

Farewell Dawn

We're coming to the end of an era at NorCal as our longest serving staff member Dawn has very deservedly decided to spend more time at home with her family and the farm.

Dawn has been a constant presence at NorCal since Evan began the business in 2010 and has seen every change that has happened, from new vets that's come and gone and in more recent times the move to Milton Common and expansion of the practice.

Dawns roles at NorCal have been varied. From making sure us baby vets have been fed and watered to keeping Evan in check. But most importantly she has been integral to the running of NorCal both behind the scenes and on the front desk.

Please pop in if you're about in the next two weeks on a Thursday or Friday to have a chat.

Worms in Sheep

With the rain and warmer temperatures, we are starting to see faecal egg count results start to increase again. Increased reports of resistance to wormers due to unnecessary use means it is now more important than ever to regularly check the worm status of your flock to determine the need for dosing and what products to use. We can check samples at the practice for £12 (incl. VAT). Please speak to one of the vets to make a dosing plan for the summer.

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.

Grass Tetany

Grass tetany (hypomagnesaemia/grass staggers) is an acute and true veterinary emergency which we are starting to see the past few weeks with this rain 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 lead 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 magnesium levels, we collect from the eye are only accurate for a limited period after death and we can put a plan in place to protect the rest of the flock/herd.

Flystrike

With the warmer humid weather coming we often see increased cases of Blowfly strike in sheep and alpacas that are yet to be shorn. If caught early fly strike is easily treated however if not detected and left untreated the maggots can cause severe damage with the most severe cases resulting in death.

Affected sheep and alpacas are usually restless and may bite or kick at the area. These areas are usually sites of faecal contamination or infected wounds and therefore usually occur over the hindquarters. Eggs hatch within 24 hours with larvae penetrating and damaging the skin. Maggots will be seen at skin level when the fleece is parted. Fleeces will become discoloured and damp with loss of wool progressing to separation from the flock and eventual death due to septicaemia, secondary bacterial infection and release of toxins.

Treatment involves immediate removal of dirty, contaminated fleece around the whole area of strike and removal of as many maggots as possible. Wash the area with a disinfectant such as iodine or Hibiscrub and apply Engemycin spray. Preparations such as Crovect should be used as per the instructions. In severe cases administration of antibiotics and anti-inflammatories is needed. Please call us if you have a case of flystrike needing veterinary attention or if you need any further advice.

Ram Vasectomies

Vasectomised rams (teasers) are a useful tool for ensuring a successful sheep breeding seasons. 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 synchronize 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 at the time of surgery - this will help to avoid the chance of any mix-ups that could be costly!

Invoicing update

We are currently sending out invoices/statements to all our clients that have outstanding accounts either via post or email. In some cases, these may just have been overlooked inadvertently with the busy time of year!

If you need any additional information on your outstanding invoices, please let us know.

- BACS preferable.
- Credit card and cash payments can be made direct to the office.
- Cheques, please email/call to confirm this has been sent to ensure they have been received please.

Oxfordshire TB Cluster Project Free Evening Event

Join the Thame-Chinnor cluster group to learn more about TB in your area and the work of the steering group. Food and drink provided.

Wednesday 15th May
6:30 – 9:00
Chinnor Rugby Club

Come along to hear about:

- Local TB disease picture
- Southern Edge RTA study
- Thame steering group projects

New Cattle Accommodation Needed!

Jenni is looking for urgent cattle accommodation for 15 cattle in the local area. If anyone knows of anything, please could you give Jenni a call... Thank you!

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NorCal Vets