

## Thame Sheep Fair

We will be at Thame Sheep Fair so pop over and say hello and have a drink!

More importantly many of you will be buying and we'd like to remind you all again about quarantining both for worms and disease!

Even visually healthy animals may be harbouring resistant worm strains which once introduced will cause massive problems to your grazing and flocks' performance in the future.

To avoid this:

1. Quarantine all incoming sheep for at least 3 weeks
2. Administer a quarantine worming treatment using a *combination* of wormers from different groups - gold standard would be to use both Zolvix and Startect at the same time while "silver" would be to combine either of these with a Moxidectin oral drench. The third "bronze" option is to go in with either Zolvix or Startect alone.
3. Keep sheep on hardstanding for 48 hours post treatment to allow any surviving eggs produced by worms before treatment to pass out in the faeces. If hardstanding ground is not available, the field they are put on should not be grazed afterwards by sheep and goats as we are assuming it now harbours resistant worm eggs.
4. Following these 48 hours turn sheep out onto pasture contaminated with your own flocks' worm eggs and larvae. This will minimise the impact of any worms that survive treatment and ensure any remaining eggs are diluted by your pre-existing worm population.
5. Finally worm egg count 14 days after treatment sampling at least 10 out of the mob and discuss the results with us.

While this may seem like a lot of cost and time, we are all too aware of the impact anthelmintic resistance is having on local flocks and following this plan will help reduce the risks. Besides worms bought in sheep can also bring in issues such as CODD or scab so come speak to one of us if you are concerned.

## Beef Benchmarking 2025!

Save the Date!

Our next farm walk is on Thursday 11th September 2025 from 3pm onwards!! We have sent out an email to all of you that have signed up to our Beef Benchmarking Club over the past few years. If you are interested and would like to be involved/attend this event, please contact the office or let one of the vets know.

### **Staff Update - Message from Evan**

I am pleased to announce that Rebecca is our new Clinical Director at NorCal. She's been a huge part of our growth so far and this new role reflects her leadership, clinical expertise and commitment to the team. Rebecca will now take the lead on clinical standards, mentoring and supporting our plans for future business growth, so that we can continue to provide an exceptional service and support to all our clients. Congratulations Becca!

### **Pica in Grazing Cattle**

In the past couple of weeks cattle have been increasingly noticed to be eating stones, wood fences and similar at grazing. This abnormal behaviour which can include chewing and licking at other material is called pica.

This can become an issue with certain objects having the potential to obviously damage the gut. The reasons behind the occurrence of pica are not completely clear. This abnormal appetite is generally associated with mineral deficiencies (sodium and phosphorus) and or lack of structural fibre. With current average grass neutral detergent fibre levels reported as adequate at the moment it is unlikely fibre is the issue.

With recent dry weather, it is possible that drought stress in crops is responsible for mineral deficiencies. Other possible causes are energy or protein imbalances, intestinal parasites or other mineral deficiencies. In some cases, the cause is unknown.

Blood testing/grass sampling may be worth considering if you notice this behaviour at grass and supplementing with licks or blocks may be beneficial. We can discuss this further if needed so please give one of the vets a call.

### **Reminder - Vaccination for Toxo and Enzo Pre-Tupping**

For ewes it is time to think about ordering vaccines early to prevent abortions especially as there have been so many supply issues with other vaccinations this year.

- Enzovax controls enzootic abortions - a 2ml injection at least 4 weeks before tupping.
- Toxovax controls toxoplasmosis - a 2ml injection at least 3 weeks before tupping.

Toxovax and Enzovax can be administered at the same time however they should be administered at different sites.

Together toxoplasmosis and enzootic abortion account for 70% of sheep abortions in the UK so an effective vaccination strategy is a very good investment compared to the cost of keeping an ewe all winter only then to abort.

Supply shouldn't be an issue this year but get your orders in early so we can ensure you have it on time. Remember Toxovax can take a few weeks to arrive!

### **Leptovoid H - no longer available**

MSD have announced due to ongoing manufacturing and supply issues with Bovilis Leptavoid-H, they have decided to discontinue its production. For those of you currently vaccinating with Leptavoid-H please contact one of the vets to discuss how best to keep your herd protected and options available.

### **Lungworm Risk Rises**

The recent break in the long dry spell has increased the risk of worms with worm larvae that were locked in dung pats now released onto pasture.

This is particularly the case with lungworm. Larvae that have been protected in the moist core of dung pats are rapidly released after rainfall and will infect grazing pasture.

Any unvaccinated youngstock on farms with a known lungworm population will now be at risk of disease. Regular monitoring is key, and any coughing should be investigated.

It is important to be mindful of adult cattle too particularly any new stock brought onto the farm or animals who may not have received sufficient exposure to lungworm.

It is possible that further dry spells will depress lungworm activity and if this is the case low exposure this season could reduce immunity in following years. This applies to adult cows as well as youngstock.

If an outbreak of lungworm does occur, fast action is necessary to reduce the impact on cow health and productivity. FECs are unfortunately not useful here and diagnosis is made on visible signs e.g. coughing after exercise and lethargy. If left untreated this can progress to secondary pneumonia which will require antibiotics and anti-inflammatories.

Please monitor your cattle for signs of lungworm and give us a call if needed.

### **From APHA...**

APHA have notified us that there are potential increased disease risks related to the hot and dry weather in conjunction with the period of prolonged hot weather impacting on forage levels and quality.

An APHA VIC and a partner postmortem provider have both recently diagnosed mortality due to Hemlock Water Dropwort poisoning. The tubers of this plant (known as dead man's fingers) can become exposed when the levels of watercourses drop, or when soil is disturbed or eroded. A shortage of grass can also lead to the ingestion of this and other toxic plants such as bracken fern and ragwort.

**PTO:**

The APHA surveillance network has also recently diagnosed cases of blackleg and other cases have been reported. Soil erosion and hot dry weather can both be risk factors for clostridial disease and for anthrax. Anthrax, blackleg, and plant poisonings should all be considered as differential diagnoses in acute onset illness and mortality cases in ruminants out at grass. It is advisable to check pasture for these risk factors and consider moving animals, fencing off high risk areas and vaccinating for clostridial disease.

### **Bluetongue Update:**

Two weeks ago, we had a confirmed clinical case of Bluetongue in a ewe in Buckinghamshire which unfortunately did not respond to treatment and died.

The restricted zone for bluetongue has been extended to cover all of England. You can now move animals within England without a specific bluetongue licence or pre-movement testing.

The Welsh government announced the introduction of Bluetongue approved red markets meaning as of Monday 14th July animals can be moved from the Restricted Zone in England to a Bluetongue approved red market in Wales, for direct onward movement to a designated slaughterhouse in Wales or one within the restricted zone.

A reminder of the clinical signs of BTV in sheep:

- crusting nasal discharge and swelling of face/nose/neck
- congestion/swelling of the tongue
- ulcers or sores in the mouth and nose
- salivation/drooling
- heat/swelling/tenderness at the coronary band (where the skin of leg meets the horn of the foot)
- inappetence and fever
- breathing problems
- abortions
- death

Please contact one of the vets to discuss vaccination and how best to protect your flock/herd. Cattle can become infected and affected however clinical signs are generally milder.

A reminder that Bluetongue is a notifiable disease and must be reported. Please call us if you have a suspected case.

Follow us on Instagram @norcalvets.

NorCal Vets



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