



# WENSUM VALLEY VETS NEWSLETTER



## Christmas Opening Hours

Outside of these hours we will of course be offering our normal emergency service on 07850 230803

Monday 23rd December -  
8.15am-5.00pm

Tuesday 24th December -  
8.15am-5.00pm

Wednesday 25th December -  
**Emergency Only**

Thursday 26th December -  
**Emergency Only**

Friday 27th December -  
8.15am-5.00pm

Saturday 28th December -  
**Emergency Only**

Sunday 29th December -  
**Emergency Only**

Monday 30th December -  
8.15am-5.00pm

Tuesday 31st December -  
8.15am-5.00pm

Wednesday 1st January 2025 -  
**Emergency Only**



## Clostridial Vaccines

With many sheep in the East of England grazing 'cover crop' at this time of year, the risk of fatal clostridial diseases is increased by ingesting more soil with this feed type. Lambing time is also a risk period for clostridial disease, contributing to losses of adults and lambs, so vaccination of pregnancy ewes is recommended 4-6 weeks prior to lambing to boost immunity and provide some cover to new born lambs.

This article focuses on sheep, however it is worth considering these vaccines on dairy and beef farms, as clostridial diseases also affect cattle and their offspring.



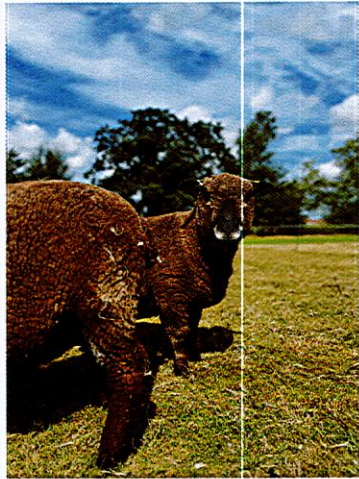


## What are Clostridial Diseases?

Clostridia are anaerobic bacteria that are present in the soil. They release spores which can be easily ingested by livestock, and then reactivate in the target organs of the animal where they produce toxins leading to a range of diseases depending on the affected organ. Although not contagious (direct transmission from an infected animal to a non-infected animal cannot occur), they are highly infectious (there is high potential to cause disease in that animal once it has been infected). Clostridial diseases include; tetanus, botulism, pulpy kidney, black leg, big head, enterotoxaemia types C & D and many more.

## Why vaccinate against them?

Treatment of clostridial conditions is very difficult. Due to the nature of the pathogen, treatment is usually unsuccessful. Unfortunately, the most common first sign of disease is sudden death and by the time we see other clinical signs, it is often the case that irreversible organ damage has already occurred. Prevention is therefore better than treatment!



Vaccinating the whole flock comes with a cost, but high lamb mortality can result in significant financial losses, as can the loss of adult sheep when grazing cover crops. Hence, many farmers choose to vaccinate their ewes against clostridial disease 4-6 weeks prior to lambing, so that their new lambs gain temporary immunity via the ewes' colostrum. Any adult sheep can be vaccinated, and it should be prioritised for those at an increased risk of clostridial disease and those that have not previously been vaccinated. Once maternally derived immunity (a lamb's immunity from colostrum) wanes at about 2-3 weeks old, they can be vaccinated with 2 doses of clostridial vaccine 4-6 weeks apart to provide longer term immunity. The vaccination regime is the same for adult sheep who have not previously been vaccinated or have missed a yearly booster, and can be started at any time.

## When to vaccinate sheep:

- Initial course two doses four to six weeks apart starting at three weeks old
- Annual booster
- Four to six weeks prior to lambing (many people give their annual booster at this time)

## Which vaccines to use:

In recent years, the UK has experienced significant vaccine supply chain issue, for a number of reasons. This has now begun to settle and many of the Clostridial vaccines are more widely available. Call us on 01328 864444 to discuss the best vaccination choice for your flock with one of our vets.

**Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year from the whole team at Wensum Valley Vets !**

