

## Vet's Viewpoint - JP



The stereotype among the general public is that farmers are always complaining about the weather. If truth be told, then so are farm vets (or at least I am).

When non-agricultural people of my acquaintance have been waxing lyrical about the "lovely warm weather", I put on the long face and explain that as a professional wearer of waterproofs, I don't like it much. When they have been saying how nice it is to have dry weather, I talk about my concerns about lack of grazing and lack of winter forage. With so many actual rays of sunshine around I feel no need to be a metaphorical one!

The changes in the weather that we are seeing are bringing new challenges. The general trend to warmer weather has made *Haemonchus contortus*, the barber's pole worm, much more of a problem in the UK, with outbreaks now reported as north as Scotland. The fly season is longer, and previously "tropical" diseases such as bluetongue are not as "exotic" as we might like! We seem to get years that have a wet season and a dry season, rather than the previous "3 fine days and a thunderstorm".

There is adaptation to all these changes going on apace within the livestock industry, from the greater use of more drought-resistant plants (like chicory and lucerne) providing green shoots even in the recent dry spell, to fans to cool dairy cows in sheds, from use of novel vaccines for novel problems, to capturing rainfall on the roofs of sheds as a water source. Clearly, the only thing that matches the farming capacity to complain about the weather is the capacity to cope with it!

## Sheep and Goats

- Vaccination remains the only practicable approach for most farmers to reduce the risk that bluetongue poses to their herd/flock. Please contact the practice to order your vaccine (due to the regulations that surround it, please provide your CPH number).
- This is also the time to vaccinate against the common causes of abortion. As the vaccines are live, it is important to time the arrival of the vaccine with when you want to vaccinate your female replacements. Let the office know now of how many doses of Toxovax and Cevac Chlamydia you will want and when!
- Monthly pooled worm egg counts are a great way to monitor worm burden in lambs. Please hand us 10 fresh faecal samples from each group of lambs (15 if the group is >150 lambs), and request a FWEC pooled by group. You might be surprised at who needs treating and who does not!
- We have seen haemonchosis outbreaks over the past 2-3 weeks. Having had warm weather and now some rain, conditions are right for the barber's pole worm. Remember that it can affect adult sheep as well as lambs, and it does not cause diarrhoea. Regular worm egg counting in lambs will detect it. Monitoring the colour of the inside of the lower eyelid of your adult sheep monthly through the summer (called FAMACHA scoring) and treating the pale animals has proven to be an effective tool for many farms. Speak to us about it.
- 10 weeks prior to tupping is the time to perform a "ram MOT": there is a great guide on how to do this here: [Ram MOT leaflet | AHDB](#) and a video here: [bit.ly/RAM-MOT](https://bit.ly/RAM-MOT). If you have rams that will be used as single sires, or you found a problem, please ask us for a full veterinary pre-breeding examination.
- Have you run out of grass? Speak to us about rationing your lambs!



## Beef Cattle

As we head through summer, now is the time to assess worm and fluke control strategies prior to the autumn. Blanket treatment of all cattle is increasingly discouraged due to rising resistance, particularly in *Ostertagia* and *Cooperia* species. Instead, using faecal egg counts (FECs) to guide targeted selective treatment helps preserve anthelmintic efficacy and keeps unnecessary costs down. Youngstock grazing high-risk pastures should be prioritised for monitoring, while low-risk groups (adult cattle) may not require treatment at all. 5-10 fresh individual faecal samples should be collected per management group. These should be submitted as individual samples and can then be pooled at the lab to allow for screening of each group. If you have concerns about gut worms (poor growth rate, signs of scour, etc) or lungworm (coughing at grass in mid to late summer) or fluke (weight loss / poor growth, scour or anaemia) then do get in contact and have a conversation with one of our vets. Warm and wet weather can cause mass emergence of larvae on to pastures, which can cause acute disease so it pays to be vigilant and carry out some monitoring.



## Upcoming Workshops

### Foot Trimming Workshop - First Aid for Feet

With BCVA Accredited Foot Health Trainer Adelle Jenkins and CHCSB Approved Instructor Paul Clayton.

Join us for this one-day workshop to:

- Understand the anatomy of a normal foot
- Identify the main signs and causes of lameness Identify the lameness lesion and learn to correctly use foot trimming equipment to assess a foot and apply a block to relieve weight bearing
- Understand when to refer to a vet or foot trimmer

**Thursday 25th September**, 0900 - 1700,

Larkmead Vets, Cholsey

£280 +VAT per person (limited spaces), lunch included

To reserve your space, please contact the office.

## Dairy Cattle- Breeding



Breeding choices are some of the most impactful decisions affecting farm profitability. Genetics is key to reaching your breeding goals to improve feed efficiency and yield. The big win is that by improving efficiency you will also help reduce your carbon footprint - If efficiency improves, profit improves and carbon reduces.

83% of the carbon footprint is from enteric methane and feed use. Feed is also one of the biggest costs on farm so there are really big wins from improving feed efficiency and yield. The AHDB has improved and updated its genetics website for farmers, making it much easier to use. This is a great resource of independent genetics information using your own herds data – helping you make decisions which will improve your herd.

Go to [bit.ly/AHDB-Dairy](https://bit.ly/AHDB-Dairy)

Log onto the new website and explore your own herd's genetics data, if you don't yet have an account all you need is an email address and an NMR or CIS number to create an account, and you will be able to access your farms genetic data, filter bulls and assess inbreeding as well as £PLI. If you need help then ask your vet or email [Dairy.Breeding.Evaluations@ahdb.org.uk](mailto:Dairy.Breeding.Evaluations@ahdb.org.uk)

## Gamebirds

With recent warm and wet weather, along with many gamebirds starting to arrive we have seen a spike in the number of hexamitiasis (*Spironucleus meleagridis*) infections. Hexamita aka Hexi, can cause large losses and widespread disease quickly, particularly in young, recently relocated or stressed birds, so prompt diagnosis and treatment is very important. The key signs to look out for are: profuse watery yellow – green diarrhoea, drooping wings, ruffled, lethargy, depression, dehydration, rapid weight drop, and increased number of deaths. The best thing to do if you notice any of these signs is to bring in a couple of sickly birds for fresh post-mortem. Hexamita is a protozoan gut parasite which particularly affected young turkeys, pheasants, partridges and quail, we use microscopy of fresh gut smears to detect the parasites.



Hexi is spread directly and indirectly by faecal ingestion, so cleanliness of equipment and clothing is really important, as well as providing plenty of fresh clean water each day to avoid contamination and to encourage water intake.

If you are worried about your birds at all, please give the office a call to discuss with one of the vets or to arrange to bring in birds for post-mortem.

## Pigs



There have been a couple of cases of concern at abattoirs in the past couple of weeks, where pigs have shown one of the possible clinical signs of ASF. Fortunately all were negated, but it does have an impact on the line. The picture below shows what the staff are looking for in the lairage.

As a reminder, clinical signs of African Swine Fever (ASF) to watch for are:

- Sudden deaths in apparently healthy pigs with little or no warning.
- High fever and pigs that suddenly lose their appetite.
- Weakness and reluctance to move – pigs may lie down more than usual
- Red to dark patches on ears, snout, belly, or legs.



- Diarrhoea or vomiting, sometimes with blood.
- Breathing difficulties and, in sows, sudden abortions.

👉 If you see any of these signs, report immediately to your vet / the DEFRA helpline 03000 200 301. Quick action is vital to stop ASF from spreading.

## Medicine Updates

- Alamylin LA 300- OOS
- Betamox RTU- OOS
- Draxxin 100ml- OOS
- Gletvax 10d/ 50ml- OOS
- Heptavac 50ml- Mid September
- Heptavac 250ml- Intermittent
- Lambivac 50ml- OOS
- Lincoject- OOS
- Noromectin Equine Paste- OOS
- Noropraz Equine Paste- OOS
- Ovivac 100ml- September
- Ovivac 500ml- OOS
- Solantel Cattle Pour On 2.5l - October
- Solental Oral Sheep 2.5l and 5l- September
- Spirovac 25d- OOS
- Tylan 200 inj- OOS
- Zactran 100ml- OOS

Please note that all bit.ly links are case sensitive

