



FARM NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2024

BLINK PAYMENT SYSTEM UPDATE

North Park are installing a new payment system. We will be able to send payment links, which will be coming from Blink, for invoices to your email and text messages. People are rightly increasing their awareness of security of these scams and items being sent by email and texts. Please let us know if this is your preferred method of payment.

We will also be able to take a regular payment from your bank or credit card. The details are securely stored on a portal compliant with PCI and GDPR.

BLUETONGUE VIRUS EXPLAINED

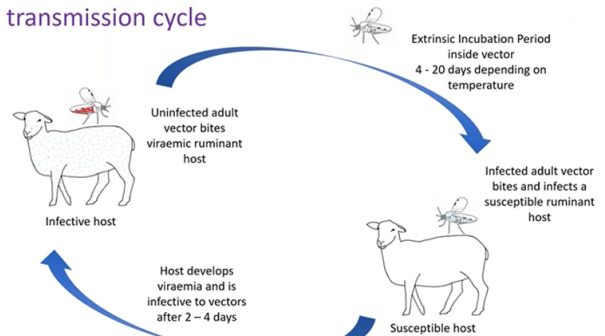
The Bluetongue Virus (BTV) is a non-contagious, vector-borne virus which means it does not spread directly from animal to animal but needs a vector (in this case a midge) to carry it over. BTV affects sheep, cattle, deer, goats and camelids in that order of severity. The main signs of BTV infection are ulcers and sores around mouth, nose and feet with drooling and lameness being most obvious.

Bluetongue is a **notifiable disease** so please ring us immediately if you have any concerns.

The virus has different serotypes, dependent on which proteins exist on the outside of the virus and some of these are genetically closely related. Vaccines are based on these serotypes and therefore some cross reaction can be possible. The previous outbreak in 2007 in the UK was caused by BTV-8, whereas the recent outbreak (2023) in the Netherlands was caused by BTV-3. Unfortunately, these serotypes are not closely related and therefore the previous vaccine will not protect against this strain.

Culicoides midges are the vectors for BTV and can also carry Schmallenberg virus (see previous newsletter). Midges exist in large numbers in mild temperatures and breed after a blood meal in damp organic matter such as soil, leaf litter and animal dung. After a blood meal, the BTV will need to incubate and replicate in the midge to be able to infect a sheep or cow on the next meal. This can take between 4-20 days and is temperature dependent. In lower temperatures, such

BTV transmission cycle



as we are in now, midge activity will be very low without active feeding. The virus is also not able to replicate inside the midge in these temperatures which means the risk of transmission is currently low. Currently in the UK BTV-3 has been found in the blood of 120 animals in Norfolk & Kent. A temporary control zone was in place in this area with movement restrictions and increased monitoring in place. This has now been removed since the low temperatures have decreased the risk of spread. Restrictions remain in place for high-risk animals such as positive pregnant females and entire males and animals waiting to be tested. The government gives regular updates regarding BTV which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bluetongue>

This means that currently there is NOT an outbreak of BTV in the UK such as was seen last summer and autumn abroad. The situation is being closely monitored by APHA and management is assessed daily. The clinical signs will be discussed in more detail in the next newsletter.



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Please continue to ensure to give us 24 hours notice for medicine dispenses were possible. All medication dispensed needs to be checked by a farm animal vet which are often busy on calls. Our management system had a recent update which will allow our vets to check this on the road but we all know that Devon signal can be patchy so this is not always possible.
- We continue to use separate phone lines for farm and small animal calls. Please listen to the options and select accordingly, including outside our office hours. We feel this is still providing a more efficient and streamlined service to both our farm and companion animal clients.

LUNGWORM (HUSK) IN CATTLE



Despite the very wet weather, spring has officially arrived, so you will (hopefully) soon be thinking about turning out your cattle. Have you thought about vaccinating for lungworm? Lungworm is caused by *Dictyocaulus viviparus*. Adult worms live in the lower parts of the lungs and produce eggs which are coughed up and swallowed by the cow. These eggs hatch as they pass through the gastrointestinal (GI) system and larvae will be deposited on the pasture. These larvae can be detected in faeces in the lab with a specialised method compared to GI worms. Clinical signs include increased breathing rate, coughing and poor weight gain. Signs are most commonly seen in the first grazing season and animals that are exposed usually develop immunity after it. Further exposure is important to maintain this immunity. A lack of exposure due to overtreatment, weather conditions (dry hot summers) or rearing in low risk areas (bought in animals), can result in clinical disease in older cattle. In adult dairy cows it can cause a 50% drop in milk yield, costing £3 per head/day.

Worms are susceptible to anthelmintic treatment used for gut worms; particularly Group 3. Overuse of these wormers will therefore prevent animals from developing immunity to lung worm during their first grazing season. By vaccinating animals before their first grazing season, they will be better protected going into the grazing season and clinical disease will be reduced. This also allows for you to implement a worming regime based on FEC testing of animals and only treating when counts indicate it is necessary. This can result in a dramatic reduction of worming of youngstock, saving time and money.

TUBERCULOSIS ORDER UPDATE

Important! FAM30 has (temporarily) lost its TB order license which means it cannot be used in regard to TB disinfection. A different licensed disinfectant will need to be used on your BT05 form after a TB breakdown for APHA to be able to lift your herd restrictions. There are several different licensed disinfectant, which are listed at http://disinfectants.defra.gov.uk/DisinfectantsExternal/Default.aspx?Module=ApprovalsList_SI For example, we are using Virophor instead.

SPRING IS COMING

This February has been one of the wettest on record, even by Devon standards. Conditions have been challenging, especially for those that are lambing. But the daffodils are emerging and with them spring and hopefully drier weather is on its way.



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