



# Larkmead Veterinary Group Farm Animal Newsletter

September 2006

## Congratulations to Claerwen

We are pleased to announce that Claerwen has passed the General Practitioners exam in Farm Animal Practice run by the European School of Postgraduate Studies. She will be awarded the General Practitioners Certificate in Farm Animal Practice.

Well done Claerwen!



## BLUETONGUE in Northern Europe

Bluetongue has very recently been reported in cattle and sheep in the Netherlands and Belgium, and the UK is now on high alert for cases. The disease is caused by a virus which is transmitted by the bite of an insect midge. It has never previously been seen as far north as this, but it is one of the diseases that was predicted to occur in Northern Europe with the warming of the climate. Bluetongue can affect all domestic and wild ruminants, and so it is possible for it to become established in a wildlife population, such as deer. It is a notifiable disease which represents a major economic threat.



The clinical signs reported from Belgium are mainly in adult cattle, which show a marked loss of body condition and drop in milk. There are usually skin lesions (swelling of the legs is common), with ulcers on the udder and teats. Often there is a photosensitisation-type reaction of the skin, which can become painful to the touch.

There are sometimes necrotic lesions on the muzzle and ulcers in the mouth, with a discharge (sometimes bloody) from the nose.

In general, sheep are more severely affected than cattle, although this has not so far been the experience in the Netherlands. The clinical signs are similar, but sheep may run a very high fever, and are usually stiff and reluctant to move, with arched back and head down. There is usually excess salivation and a muco-purulent nasal discharge. Not all sheep in a flock will show signs, but of those that do, up to 30% mortality may be expected.



## Web-site

We have re-designed our website, adding more pages on farm animal topics. This will be continually reviewed and updated, and we will put our newsletters onto the site each month. Go to [www.larkmead.co.uk](http://www.larkmead.co.uk) for a taster.

## Staff holidays

As many of you will know, Naomi, who is in charge of medicines in the farm animal office, injured her knee in a skiing accident last January. Ever since then she has been waiting for surgery, and in the fashion of the NHS, the appointment came through at one week's notice for an operation on 25th August. However, she will be off for some weeks, and this will unfortunately coincide with Lucy's holiday in early September. The effect of this will be that staff from other areas will need to help out at certain times, and these girls will not be as familiar with the farm system as the regulars. We would ask for your indulgence if they do not immediately recognise your name, or the names of the medicines you are ordering. Kirsty will still be here and Chris will try to be in the office as much as possible over the period, so hopefully you will not notice any difference.

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