

Welcome Maddy our New Vet

“I am a newly graduated vet originally from the Romney Marsh, but due to my love of farm animal practice I’ve relocated to become a part of the Norcal team. I am very excited to get stuck in on farm and develop as a new graduate vet. Outside of work I enjoy riding my ponies and beating at local shoots with my Black Labrador. I am interested in all areas of farm animal practice but have a particular interest in breeding and fertility.”



Reminder: Compulsory Registration For all Birdkeepers

Reminder for you all that Defra have announced new rules coming into force from 1st October 2024 with the aim of improving disease control measures.

All kept birds, not just poultry, will need to be registered with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA); the threshold number of birds kept requiring registration will be reduced from 50 to one; and all keepers of birds will be mandated to review their records annually. There will be no requirement for birds such as budgerigars, parrots, or canaries that are kept in a birdhouse within a dwelling to be registered.

This will affect quite a lot of you who own backyard flocks, birds of prey and pigeon enthusiasts.

You can do this now by visiting:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-as-a-keeper-of-less-than-50-poultry-or-other-captive-birds>

Bluetongue Update

New cases of Bluetongue virus have been reported in Norfolk and Suffolk this week. Four sheep cases have been confirmed across three holdings.

Bluetongue (BTV) is a viral disease spread by biting midges, which affects all ruminants (eg. sheep, cattle, goats and deer) and camelids (such as llama and alpaca).

Symptoms vary across ruminants, but include fever, lesions, redness of the mouth, eyes, nose, reddening of the skin above the hoof, excessive salivation and nasal discharge.

However, animals may show little or no clinical signs.

We will keep you all updated with any updates but please remain vigilant with monitoring livestock and prioritising biosecurity as always with any infectious disease.

If you keep susceptible species (ruminants and camelids), you must keep a close watch for, and report, any suspected clinical signs of bluetongue disease in your animals.

Sheep Meeting

We will be holding a sheep meeting discussing worms in sheep - particularly resistance to common products and advising on implementing quarantine worming to prevent the buying in of resistant worms. Zoetis will also be attending to talk about their new product Startect.

Date & Time: Tuesday 10th September 6:30pm
Location: Thame Chinnor Rugby Club OX9 3JL

Food and drink will be provided. We hope to see many of you there.
Please let us know if you will be attending.

Beef Benchmarking Is Back!

Beef Benchmarking is back for another year which many of you will have received emails about.

We have organised another farm walk to start off this year with, the details of which are below:

Date: Thursday 19th September 2024
Location: Castle Hill Farm, Wheatley, Oxon OX33 1JQ
Time: 3pm

We will be having a BBQ again and talking about youngstock health.

We will also be sending out the Beef Benchmarking Questionnaire after the meeting too for you all to fill out again.

Please contact the office or let one of the vets know if you will be able to attend.

Haemonchus Alert

We are seeing a lot of cases of Haemonchus in the area at the moment in sheep, goats and alpacas. Important things to consider with this abomasal blood sucking worm are:

- Ewes are affected just as severely as lambs
- Affected animals do not scour generally unless there is infection with other parasites - anaemia (shown by pale mucous membranes)/collapse and oftentimes just sudden death are the main signs.
- Less acute cases will appear like fluke - weight loss, bottle jaw and lethargy
- This worm is a prolific egg layer so a presumptive diagnosis can be made by a high worm egg count. However, a postmortem exam gives a definitive diagnosis.
- 5000 haemonchus are capable of drinking 250ml of blood daily while each female worm is capable of producing up to 10,000 eggs per day therefore animals can succumb to infection very quickly.

Please contact us for advice if you suspect a Haemonchus burden in your animals.

APHA have also notified us they have received a few sheep submissions over the past month where chronic and acute liver fluke were diagnosed in the same animals. Clinical signs can look similar to Haemonchus therefore it is important to get the correct diagnosis as treatment will differ.

Lameness in Beef Cattle

Although generally less thought of in beef and sucklers compared to dairy - lameness is still an important issue in terms of both welfare and profits. Also, vitally lame animals cannot obviously be transported to market or abattoirs.

A key point to note is that on average cattle who have ever been lame will have a daily live weight reduction (DLWG) of 240g per day. This means a longer time to finish with the increased costs associated with doing so and a less efficient system. Lameness will also put sucklers in a poorer position to get back in calf and rear her own calf.

Lameness can have infectious causes (e.g. digital dermatitis or foul), non-infectious lesions (e.g. white line disease or sole ulcers), injuries and foreign bodies such as stones. A lot of the time will be farm dependent due to different set ups, ground conditions etc with us seeing certain farms having season dependent lameness.

Firstly, it is important to identify and deal with a lame animal as quickly as possible. This obviously proves a challenge at this time of year with cattle being out at grass however the quicker the problem is dealt with the less chance of reoccurrence. This is particularly important with large bulls – masterjects are great for injecting at grass however usually we find they are being massively underdosed and often anti-inflammatories are being skipped. Although time consuming the quickest path to recovery is getting them in, lifting the foot and having a thorough look and treating accordingly.

Any bought in cattle similar to sheep should be quarantined by keeping separate from the rest of the herd. Monitor for lameness and ideally run the animals through a footbath. Animals may not appear lame but could be harbouring infection such as digital dermatitis. Again, although time consuming prevention is always more cost and time saving than an outbreak of infection.

Finally, please keep records of lameness and causes identified like any other issue. We can use these records to identify any patterns and therefore help find solutions to prevent them happening in the first place.

NorCal Vets

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