

# Newsletter

## Spring 2023



Spring is in the air and after a very dry January and February, the grass might even be starting to grow. We are busy with pre movement testing before the store sales, as well as responding to more urgent matters of prolapses and obstetrical matters as the lambing and calving season kicks in!

You will be aware that direct payments are declining, and the Government is looking to support healthier animals and higher welfare and productivity in partnership with farmers, vets and the wider industry. Part of this support is via the APHA Animal Health and Welfare Pathway which has finally opened in February to all farmers who are eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).

The Pathway is a long-term project aiming to support continual improvement in health and welfare of all livestock through quality veterinary advice, capital grants, disease eradication programs and production incentives.

Starting this month, all dairy, beef, sheep and pig farmers can have a fully funded, annual farm visit "The Vet Visit" from their own vet, as long as the farm is eligible for BPS and have more than 10 beef or dairy cattle, 20 sheep or 50 pigs, and as part of this review there is the opportunity to discuss the most appropriate investments in terms of grants for capital investments to support the delivery of these health and welfare priorities.



## Dates for your diary



**Mastering Medicines Course**  
- Date TBC



**Faecal Worm Egg Counting Training Course**  
- Date TBC



**Small Holders Talk**  
- Date TBC

Please call or email the office with any interest to our forthcoming events.

T: 01273 473232  
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We currently conduct health reviews for dairy, beef and sheep farmers as a regular annual review, when milk processor or Red Tractor audits require them, or as part of your Flock or Suckler Club membership. This process has been heavily subsidised by Cliffe Farm Vets up until now in order to engage with as many farms as possible. With the annual funding now available to subsidise this process from government, we anticipate that we will be able to continue to conduct the same annual review process, ensuring it is Red Tractor/audit compliant, and also complete the mandatory testing for BVD (beef and dairy) and drench tests (sheep) as part of the scheme. You will be able to claim the following from DEFRA on receipt of the review, summary report, and test results, to offset some or all of the vet and testing costs.

**Dairy: £372**  
**Beef: £522**  
**Sheep: £436**  
**Pigs: £684**

Currently you can only apply for **ONE** species per farm, but this will be extended in the coming months to allow a claim per species enterprise per year.

From your application being accepted, we have six months to complete the necessary review and testing- NB. Sheep farms are obliged to do drench testing as part of the scheme, and this is best performed on lambs in late summer/ early autumn so please do not register too early!

Please go to **Annual health and welfare review of livestock** ([defra.gov.uk](https://defra.gov.uk)) to register and you will receive an email in due course inviting you to apply.





## Quarterly Disease Report September to December 2022

### Cattle

Lymphoma was the cause of death in a 10-year-old suckler cow who had been losing condition since calving in the Spring. The animal was euthanised and submitted for post-mortem examination. Multiple tumours were present in the liver, kidneys, lymph nodes, spleen, lung and heart. Further sampling identified this as Lymphoma which is a tumour of lymphocytes (white blood cells). In this case the APHA were notified and investigations carried out to exclude Enzootic Bovine Leukosis as a potential cause and is a statutory requirement in animals >2 years of age where tumours are identified.

A 2-year-old Aberdeen Angus X fattening heifer was submitted for post-mortem examination after being found dead surrounded by a pool of blood. On examination right ventricular wall of the heart was enlarged with multiple coalescing lung haemorrhages and blood clots present within the bronchioles. A large abscess was present in the vena cava returning blood to the heart with a second smaller abscess within the liver (green circle). These abscesses erode blood vessels and lead to pulmonary haemorrhage.



Depending on the size of the blood vessel affected this can sometimes lead to a fatal haemorrhage. The cause of the abscess was unknown. They are often caused by ruminal acidosis but the animal had been on a forage-based diet since arrival. A septic focus from a previous undetected navel-ill or from a previous injection site are other potential causes.

### Sheep

Orf with severe secondary bacterial infection was the cause of superficial dermatitis affecting the lips and nose in a Dutch Spotted ram. The lesions developed shortly after removal from the ewes and Orf viral infection was confirmed with further testing. Ewes in the group tupped by this ram were also starting to show symptoms. This group and another group of ewes which were due to be housed together for lambing time were vaccinated using Scabivax Forte to minimise the effects of the virus at lambing time.



Several flocks were confirmed as having trace element deficiencies during the autumn with poor lamb growth the main clinical sign. Animals were also found to have significant worm burdens which were poorly responsive to worming but for which resistance was not detected.

## Legal position on once a day feeding of young calves.

Last month APHA issued a statement that clarified the current legal position and the reasons behind it.

The practice of once-a-day feeding is driven in part by an increase in the price of milk replacer powder as well as a reduced availability of labour on some farms. There is a legal requirement that all calves must (not should) be fed at least twice daily according to the UK Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations.

Defra's Welfare Code for calves states that 'all calves should receive liquid food every day during the first four weeks of life and, in any case, until they are eating enough solid food'. In practice, calves do not eat a sufficient amount of solid food in the first four weeks of life to constitute a feed, so calves should be fed twice a day with liquid food to satisfy their nutritional needs.

Due to the time required for rumen development after birth to enable both digestion and absorption of nutrients from solid feed, even if calves did eat sufficient quantity of solid feed, they would be unable to process it until they are a minimum of 3-4 weeks old.

When suckling from their mothers, young calves will on average drink 5 times a day.

Unfortunately, some milk replacer products still have a once a day feeding claim in their promotional material without clarification as to it not being suitable for baby calves.

Any farmer found to be non-compliant with the rules on feeding calves is at risk of enforcement action and penalties, ranging from single farm payment deductions to potential prosecutions.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any queries on the above animal welfare issue.



## |Twin Lamb Disease

Lambing is fast approaching and now is the time that you might start to see twin lamb disease in your ewes. Disease occurs at the end of pregnancy when the ewe struggles to eat enough to supply the fast growing lamb.

Twin lamb disease is seen as a ewe going off her feed, staggering or going down. In severe cases it can cause blindness and even death. Treatment in the first instance can be given on farm with propylene glycol as an energy dense drench to correct the negative energy balance.

Milk fever is hard to distinguish from twin lamb and so it is a good idea to give calcium under the skin at the same time. Giving an anti-inflammatory like Metacam has been proven to improve survival rates of both the ewe and the lamb! Severe or non-responsive cases should be taken to the vet.

The group most at risk are older ewes that are either over condition or in poor condition and on lower energy feed. We can blood sample a group of 6 ewes to assess energy balance as well as calcium and magnesium. This can give an early signal that a ration needs to be adjusted. We take blood samples in the last 3 or 4 weeks before lambing as this is the time that the lamb is growing the most and so the ewe is working the hardest. We can then give advice to help reduce twin lamb and milk fever in your ewes.

## |Neospora in Cattle

*Neospora caninum* is a protozoal parasite of cattle, sheep and goats and is closely related to *Toxoplasma gondii* in sheep. The dog (not the fox) is the natural definitive host. Dogs then shed oocysts into the environment in their faeces. These oocysts are then ingested by the intermediate host, for example, cattle. Infected meat from cattle is then ingested by the dog and the life cycle is complete. However, there is also vertical transmission whereby the infected pregnant cow can transmit the parasite to its unborn calf. This calf will be born and remain *Neospora* positive and when this infected calf becomes pregnant itself, this awakens the parasite and causes multiplication and spread of the parasite to the placenta and foetus.

### Neospora infection in cattle can cause:

- Abortion of the foetus between 3-9months of gestation
- Premature birth/ still births
- Full term calf born with neurological problems
- Clinically normal but infected calf.
- Clinically normal and uninfected calf.

Unfortunately, there is no vaccine or treatment to prevent infection or abortion.

### What can you do to limit Neospora coming into your herd?:

- Keep dogs away from calving areas and feed stores
- Minimise dog faeces on grazing fields and near feed stores.
- Educate the public if footpaths go through your land.
- Test prior to buying in new stock

### What options are there to monitor/ control Neospora infection within your herd?:

- Blood test breeding cows pre-breeding annually (whole herd screening)
- Investigate abortions - blood test aborted cows and sample the aborted foetus and placenta.
- Never keep calves from neospora positive cows for breeding.
- Cull all neospora positives cows over time

The best option for monitoring and controlling *Neospora* will be farm specific so please speak with your vet to discuss the most appropriate testing protocols for your farm.

## |Registered TB Advisors

Did you know that your vet is available to offer **FREE** advice regarding TB Biosecurity. We have six TBAS trained veterinary advisors at Cliffe who can attend your farm to discuss all aspects of TB risk. We focus on purchasing decisions, biosecurity, cattle-to-cattle risks, wildlife risks, feed management, slurry management, and business resilience.

It is fully funded by DEFRA, and we aim to spend an afternoon walking the farm and identifying practical achievable changes for you to implement on farm to reduce your risks of acquiring TB in the herd. So, your own vet, on your farm for 3+ hours and ZERO cost to you- what is not to like??!

**PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE  
TO BOOK YOUR VISIT!**



T: 01273 473232 E: [farmenquiries@cliffevets.co.uk](mailto:farmenquiries@cliffevets.co.uk)

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