

## Happy Easter!

### Office Opening Hours for Easter 2025!

Good Friday 18th of April: 9am-12pm

Saturday 19th of April: Closed

Sunday 20th of April: Closed

Monday 21st of April Closed

There will be a vet on call for emergencies please call the office number should you require assistance.  
01844 260616

### Nematodirus (again!) and Coccidia in Lambs.

Another warning about the risk of nematodirus to young lambs in our area. We are currently in a very high risk peak time of hatching. At this time of year, the major parasites of concern for young lambs are nematodirus and coccidia.

Those most at risk for nematodirus:

- 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 wormer is 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 we've been recently having) this triggers a mass hatch. Couple this with lambs that are in the susceptible age bracket and huge problems will happen.

Coccidiosis is another thing to consider at the moment. Coccidiosis can result in profuse diarrhoea that can be dark or even blood stained, with straining and weight loss. If left untreated the disease can be fatal. Even if treated, severe disease may result in damage to the gut, which prevents the lamb from thriving. Older lambs can shed large numbers of oocysts into the environment even after they develop immunity and can be a significant source of contamination for younger lambs in the flock.

Treatment can be in-feed or more commonly by drenching with products containing either diclazuril (Vecoxan) or toltrazuril (Baycox/Tolracol). The timing of treatment is important, and lambs should be treated 1-2 weeks before expected disease. Lambs treated with diclazuril may require repeat treatment approximately 3 weeks after the first treatment as this drug has no residual activity.

### **Bluetongue Update**

Pre-movement testing exemptions have been introduced until 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025.

Until 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025, you do not need to test non-breeding animals over the age of 60 days before being moved out of the restricted zone. This temporary change reflects the current low risk of moving these animals out of the zone.

The only animals you currently need to test before movement are:

- entire males intended for breeding
- females who are pregnant or have unknown pregnancy status
- youngstock if they are aged 60 days or younger at the time of the movement, unless they are travelling at foot with the maternal dam – in this case, you can test the maternal dam by PCR and ELISA

You must still apply for a specific movement licence for moving animals out of the restricted zone.

This is a temporary change that will apply until 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025, although the exemption may end sooner if the risk of bluetongue virus transmission has increased.

### **Blue Tongue Vaccine**

If anyone is interested in the Blue Tongue Vaccine, please let us know as soon as possible as stock is in short supply.

Please call one of the vets to discuss further.

### **Campylobacter Abortions in Sheep**

Campylobacter abortions have been a common finding in lamb samples sent off recently.

Campylobacter is a bacteria and infection is oral either from faeces or from abortion products and fluids from other aborting ewes. Fomites such as people and birds are another potential means of spread. Birds can excrete the organism for long periods of time in their droppings.

Affected ewes themselves can excrete the bacteria in discharge for up to 7 weeks after abortion however can continue to carry it in their gallbladder and intestines meaning these carrier sheep can introduce it into a naive flock.

Reducing the stocking density and good hygiene practices when lambing indoors will help reduce the pathogen load.

Keeping feed troughs clean and turned over when not being used, isolating aborting ewes, removing abortion products, disinfection and reducing bird numbers in sheds will all help.

Lambing outdoors will obviously result in less infection pressure but consider using extra fields, moving feed troughs regularly and avoid strip grazing in an outbreak. These measures will help limit the amount of bacteria ingested.

Sampling aborted lambs can help guide vaccination/targeting measures to prevent further problems whether this year or next. Please also remember to collect placenta if available!

## Scours and Navel ill in Calves

We have had a number of bad outbreaks of scours requiring intravenous fluids and navel ill over the past couple of weeks.

As we all know the key to preventing these issues is a combination of excellent colostrum quality and quantity and hygiene.

Unfortunately a lot of silage analysis from feed made last year is coming back low in proteins which appears to be having a knock on effect on colostrum quality in the cows.

Please be careful and remember the big three Qs with colostrum: Quickly, Quality and Quantity.

- **Quickly:** Colostrum concentration decreases by 3.7% each subsequent hour post calving and the calves ability to efficiently absorb colostrum also reduces rapidly.
- **Quantity:** Calves should be fed at least 4L (or 10% of bodyweight) of good quality colostrum within 4hrs of birth. A further 2L should be given within 12hrs of birth.
- **Quality:** Measure colostrum quality using a colostrometer or a Brix refractometer. Only good quality colostrum (>50g/L of IgG) should be given to calves or stored. You cannot tell the quality just by looking at it.

If good quality colostrum is not available the next best thing is Immucol Platinum Calf Colostrum. We stock this at the practice along with the lamb version. Many studies have shown this colostrum has the highest levels of immunoglobulins available on the market at the moment. A calves first feed is the most important feed it will have in its life so it is worth making the investment.

Hygiene wise please be especially mindful this time of year. The bacterial pressure in [calving](#) pens need to be low. Calves as we know are born with no immunity, so there is a high risk of them picking something up in the period just after they have been born. Ideally, individual pens would be cleaned out and disinfected between each calving.

Common sense and simple measures is the best practice so if you get a case of a scouring calf act quickly. Consider buying a cheap pair of overalls/wellies to just be worn in those pens and have a footbath outside the pens, Wash your hands and use separate stomach tubes for sick and healthy calves! While time consuming this will limit the pathogens being brought from pen to pen in an outbreak.

## Twin Lamb Disease

Most of you are in the middle of lambing by now but for those of you who have just started or about to begin twin lamb is something to watch out for with us vets being called daily regarding cases.

Twin Lamb Disease is a severe form of ketosis that occurs in ewes in late pregnancy due to the high energy demand of the growing foetus/s through increased requirements from twins/triplets, poor quality/feed with not enough energy, stresses causing the ewe not to eat.

### Symptoms?

Early symptoms are inappetence/isolation which quickly progresses to dullness, neurological signs, collapse and death.

### Treatment?

Successful treatment is time dependent and affected ewes need to be treated aggressively quickly.

Ewes should always be treated with three products:

1. Propylene Glycol (Twin Lamb Drench) orally
2. Calcium SC (as ewes with twin lamb usually also have concurrent hypocalcaemia)
3. Emdocam (improves survival rates by up to 50% as twin lamb has an inflammatory process).

Treated ewes are more likely to have problems lambing including dystocia, dead/weak lambs or retained cleansing so prevention is key. Please give one of us a call if you have any concerns about your pre-lambing nutrition.

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](mailto:thame@norcalvets.co.uk)