

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER

Brexit, Planning for the end of the Transition Period

As I write there is still a lot of uncertainty about exactly where we will be on 1st January 2021.

From a day-to-day perspective we are confident that access to medicines and equipment will not be affected. All of our suppliers have plans in place and a significant volume of stock to cope with any hold-up in movement of goods from the EU.

The biggest impact that we are seeing is going to be on exports, both of live animals and of products containing materials of animal origin, such as cheese, feed supplements and colostrum powders. Currently these products are exported to the EU on the basis of certificates signed by the manufacturer as the processes and safety measures are harmonised across the EU. When the transition period ends this will not be the case and each consignment will need to have its health status and manufacturing processes checked and certified by a vet.

We hope that there will be an agreement between the UK and EU so that this process does not have to happen, as it will cause significant disruption to the manufacturers, and that the current certification rules can continue. However, we are working with several local companies to make sure that everything is planned for and that the certification can be done with the minimum of disruption to their trade.

Live animal exports will also be affected, but as vets currently need to certify the movement of animals into the EU then our volume of this work is likely to be very similar. However, there will be more requirements for pre-export blood tests and isolation periods, especially for horses but also for farm animals.

Our biggest concern is the potential impact on animal welfare if there are huge queues at the channel crossings but we hope that these are minimised as much as possible.

If you are considering exporting any animals, or are involved in the manufacture and export of products containing animal ingredients then please contact us at the earliest opportunity and we can help with the planning to ensure that the process goes as smoothly as possible.

Itchy sheep



Although there are multiple reasons for sheep to itch, itchy sheep are most likely infested with the chewing louse *Bovicola ovis* or sheep scab (*Psorptes ovis*) or a combination of both.

Following infection with mites it can take several weeks for sheep to start to scratch and rub and this can allow time for the mites to spread between sheep.

Two methods of testing exist. Skin scrapes or a relatively new *Psoroptes Ovis* ELISA blood test.

In some cases it can be difficult to identify mites on skin scrapings and with some flock showing few clinical signs it can be very useful to utilise the ELISA blood test to detect antibodies in the blood from 2 weeks after infestation.

Biosecurity is an important part of sheep scab control. Herefordshire and the surrounding area has a high level of infection in sheep flocks. Sheep moved through markets can potentially pass the parasite from group to group if their fleeces come into contact. When purchased sheep are moved onto farm, as part of a comprehensive quarantine process we recommend that all sheep are isolated from your flock for at least 28 days, this gives the scab enough time to show itself in the group and for treatment to be undertaken before it's too late.

Two treatments for mites are available in the UK, injectable macrocyclic lactones and diazinon organophosphates (OP) dips. It is important to remember that resistance in mites in the UK to injectable treatments has been identified and is possibly increasing.

HEREFORD: 01432 351471 • BROMYARD: 01885 488440 • LEDBURY: 01531 806129

Clinical Vets: Dominic Alexander · Will Allman · Mike Bellamy · Andrew Cooke · Joel Galloway · Nick Gibbon · James Hipperson · Louise Lafin · Hannah Mitchell · Matthew Pugh · Caroline Rank · Harry Walby · Charlotte Watkins

TB Testers: Jacek (Jack) Andrychiewicz · Petre Balanescu · Ovidiu Mircea-Oltean · Tudor Patcas · Diego Sainz Garcia · Javier Sisamon

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Prior Preparation Prevents Poor Performance!

Health plans are often wrongly viewed as a tick box exercise to meet farm assurance requirements. In actual fact, they can be a hugely valuable tool in steering your business! You wouldn't buy a new car without knowing it's miles per gallon and looking at the log book so why should driving your business be any different.

Looking retrospectively on the year and collating the data can give us vital information on trends and therefore what changes would be worthwhile. The more accurate the information, the better the conclusion we can gain and hence the best advice we can give. It's often not that nice to remember the deaths or things that have not gone so well, but it is only with acknowledging these that we can move forward and try and prevent them happening in the future. It's best to collect all of your farm data as you go along, so whether it is the farm diary, a computer programme or even some chalk on a blackboard in the shed; making a note of all losses and disease as you go can mean that you have invaluable figures to look back on. It doesn't pay to be an emu and bury your head in the sand – so let us help you move forwards instead!

Our Belmont health plans are designed to maximise discussion of your business and limit the "tick box" monotony that sometimes accompanies these processes. However, there are a few basic rules to help you get the most out of the process:

1. Book your health plan in sufficient time to allow the office girls to organise your antibiotic review and also send you the production data sheets to fill out.
2. Fill out your farm production data prior to the vets arrival and send back to the office for the vet to assess prior to the visit.
3. Be open minded and ready to discuss your figures come health plan day!

Through filling out and sending back your data prior to the booked visit, we can help you get the most benefit for your money and prevents time spent scrabbling around the farm office instead of focusing on the future!

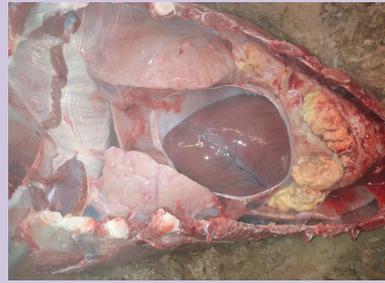
We look forward to seeing you soon!

Out of hours

A reminder that if there is ever any difficulty in reaching the vet on call out of hours, we have a permanent answering service, Phoneta, who will take your call and then go on to contact the relevant vet. They can be reached on 01432 381440.

Post mortems

Post mortems are an invaluable tool in diagnosing problems within your herd or flock. Any unexplained death, multiple deaths or chronic problems not responding as expected should be investigated.



Post mortems open up testing options which would be impossible with the live animal and allow for definitive diagnoses.

We can perform PMs on farm or in the surgery (sheep/goats/calves). For

larger cattle, a telescopic handler is required to help hold the animal in place. PMs usually take 20 – 40 minutes and require a clean area which is easy to clean up afterwards, away from other stock or feed areas. The fresher the carcase, the better as changes that occur post death can affect the chances of getting a diagnosis.

If you require a post mortem, please call as early as possible, including weekends.

Three Counties Farming Awards



Sadly, due to COVID 19, the Three Counties Farming Awards were not able to take place as planned this year, instead they were held via a live Facebook stream on Thursday 26th of November.

As a practice we were proud to sponsor both the cattle farmer of the year and sheep farmer of the year categories.

Hopefully next year we will get back to celebrating in style and Nick may treat us and break out his tux again.

A special congratulations to those familiar faces who received nominations or rewards, they were very well deserved!

Welcome to the Team

This Month we introduce our newest addition to the team, Joel Galloway. Joel hales from Newcastle, he studied at RVC London alongside Hannah and Harry. After graduating he spent 3 years working in Devon before heading to New Zealand for a calving season.

Joel is a through and through farm vet and will lend his hand to anything but has a soft spot for dairy. If you see him out and about or in the office please give him a warm welcome!

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