

## MAY/JUNE 2024 NEWSLETTER

### New veterinary medicine regulations (VMR) May 2024

The royal college of veterinary surgeons (RCVS) have implemented new regulations and guidelines that came into effect on May 17<sup>th</sup>. These will have an effect on what and when we are able to prescribe certain medications.

- The key measures introduced include:
  - o Antibiotics may not be “used routinely”
  - o Antibiotics may not be “used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry or poor farm management practices”
  - o Vets **may not** prescribe a veterinary medicinal product which is an antibiotic for **prophylactic** (administration of a medicinal product to an animal or group of animals BEFORE clinical signs of disease in order to prevent the disease/infection) purposes
    - Antibiotics may only be prescribed for prophylactic purposes “in exceptional circumstances where the risk of an infection is very high and where the consequences of not prescribing the product are likely to be severe”
- In general our clients are good at maintaining low antibiotic usage on farm and only using it when necessary/indicated – therefore we don’t expect this to affect our dispensing but you should still be aware of this change.
- At this stage we do not expect the changes to VMR to change what medications you are currently receiving/collecting. We will update you further if this changes.

### Medicine hub

The medicine hub has been set up by AHDB (Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board) to provide a secure location to collect, report and compare your antibiotic use at an individual farm level. It’s main aim is to tackle antimicrobial resistance and allow AHDB to promote the reputation of our industry to the public and that we are using antibiotics responsibly.

For those of you who are part of the Red Tractor farm assurance scheme, there is a new recommendation for your “Annual Antibiotic Collation” to be uploaded to the medicine hub.

To get started you will need

- CPH number and herd/flock numbers
- If entering data for cattle you will need your CTS web service user ID and password
- Details of medicines used during the year
- Animal population

One particular value that can be generated through the medicine hub and is a useful measurement for your farm is Antibiotic mg/kg PCU (population correction units). This is a measurement of how much antibiotic is being used across all your animals.

- Rough benchmarks to aim for
  - o < 10mg/kg Good
  - o < 5mg/kg Very Good
  - o < 2mg/kg Great

Once you are registered you will need to assign us as your vet through “third party permissions” and then “add vet practice permission”. Once we are assigned as your vet, we can upload your purchased medicines directly into medicine hub with our new VetImpress system. To find out more and how to progress with linking your data please contact Jonathan at the practice.

## Sheep scab

Caused by the mite *Psoroptes Ovis* – it is a legal requirement in England to treat infected animals and all others in the flock.

Most cases are seen from September to April when animals have their full fleece, however they can still be seen over summer. **Clinical signs** include itching, wool loss and in more serious, chronic cases loss of body condition.

**Diagnosis** can be done through either skin scrapes + microscopic examination and blood sampling or preferably through a combination of the two.

- We can arrange a visit to take samples of the lesions with a scalpel blade, normally at the same time we will take a blood sample to check for an antibody reaction. Sheep can test positive from 2 weeks after becoming infected to roughly 3-4 months after the initial infection.

**Treatment** is limited to two types – plunge dipping with the organophosphate Diazinon (Osmonds Gold Fleece Sheep Dip and Paracide 62) or injecting with one of the macrocyclic lactones (moxidectin, doramectin or ivermectin – Cydectin, Dectomax, Ivomec)

- Dips are only effective against sheep scab when applied by correctly plunge dipping – they kill the scab mites within 24 hours and have residual action for several weeks.
- If using macrocyclic lactones the correct dosing procedure must be followed – reinfection from untreated animals is possible depending on how many animals are initially treated and if they are allowed to mix with untreated animals.

**Prevention** is key with controlling scab – good biosecurity, effective quarantine and treatment for incoming animals are all essential.

- You should assume all incoming sheep are carriers, regardless of assurances of disease freedom or prior treatment from vendors. Even sheep from scab free flocks can be infected at markets, in transport or from contaminated clothing and equipment
- Incoming sheep must be effectively quarantined for at least 3 weeks, the best option to avoid unnecessary scab treatment is to test animals in the group for exposure – it is only reliable when samples are collected two weeks after quarantine started.
- Shearing can stop the progress of sheep scab either temporarily or permanently – by removing the microclimate, leaving the mites exposed to dehydration. **However** the mites can spread from animal to animal on shearing equipment and clothing