

Professional Veterinary Services for all Livestock Species

CVP Large Animal News

Blue Tongue Outbreak

There is currently an on-going outbreak of Blue Tongue (BTV-8) in France. The risks of spreading to the UK appear to be increasing. Blue Tongue is a virus that is spread by infected midges biting cattle and sheep.

It is a notifiable disease which means any suspected cases or symptoms should be reported either to ourselves or APHA.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bluetongue#how-to-spot-bluetongue>

In the past vaccines have been available to protect your stock against Bluetongue. Currently there are no vaccines available but the pharmaceutical companies are being asked to go back into production.

How quickly they can make sufficient stocks is unknown, so it may be a case of first come first served.

How to spot bluetongue

In sheep

In sheep the main signs of bluetongue are:

- ulcers in the mouth
- discharge of mucus and drooling from the mouth and nose
- swelling of the mouth, head and neck
- swelling of the coronary band (where the skin of the leg meets the horn of the foot)

In cattle

Cattle are the main carriers of bluetongue. Infected cattle generally do not show any signs of the disease, but occasionally signs can include:

- swelling and ulcers in the mouth
- nasal discharge
- red skin and eyes as a result of blood collecting beneath the surface
- swollen teats
- tiredness

Priscilla leaving

It is with sadness that Priscilla Denissen is heading back across the Channel to practice in Belgium. Priscilla joined us in December 2014 and has been an integral part of the Long Stratton team doing both small and farm animal work. It is very rare that you do not see Priscilla with a smile on her face, even when working with Steve and this will be sorely missed.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish her all the best for the future and hope that she will keep in touch.



Do your ewes and lambs need worming? Which wormer should you use?

Hopefully the grass has started to grow with the warmer weather and your ewes and lambs are growing well. It is important that any growth is not checked by an increased worm burden, however blanket treatment of all stock with wormers can be unnecessary, increasing your costs and increasing the risks of causing resistant species of worms.



Certainly, worming lambs through their first grazing season is probably required but worming all the ewes at the same time can lead to resistant worms forming due to the possibility of wiping out all susceptible worms.

Detailed information of worming regimes and can be found at www.scops.org.uk (Sustainable control of parasites in sheep).

To reduce resistance to the wormers you use, not worming a proportion of your ewes allows susceptible worms to remain in the population. Fit ewes, (probably those with singles and some twins) are the ones that you should be leaving.

Faecal egg counts are an important tool in determining the worm burden present in your sheep. Collecting fresh faeces from a group of lambs and from a group of ewes can also highlight the need of which animals need worming. Also do a faecal egg count a specified time after you have wormed your sheep (dependent on which class of wormer you have used) will also give an indication of any resistance issues that may be present.

Other important things to consider are calibrating your drenching guns, making sure any left over wormer is still fit to use, and knowing the weight of the animals you are worming (always dose for the heaviest animal).

Worming protocols can be incorporated into a flock health plan, which will cover all aspects of flock health, including lameness, lambing losses and lamb mortality, vaccination programs and other infectious diseases.

Having a flock health plan would benefit your flock, so call the surgery to discuss with Steve setting a plan up.



Faecal egg counts are carried out at the surgery. You can drop in fresh faeces samples to any of the Chapelfield branches. Samples cost £10 (inc vat) with a **free post-worming check if wormers are purchased from the surgery**. Smaller doses of wormer can be purchased for small groups of lambs or ewes.

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