

Wishing all our clients a very Happy Christmas and New Year!

We would all like to thank you all for your custom this year. NorCal has had a busy year and continued to expand with Maddy our new vet joining us in September. The office has also seen change with Dawn leaving to lead a more glamorous lifestyle on the farm and Jess joining as practice manager - forcing us all to enter the 21st century and making us aware spreadsheets exist. Some of us have ended the year a bit broken and hope to return in January with all vets having fully functional fingers, arms and shoulders.

A vet will of course be available 24/7 over the Christmas period for any emergencies and the office opening hours are below.

As you are all too aware this has been a difficult year for farming with many of you dealing with the extra workload from Bluetongue and TB restrictions as well as the worry of the latest Budget and we hope you all have a lovely Christmas and take some time off to relax and reset for 2025.



Christmas Office Opening Hours

Christmas Eve: 9am-12:30

Christmas Day: closed

Boxing Day: Closed

Friday 27th: 9-12:30

Weekend: Closed

Monday 30th: 9-12:30

Tuesday 31st: 9-12:30

New Years Day: Closed

Thursday 2nd: Normal office hours (8:30-4)



Beef Benchmarking Club

Thank you to all our beef clients that have decided to get involved in our beef benchmarking club. Our farm walk back in October was a huge success with a great turnout from all of you.

We will be hosting our winter meeting on Wednesday 29th January from 6:30pm at the Thame Chinnor Rugby Club to go over all the data collected from yourselves. Please can you all fill in the online questionnaire sent by email by the 15th of January. Any questions please give us a call.

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 35 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.

Worms in Cattle

We have been seeing a few worrying cases of scouring and death in housed younger cattle with high worm egg counts only in some cases.

Generally in cattle we are concerned with two worm species: cooperia and ostertagia. Cattle usually develop immunity to cooperia after their first grazing season and cause less severe disease but immunity to ostertagia may take a few seasons to develop. To complicate things ostertagia can be split into two syndromes or “types” - Type 1 and Type 2.

Type 1 Ostertagiosis is what we typically see at grass in late summer/autumn in autumn born suckler calves and younger animals. A significant proportion of the group will develop green watery diarrhoea and lose weight/appetite etc. This can usually be treated effectively with any of the three classes of wormer. Worming before turnout and exposure to worms however will not allow any natural immunity to develop as the animal gets older therefore it is important to wait a couple of weeks post turnout to worm. Monitoring faecal egg counts two or three times over the grazing season starting 3 weeks post turnout is the best route to determine when to worm to prevent clinical signs but also allowing animals to develop their own immunity to worms.

Type 2 Ostertagiosis however is slightly trickier.

Worm larvae ingested at grass do not develop immediately to adults and instead undergo a process called “hypobiosis” in the stomach wall and later have a mass emergence in the late winter/spring while housed. Treatment response to Type 2 ostertagia is poor and can cause sudden death sometimes without scouring but usually will have profuse diarrhoea which does not respond to treatment. As adult worms are not present at this stage a faecal egg count will not show eggs and bloods measuring an enzyme showing abomasal damage confirms disease. This is why we recommend all youngstock are wormed at housing using a **clear** wormer - effective against this encysted larval stage.

There have been reports of resistance in the UK of Ostertagia to clear wormers and we have suspected a few cases this year. Unfortunately unlike sheep we struggle to get cattle dung samples in for faecal egg counts so we would encourage you to consider this next year.

New Vaccine available for Cryptosporidium

MSD have developed a vaccine to protect calves from *Cryptosporidium parvum* or “Crypto”. Similarly to Rotavec/Bovigen Scour this vaccine is administered to the pregnant cow pre calving providing antibodies to the newborn calf through the colostrum.

The primary vaccine course is two doses given 4 to 5 weeks apart with the second dose needed at least 3 weeks before calving. Cows then only need a single booster in subsequent pregnancies.

Cryptosporidium is a parasite which causes severe diarrhoea and death in calves usually 1-4 weeks old. The symptoms occur rapidly – calves begin to scour and shed huge quantities of oocytes in the dung. They become severely dehydrated, weak and find it difficult to stand up.

Some calves can become infected and do not show any signs, but still spread the infection through the oocytes in their dung. Oocytes are very difficult to kill through disinfection and can live in a shed from year to year.

We know the primary course of two doses will turn a lot of you off the idea but we would encourage those of you who have had confirmed outbreaks of crypto in your sheds in the past couple of years to give one of the vets a call and discuss the benefits.



NorCal Vets

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