by applying a commonly used equine umbilical surgical approach to a Simmental heifer calf after her original surgery broke down. The girls used a mesh to repair the gap in the body wall and six months down the line the heifer is thriving and keeping up with her twin.



Chicken vet

We are now an associate practice of St Davids Poultry Practice after Becca and Kathriona completed specialist training with The Chicken Vet. We have since seen a big increase in the number of smallholders and small flocks using us and have worked up some very interesting cases as a more chicken friendly practice.



Smallholder workshop

In August Kathriona and Becca held another informative smallholder skills workshop. On the day basic sheep and goat handling was covered as well as common problems encountered throughout the year. We are planning on running an additional on farm practical lambing workshop in the new year. Keep an eye out for a date soon!

Lambing Abortion Checklist

Although a bit early for the majority of you a refresher on what to do if abortions occur pre-lambing:

- Practise extremely good personal hygiene
- All aborting ewes should be immediately separated for at least three weeks (time for vaginal discharge to cease)
- Keep aborted fetuses and any placenta to send off. Give us a call.
- Ill ewes should be treated with antibiotics (generally Trymox LA) and anti-inflammatories (Emdocam) and fluids if necessary. Always call to check if unsure.
- Mark any ewes for blood sampling later (free bloods dependant on flock size will be available in the New Year - we will notify you in the newsletter)
- Do not foster any ewe lambs you intend to keep as replacements onto aborted ewes.
- Consider vaccination for the following year - here bloods/tests on aborted lambs can identify the problem in your flock and guide vaccination accordingly.

Watery Mouth Prevention - No Spectam

As thoughts turn to lambing a reminder that this will be the first year where there will be no spectam available at all.

Although many flocks have made significant improvements in the reduction of the use of oral antibiotics through hygiene, good colostrum management and good ewe nutrition this year identifying who is most at risk will be more important than ever

Firstly, ewe nutrition is vital. Having ewes in the correct condition and on the right plane of nutrition in the run up to lambing will improve colostrum production and quality and minimise lambing problems. This will increase lamb vigour at birth and make sure they receive sufficient colostrum.

Colostrum management is the single most important element in preventing watery mouth. Tube feed any lambs that you are concerned did not receive enough colostrum - lambs should receive 50ml/kg within 2 hours of birth and 200mls/kg within the first 24 hours of life. Tubes/feeding equipment/jugs should also be well maintained - any dirt will introduce bacteria into the lambs. Scratched/damaged tubes should not be used as well as potentially internally damaging the lamb bacteria will cling to the damaged parts.

Make sure to use plenty of bedding and clean out pens between ewes in order to keep bacterial challenges low. If any ewes are scouring this is also a source of infection for naive lambs so ensure worming if necessary is carried out. Please give us a phone call to check if you are using the most beneficial pre-lambing wormer for your ewes.

Remember who is most at risk: triplets, lambs with low birth weights, lambs from ewes with poor body condition and those who had a hard birth.

It is now recommended to treat cases with amoxicillin e.g. Trymox LA rather than oxytetracyclines (Engemycin/Alamycin) due to reports coming back from labs with resistance.

There is now a vaccine that can be imported to prevent watery mouth (similar to Rotavec Corona in cattle). This vaccine must be imported therefore we will need to know in advance if you are interested in ordering.

Give one of us a call to chat about the best approach for your farm before problems arise or for any questions on the newly available vaccine.

TBAS

Unfortunately, this year as many of you know too well, we have had a lot of our farms experiencing breakdowns. One tool we are trying to use is the new TBAS visits where one of us come out on farm free of charge and walk your land/sheds with you and talk through potential risks and recommend changes to alleviate these risks. There has not been a large uptake in this so we are hoping once things quieten after the busy Christmas season more of you will take advantage of this free service.

Sheep Scab

Sheep scab is one of the most contagious parasitic diseases of sheep in the UK and is caused by an allergic reaction from the sheep to the mite *Psoroptes ovis* and its faeces causing huge economic burdens through production loss.

Repeated intense scratching and skin damage leads to wool loss and eventual skin damage and skin scabbing. Sheep will lose body condition and can potentially progress to seemingly fitting behaviour.

Scab cannot be seen and can only be confirmed by a skin scraping or blood test. When it is confirmed in one sheep it must be assumed all are infected and all treated accordingly. The mite spreads through contact and can live on fence posts, housing, lorries and anything the sheep has been in contact with for 17 days - this makes biosecurity, animal handling and hygiene considerations a high priority as the mite can persist in the flock in this way.

All sheep in the group should be treated at the same time. Treatment involves either injections (more than a one-off jab!!) with a 'clear wormer' Macrocytic Lactone or ideally obviously dependant on the time of year dipping in an organophosphate. Injecting while a lot of the time considered easier brings the risk of roundworm resistance so this must be considered. Dipping also will kill any lice present.

Prevention and good biosecurity are key for scab. Poor fencing with neighbouring flocks and bought in sheep pose the greatest risk therefore double fencing is best used where possible. Where there is common grazing or risk of contact between sheep communication is vital to ensure that all sheep in an area are treated at the same time. Bought in sheep should be treated and as always quarantined before introduction to the main flock - as is best practice for all disease.

If you suspect scab in your flock let us know and we can advise on treatment or decide if further tests are advisable to differentiate between lice and scab.

Lice in Cattle

Lice in cattle causes irritation and scratching resulting in productivity losses through reduced feed intakes, poor coat quality as well as welfare issues.

Lice cannot survive for more than 3-5 days without cattle to feed from. Now that cows are housed the lice can spread easily from cow to cow. Over winter long grown hair also allows them somewhere to hide.

There are two types of cattle lice: biting and sucking. Differentiation is only important if you are relying on injectable clear wormers to treat lice - only sucking lice will be killed. Pour on clear wormers as well as pour on synthetic pyrethroids will kill both sucking and biting lice.

Thame Market December Events

Wednesday 7th December

The Thame with the Vale of Aylesbury Primestock Show - sale to commence at 11am.

Thursday 15th December

RABI Carol Service – 7pm in the main cattle ring

Friday 16th December

Christmas Show – Entries close Monday 12th at 4pm

Christmas and New Year Office Opening Hours

Closed 24 Dec - 27 Dec

Open 28-30 Dec 9 am until 12pm

Closed 31 Dec – 2 Jan

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Follow us on Instagram @norcalvets



NorCal Vets

Unit 2 Rycote Lane Farm, Rycote Lane
Milton Common, Thame
Oxfordshire OX9 2NZ

01844 260 616 thame@norcalvets.co.uk