

All the latest news and advice from our expert team

# Farm news

March 2026



## Medicine Matters Part 1: Obtainability Obstacles Carolyn Baguley MRCVS



As many of you will be painfully aware, the last few months have been particularly trying in terms of medicine supply and availability. We've done our best to supply alternatives wherever possible, but even that has meant we've had a bewildering succession of product names, brand names, and data sheets in different languages where we've had to import the equivalent of a UK-licensed medicine.

Things seem to have eased a little in the last few weeks, but I wanted to say thank you to all our clients who have been patient and understanding with us, and who have allowed us to work with you to find solutions despite the frustrations!

I asked Andy Hardie, IVC's Head of Commercial – Farm and Equine, to explain the background to the issues in a little more detail so that we could help our clients understand what's happening and why. I thought his answer was a good one, and explained the situation well, so I've included it in this month's newsletter.

## Veterinary Medicine Supply: Update for farmers Andy Hardie, IVC Head of Commercial – Farm and Equine



Supply issues affecting injectable antibiotics, vaccines and other essential livestock treatments have become one of the most frustrating challenges all farm vets are facing. We wanted to explain what's behind these shortages and how we can help protect your animals and your business.

### Why are some medicines harder to get?

This isn't a local problem – it's affecting farm vets right across the UK and beyond. A combination of factors has come together to create supply pressures on some of the medicines we all rely on:

- Very few manufacturers – for some key ingredients, there are only a handful of factories in the world. When one has a problem, there simply isn't the capacity elsewhere to pick up the slack. 95% of the amoxicillin raw ingredient comes from three factories in China!
- Tighter manufacturing standards – since Covid-19, regulators have raised the bar on how veterinary medicines are manufactured to bring them in line with human standards. This is a good thing for quality, but some facilities have had to pause production to make improvements.

- Global supply chains – many of the raw materials for common antibiotics come from overseas. Disruptions anywhere in that chain can have knock-on effects here in the UK.
- Complex vaccine production – vaccines like clostridial products involve multiple bacterial strains. If just one strain fails quality checks, the entire batch can be lost.

### The good news

The situation is improving on several fronts. Some injectable antibiotic products that have been unavailable are now returning to the market, and supply of the Scabigard® Orf vaccine is expected back this week. New clostridial vaccine products are also in development, which should help ease pressure in the longer term. We are working hard behind the scenes to forecast demand and secure stock ahead of busy periods.

### What you can do

Some simple steps can make a real difference:

- Plan ahead and order early: Talk to your vet now about what vaccines and treatments you'll need for the coming season. The earlier we know what you need, the better placed we are to secure it.
- Be open to alternatives: If your usual product isn't available, your vet may be able to prescribe a suitable alternative that does the same job.
- Talk to your vet: Your vet practice is your best source of up-to-date information on what's available. If you're planning vaccinations, treatments or ordering for the season ahead, give us as much notice as possible. It genuinely helps.

**We know these shortages are frustrating, and we're doing everything we can to keep the medicines you need available. The supply picture is improving, but planning really does make a difference – for your animals, your business, and us!**



ScarsdaleVets FARM VETS

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## Medicine Matters Part 2: Bluetongue

### Boosters

Carolyn Baguley MRCVS

Bluetongue-3 caused problems last year, and we expect it to do the same again this year. Derbyshire came third in England, behind Cornwall and Devon, for the highest number of cases in 2025. A number of our unvaccinated herds saw severe effects of BTV-3 on both male and female ruminant fertility, health and, in dairy herds, milk production.

Pharmaceutical companies worked hard to quickly develop safe and effective vaccines, and many of our clients vaccinated last year to good effect.

Protective immunity develops approximately three weeks post-vaccination. To ensure optimal protection, animals should ideally be fully vaccinated by early May, or at least three weeks before the onset of the anticipated risk period (typically early June).

As we get closer to the start of the midge season, one of the questions on our minds is the duration of vaccine immunity. If you vaccinated last year, when should you give a booster?

Having had no great answer to this so far, it's starting to become clearer that manufacturers anticipate that a full vaccination course will provide approximately 12 months' duration of protection, although this is not yet formally stated on product datasheets.

**At the time of writing, we would therefore recommend a single booster in May for both cattle herds and sheep flocks that vaccinated last year.**

**We would recommend a full primary vaccination course for herds and flocks that did not vaccinate last year.**

If you need to vaccinate a little earlier than May for ease of management, in order to fit in vaccination before turnout, then absolutely do that.

At present, no significant supply constraints are expected, with manufacturers planning production to meet expected demand. As always, please do speak to one of our vets for more details if you need them or would like to discuss this further.



**BLUE TONGUE**

**ASSESS**  
YOUR RISK  
**PROTECT**  
YOUR BUSINESS  
**DEFEND**  
YOUR STOCK

## FlockCheck 2026: Reminder



MSD Animal Health, the makers of Toxovax and Enzovax, are running their FlockCheck scheme again this year, which will run from now until June. It is designed for flocks with 100 or more breeding ewes, but if you're interested in accessing the funding and your flock is smaller than that, please speak to us.

Blood samples are taken from 6-8 barren or aborted ewes and tested for antibodies against Chlamydia abortus (EAE) and Toxoplasma gondii, two of the most common causes of abortion in ewes. MSD will pay the lab fees for these samples.

The testing is designed for ewes that were scanned in lamb and then never lambed, or ones that were known to abort (the antibodies start to wane after 3 months and so there's a risk of false negatives if ewes that never got in lamb are tested). It's not suitable for ewes that have been vaccinated against these two diseases.

If you've had early/mid pregnancy losses or later abortions in your flock and would like to access the funding, please speak to one of our vets.



**SAVE THE DATE**

**THURSDAY 26TH MARCH, EVENING**

Join us on Thursday 26th March for our Client Information Evening.  
Food provided and all welcome.

Discover the latest non-antibiotic products currently being reviewed and recommended by our veterinary team, with insights from our expert guest speakers. Full venue and timing details will be shared on our Facebook page and through our reception and veterinary teams.

If you'd like all the information sent directly to you, call our reception team today on 01332 294929.

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