



FARM NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2025

LAMBING COURSE 2025 AND *NEW* CALVING COURSE

On **Monday 20th January 2025**, NPVG North Tawton will host our first **Calving Course**. Applicable to all levels, refreshments provided. The course is designed as a **guide to pre-calving**, discusses **common calving difficulties** and how to approach them, and **care of the newborn calf**. It is applicable to **beef and dairy** cattle.

Our NPVG Lambing course is scheduled for **Tuesday 4th February 2025**. This course has tips for **how to prepare** for the busiest time for flocks. We have **lambing simulation boxes** and a range of equipment to pick up tips to use. Our day courses are delivered by vets with special interests in the areas and practical activities will be encouraged so please bring wellies. Both courses will have up to date veterinary advice in the morning sessions with time for group discussion, and practical elements will be delivered in the afternoon. Booking is essential. Both courses are £60 for the first person per farm, with £30 per additional member of the farm team. Discounted places are available for Beef Suckler Herd Health Group and Smallholders Club members.



CASE OF THE MONTH: Yellow sheep

Our vets attended a small flock of sheep in early December as there was a **general ill thrift in the ewes and lambs**, and one had become very apparently unwell. On examination, the two-tooth had a body condition of 1.5/5, a normal rectal temperature, and **severe yellow colouring** around the eyes and gums. The vet suspected **parasitic disease**, likely having an impact on the whole flock to varying degrees. The owner had recently administered a 3-ML (clear) worming product, based on the time of year and weather conditions. No prior Worm Egg Count (WEC) had been conducted. Our vet took samples for **gut worms and liver fluke**, to determine if one or both parasites were the culprits in this case. The WEC showed nearly 2600epg, over 10 times the threshold for requiring treatment in this group. The fluke testing was also positive. The combined **worm-induced anaemia and fluke-damage to the liver** likely caused the unsettling gum colour. Appropriate treatments were recommended and there were thankfully no losses in the flock. **Testing BEFORE you treat** for parasites is important for many reasons, firstly so that you can know that the **treatment is required** and so is worth the time and money, secondly so that the **correct treatment** is chosen, thirdly so that you have a benchmark for comparison in case of a **treatment failure** (including cases of wormer resistance). We can report WEC results on the same day as receiving samples in most cases, our price includes a vet discussion about **which products are most suitable** if treatment is needed. We have started using some **fast-result snap tests for liver fluke**. This new test type can be done on farm and can detect fluke infection from as early as 3 weeks post-infection. It should be used on first grazing season lambs or calves to determine if and when fluke treatment is needed. Please call to speak to one of the farm team before making the decision to treat.



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DECIPHERING DRUGS- RED TRACTOR APPROVED MEDICINE COURSE

We have had recent interest in running the use of veterinary medicines course again. We are looking to set date(s) based on requirement. If you would like to be on the waiting list, please telephone the practice or email info@northparkvets.co.uk.

REMINDER: CHANGE TO FARM DISPENSING

As of 1st December, we are required to book all medication via named veterinarians for specific animals. When requesting medicines, please volunteer either a tag number for single animal treatments, or an identifying group name e.g. "Cow 1034 mastitis" or "xxxxx group intranasal vaccine". This dispensing style is new to us and will take some time to adjust to but is a requirement from the VMD and RCVS so please help us to operate smoothly.

NEOSPOROSIS; disease spread by dogs causing cattle abortions

Neospora caninum is a **microscopic parasite** that can infect many species and must go through two life stages to complete its cycle. Commonly, one stage involves cattle, the other involves dogs. Dogs become infected when they ingest contaminated material (**primarily tissue or fluids from cattle abortions**), or an infected bitch may **pass on the parasite to her puppies** in the womb. Many infected dogs do not show any symptoms; however some young dogs can develop various forms of **paralysis**, affecting quality of life. Dogs spread Neospora to cattle through **defecating on pasture or along feed spaces**, and so outbreaks can occur year-round. In cattle, the main clinical sign is **abortion or stillborn calves**, occasionally newborn calves have neurological signs. It is likely that any live heifer calves born of an infected dam will be **persistently infected**, being more likely to have abortions if breeding is attempted. Unlike many other infectious abortion agents, neosporosis rarely causes other clinical signs in the dam. Many cases of neosporosis in cattle are missed. The importance diagnosing presence in your herd is in knowing that each unsuccessful pregnancy is **potentially another infection source for farm dogs** to perpetuate the spread.

Diagnosis can be made via **blood test** of the dam at least 2 weeks after her abortion/ stillbirth, or through **detection** of the parasite in the foetal material. The same blood test can be used to screen heifers prior to breeding for exposure. Please discuss with one of our farm vets if you have family lines that have had **consecutive dead/ aborted calves or a reduced number of births than expected this year**. A management plan for the dogs and cattle should be in place if *Neospora caninum* is diagnosed on your farm. There is **no available vaccine and no reliable treatment for cattle**.



TELEPHONE ADVICE CHARGES FOR LONG OR COMPLICATED PHONECALLS

From 1st January 2025, our farm department will begin charging for telephone advice if the discussion is replacing a visit. The charge will be at the vet's discretion and will begin from £24.90 + VAT. This charge will not be applied in addition to any visits or further investigations that are scheduled. We are putting this charge in place as a result of the high volume of calls that are taking large amounts of vet time and having detrimental effects on other areas. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.



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