

## Easter Bank Holiday - Office Opening Hours

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April  
9am – 1pm

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> April  
Closed

**An on-call vet will be available 24/7 please just call 01844 260616 if you need any advice/a visit**

## Sheep Flock Meeting

We are planning a meeting for our sheep clients to be held in May – keep an eye out for further details!



## Job Vacancy Relief AI Technician

We are looking for a reliable, flexible individual who can provide cover for Jenni our AI technician. The ideal candidate would be AI trained and could cover 7-10 days a month and would also be available to cover any sickness/holiday as required. The days worked each month can be mutually organised with Jenni.

- All equipment and company van provided.
- Mix of dairy and beef cattle.

To apply:

Please send a CV and covering letter to [thame@norcalvets.co.uk](mailto:thame@norcalvets.co.uk).

Any questions please call or email us, and it would be great if clients could spread the word too!

## Game Bird Meeting



**Wed 19<sup>th</sup> April 6pm @  
Chinnor RFC, Thame OX9 3JL**

Talk hosted by George Davis, Chairman of the GFA discussing Avian Flu regulations

With speakers including:

- Evan David, NorCal: Discussing Avian Flu clinical signs & Tb in deer
- A representative from Aim to Sustain
- Stuart Hutchings from Thames Valley Police Rural Crime Team

*Further details to follow*

There will be a buffet supplied, with the bar open and hot drinks available.

Open to all gamebird clients, please let us know if you're interested in attending.

## Grass Tetany in cattle and sheep

Grass tetany (hypomagnesaemia/grass staggers) is an acute and true veterinary emergency which we are starting to see the past few weeks mostly in lactating sheep and cattle at grass. It is caused by a deficiency in blood magnesium levels.

Any reduced intake in grass in times of bad weather, bulling, transport, dietary changes or other concurrent disease can predispose to grass tetany as cattle and sheep need a constant daily intake especially during high milk production. Lush fast-growing grass as well as grass heavily fertilised with potassium or nitrogen also leads to low magnesium blood levels.

Signs commonly seen are staggering, high head carriage, muscle tremors which progresses to seizures with characteristic paddling. Immediate treatment is needed with Magniject No 9 injected under the skin. Prevention is key so call us to discuss possible options such as mineral licks, rations containing magnesium, magnesium boluses and adding magnesium to water. If you suspect an animal has died from grass tetany call us ASAP if you would like a confirmed diagnosis as the magnesium levels we collect from the eye are only accurate for a limited period after death.

## Nematodirus- High Risk in area

Nematodirus caused by the Nematodirus battus worm strikes very quickly with little or no warning. Each year we diagnose it as the cause of high mortality rates as well as stunting the growth of other susceptible lambs. Faecal egg counts (in this instance!) are not reliable as the damage is done by large numbers of immature larvae that are not producing eggs.

*We are entering a risk period for Nematodirus in this area.*

High risk reasons include:

- Lambs grazing pasture that carried lambs last spring
- Generally, happens in lambs aged 6-12 weeks old - old enough to be eating significant amounts of grass but might be younger if ewes are not milking well
- Concurrent challenges with coccidiosis
- Lambs under stress - triplets, fostered, older or younger ewes
- !! A sudden cold snap followed by a period of warm weather!!

If at all possible: avoid infection. Move your at-risk lambs to a low-risk pastures: pastures not grazed by lambs last spring.

If this is not possible the recommendation is to use a white wormer. Please check if worming has been effective by taking a FEC 7-10 days post treatment because although white wormers are usually highly effective against Nematodirus cases of resistance have still been reported. It is also important to remember that you might need to treat lambs more than once depending on the spread of ages in a group and weather conditions.

It is important to bear in mind that before they can hatch eggs need to undergo a period of cold weather followed by warmer temperatures of 10 degrees or more. If these conditions happen over a short period of time like the weather changes we've been recently experiencing this triggers a mass hatch. Couple this with lambs that are in the susceptible age bracket and huge problems will happen.

Give us a call if you have any questions or need advice on how best to prevent this being an issue this springtime.

This website is also useful to visit: <https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/>



# FlockCheck 2023



MSD are running their annual FlockCheck Bloods for antibodies for Toxoplasma and Enzootic abortions in ewes. These bloods should be targeted at 6 to 8 ewes post lambing who have aborted or are barren at lambing. The scheme is available from 1st February until 30th June 2023 and is open for flocks of 100 or more breeding ewes and the cost of lab testing is covered. Please mark any suitable ewes at lambing time and give us a call to discuss/arrange bloods.

A reminder on what to do if abortions occur:

- 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
- 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.

## MSD BRD Screen



### What is BRDScreen?

Bovine Respiratory Disease (BRD) sampling scheme for calves approximately 3-6 months of age and determination of antibodies for exposure to:

- Mannheimia haemolytica
- BRS virus
- PI-3 virus
- Mycoplasma bovis
- Bovine Respiratory Coronavirus (BCoV)

This involves blood sampling 5 unvaccinated calves per farm or management group.

The testing is undertaken at the MSD Lab in Boxmeer, Netherlands. This screening usually costs £320 however MSD will subsidise the full cost (except postage).

BRDScreen is not suitable for diagnosis of acute respiratory disease, rather it should be utilised to get a snapshot survey of diseases circulating on the farm in youngstock in order to advise decisions on management and vaccination of future cohorts.

If you are interested in this or would like to know more info, please get in touch with one of the vets.

## Vaccine supply issues

As we're sure you are all aware there are issues with the availability of Heptavac-P Plus again this year. The only current alternative product available which contains similar components is Ovivac - P.

If no alternative can be sourced pregnant ewes should be prioritised particularly first time lambers and gimmers. If the pregnancy booster is delayed and given to the ewe later than the 4-6 week period prior to lambing, be aware that this will protect the ewe however will provide a limited or unknown level of protection to the lamb via colostrum. Also consider the stress of gathering ewes very close to lambing. Post lambing lambs should then be prioritised as much as possible with lambs needing their first dose of vaccine from 3 weeks of age and then another 4-6 weeks later.

Please be aware that there are also issues with the supply of Lambivac, Bravoxin, Covexin, Leptavoid and Scabivax – please get in touch if you need any advice.

## Turning Out of Cattle

With thoughts turning to turning out of cattle just a reminder to check for any jobs that would be easier dealt with now rather than having to gather cattle back in in a couple of weeks - missed castrates, horns, routine vaccinations for diseases such as Clostridia and IBR, dosing, mineral bolusing etc.

## Reminder of annual visit required for antibiotics

Around lambing time, we often find clients requesting antibiotics despite us not having seen their flock/farm/smallholding within the last 12 months. This is most commonly smallholders with smaller flocks.

Unfortunately, it is a requirement that we have seen your animals within the last year in order to dispense antibiotics – please get in touch if you need to book in a flock visit or simply to bring one of your animals into us to be able to comply with the requirement.

## Drugs at Thame Market

A reminder that we are happy to arrange for drugs to be dropped off at Thame Market on Fridays for clients to collect. Please ensure you have arranged this with us by contacting the office by Thursday at the latest to allow time for any drugs to be ordered in. Many thanks.

## New Facebook Page

We have recently launched a new Facebook page – where we will keep you updated with any NorCal updates and news. Please like/follow/leave us a review!

**NorCal Vets**

Farm, Smallholder & Game Birds

Follow us on Instagram @norcalvets

Facebook @ NorCal Veterinary Services



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**01844 260616**

**thame@norcalvets.co.uk**

## Cattle accommodation wanted!

Jenni is looking for a barn with field suitable to fit up to 30/40 head of show cattle. Ideally max 20 mins from Grendon Underwood  
Please contact Jenni on 07542 941022 if you can help

(The barn will need to be used year-round as the cattle will be in and out during the year and can't mix with any other cattle as they are part of a high health scheme)