

Vet's Viewpoint- Izzy



Firstly, Happy New Year everyone on behalf of all of the Larkmead farm vet team!

New year, new beginnings and a fresh start! As we roll into 2025, with spring just around the corner, lambing and spring calving will soon be upon us. Now is an important time to start thinking about pre-lambing and calving nutrition, pre-calving scour vaccines, colostrum management; ration planning amongst many other aspects.

One very important aspect to consider at this time of year is calf scours. Calf scours covers a wide range of infectious bacterial, parasitic and viral causes; as well as non-infectious nutritional scours. Calf scour can have a major impact on calf mortality, growth rates and ill-thrift for beef and dairy calves; and these can have detrimental impacts long-term. Some causes of scour we are able to diagnose on-farm with rainbow snap tests, others we may need to take further samples. Knowing the cause of an outbreak early is very important to improve calf survival rate and help us prevent future problems where possible.

Rotavirus is one of the most common causes of severe diarrhoea in young beef suckler calves. It is an important time of year to look back at the numbers of calves affected by scours and calf mortality from last year, as calf scour protection is provided through antibodies in the colostrum and milk of immunised pregnant heifers and cows. So now is the time to think about these vaccinations in the lead up to spring calving.

Setting calves up with a good start is so important for their survival, growth rates, future fertility and productivity. Proactively preventing and managing calf pneumonia and scours through a combination of vaccination, good dam nutrition, housing and colostrum management is the best way to improve calf health, reduce antibiotic usage and improve your calving block. These are all aspects we can help control, to give calves their best start to hit the ground running and skipping!

If you wish to discuss any pre - lambing or calving preparations; or if you want to make or renew your tailored annual herd health plan (HHP) please don't hesitate to contact the office to get this booked in. Now is a great time to get this in the diary, in order to go into the new year with a fresh plan and be able to implement changes before spring lambing or calving kicks off. We also have some workshops upcoming that may be of interest - scroll down for details.

I wish you all a very happy, healthy and prosperous year for 2025 (hopefully with less relentless rain...!) and look forward to seeing you all.

Sheep and Goats

- Body condition scoring ewes in mid-pregnancy (e.g. at scanning) is also important for planning ewe nutrition in late pregnancy well.
- Please contact us if you want a ration plan for your ewes, or if you want to "sense check" your planned ration with us.
- If your scanning results are disappointing, don't suffer in silence, tell us! In particular, don't cull out the barren ewes until we have had a chance to blood sample them- this can be very informative, and the lab testing is subsidised for flocks over a certain size.
- As many of you will be aware, there have been availability problems with clostridial vaccines (e.g. Heptavac P Plus, Ovivac P Plus, Bravoxin) for most of this year. This problem continues into 2025, so please let us know how many doses of Heptavac P Plus you are likely to want for pre-lambing boosters, and when you are likely to want them. We will then do our best to ensure that you receive what you require.



Bluetongue Awareness

We are still busy with the APHA Bluetongue Surveillance testing programme (cattle). Premises are picked at random by APHA. If you are selected, our office will give you a call to book in the visit with a vet. They will need to collect blood samples from a maximum of 35 cattle and go through the APHA questionnaire with you. We appreciate this may cause some inconvenience to you should you be selected, however surveillance testing is designed to ensure that disease control measures are proportionate whilst enabling businesses within the zone to continue operating as close to normally as possible. APHA's aim is to keep Great Britain disease-free and where disease is present, limit its spread – they and we cannot do this without your help and cooperation. If you are concerned, [please give us a call](#). Here's the latest info (as of 6/1/25):

- 188 confirmed cases in the UK.
- Please visit the APHA bit.ly/bluetongue-map for further info.
- A general license for the BTv-3 vaccination can be used for all counties in England. The license can be found here: bit.ly/Bluetongue-3-vaccine

There is useful species relevant sources of information available:
bit.ly/ruminanthw-Bluetongue
bit.ly/Bluetongue-AHDB

Reminder - Veterinary Attestations!

With the scheme running for a year now many veterinary attestations / VANs will be expiring over the next month. Please get in contact with the practice if yours will need an update. A VAN is required for livestock going to slaughter as their animal by-products may be exported to the EU. If you are farm assured by one of the bit.ly/GOV-qualifying-schemes then your membership number will suffice. If you have an AHWP Vet Review in place then this will also count. Give us a call if you have any questions.





Cattle

New calf scour vaccine:

Calf scour is an all-too-common condition; it's painful and potentially life-threatening for calves, and stressful and time-consuming for those who look after them. Vaccination to protect against E. Coli, bovine rotavirus and bovine coronavirus is a key component of scour prevention for many farms. These vaccines are given to cows in late pregnancy in order to stimulate the production of antibodies in the cow's colostrum, which then go on to protect the calf (provided the calf receives enough antibody rich colostrum quickly enough).

As part of our calf health strategy, we have reviewed the vaccine we prescribe for the prevention of calf scour and have decided to move from Bovigen Scour to Fencovis. How is Fencovis different to other scour vaccines?

Scour prevention: Uniquely, Fencovis is licensed to prevent calf diarrhoea caused by bovine rotavirus and E. coli K99, while reducing the incidence and severity of disease caused by bovine coronavirus. The effectiveness of the vaccine has been proven by extensive European studies and field trials.

Oil-free adjuvant: Adjuvants are used in killed vaccines to help stimulate a good immune response. The adjuvant in Fencovis is oil-free for optimal user-safety and reduced risk of injection site swelling.

Flexibility: Fencovis comes as a ready-to-use injection available in 1, 5 and 25 dose packs, so it's flexible to use, however many animals you need to vaccinate.

2ml dose: Fencovis is administered as a single 2 ml intramuscular dose.

What's unchanged?: Similar to other scour vaccines, Fencovis is administered between 3 and 12 weeks before calving, to provide immunity to calves via their dam's colostrum.

Calf scour control is often multi-factorial, vaccination can be a very important part of control but it is also vital to consider other risk factors, if you would like any further advice please do drop us a line.

Pigs

Over the last 30 years in practice, we have seen the use of in-feed medication decrease dramatically – in fact our in-feed storeroom is now redundant and used for other things. As a practice, client average use is now <10mg/kg PCU (with many well below that). Pressure continues and from the beginning of next month, Red Tractor standards are changing to include an additional requirement, if in exceptional circumstances any antibiotic is prescribed prophylactically. Please give us a call if you have any questions.

<p>AM.2.2</p> <p>Prophylactic administration of antibiotics is only permitted in exceptional circumstances (NEW)</p>	<p>PG.AM.2.2.a</p> <p>The rationale for prescribing a product for prophylaxis is clearly recorded by the vet</p> <p>PG.AM.2.2.b</p> <p>When an antibiotic is prescribed for administration to a group of animals for prophylaxis a management review is carried out by the vet to identify factors and implement measures for the purpose of eliminating the need for any future such administration</p>	<p>R</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rationale for prophylaxis (per prescription) Management review (group prophylaxis)
<p>GUIDANCE: Prophylactic administration or prophylaxis means the administration of a veterinary medicinal product to an animal or group of animals before clinical signs of disease in order to prevent the occurrence of disease or infection. Clinical signs of disease include visible outward signs of disease as well as sub-clinical disease detected through laboratory testing. Exceptional circumstances include where the risk of an infection or of an infectious disease is very high and where the consequences of not prescribing the product are likely to be severe. Group prophylaxis is when antibiotics are administered prophylactically via a group administration route such as in-feed, in-water, in milk/milk replacer or in liquid feed, to more than one animal at the same time.</p>		

Practical Calving

Tuesday 28th January 1100-1300
Larkmead Vets, Cholsey

All cattle farmers and stockpersons are invited to attend this practical workshop on the essentials of calving. We will cover:

The essentials for a good calving

Discussion on calving techniques and any problems that may arise

Basics of Birthing

Timings

When to call the vet

How to correct standard problems

£50 per person (50% discount for health club members), lunch provided. Please book your place with the office:

farm@larkmead.co.uk

Lambing Workshops

10th February or 10th March 1000-1300
Larkmead Vets, Cholsey

All sheep farmers and stockpersons are invited to attend this workshop on the essentials of lambing. We will cover:

Pre lambing preparation & complications

Discussion on lambing techniques and any problems that may arise

Basics of normal lambing

Timings

When to call the vet

How to correct standard problems

Post Lambing care of Ewe and Lambs

Common problems with the new born lamb

£50 per person (50% discount for health club members), lunch provided.

Please book your place with the office: farm@larkmead.co.uk



Medicine Updates

- Betamox RTU 100ml- Sporadic supply until 2025
- Cevac Chlamydia- Not due back this season
- Gletvax 20d- No date
- Heptavac 50ml- No date
- Heptavac 100ml- Sporadic supply
- Heptavac 250ml- 25th January
- Heptavac 500ml- No date
- Spotinor 250ml- Not due back this season
- Synulox 100ml Inj- End of 2025
- Gletvax 10 dose - limited availability

Please note that all bit.ly links are case sensitive