

TB Update

Ten of our clients are under TB movement restrictions at present, with one of them pending on Inconclusive Reactors to be retested.

Remember that the ibTB interactive map is a useful tool if you would like to check the TB situation on farms around you.

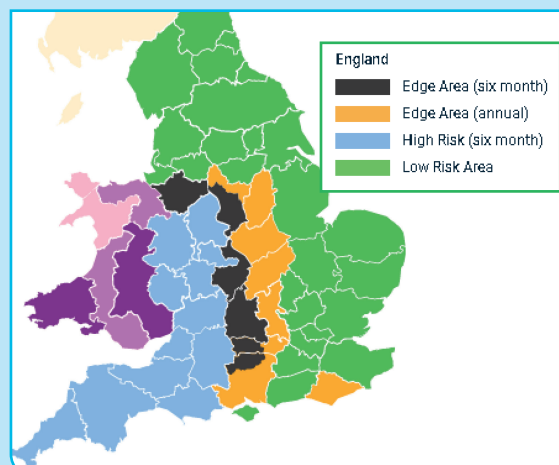
Also, the TB hub is the best source of information for everything related to bovine TB, whether you are dealing with a breakdown or want to prevent your farm from having one.

The TB advisory service along with DEFRA are running a TB conference on **Wednesday 29th November at Sixways Stadium, Worcester**. The details are still to be announced but it is worth saving the date in your diary if you are interested in how we are planning to move towards a TB free future.



TB Testing Changes

Some of you may have received letters or heard of some changes to TB post-movement testing recently and many of you will be affected by these changes depending on where you source cattle. From 1st August 2023 post-movement testing will be compulsory for cattle moved to annual testing parts of the edge area from higher TB incidence areas of England and from Wales. Several of our clients fall in the annual testing part of the Edge area so it is important you are aware of the changes if buying in from High risk areas. There are no changes for those in low risk, six monthly testing parts of edge areas or high risk areas; although if your farm is in a high risk area it is also worth being aware of the changes. Post-movement tests are required by DEFRA however they are a private test and therefore must be paid for. APHA have also stated they will soon stop sending out letters to inform of post-movement testing meaning it will be up to the buyer to know whether this is required and organise the test.



Please refer to the map below to help identify which zone you/your suppliers are in.

As always we are on the end of the phone on 01477 571000 if you have any queries as we know it can be complicated to work out what testing is required and when.

Sheep Abortion Vaccines

We are once again at the time of year when we start thinking about sheep abortion vaccines. There have been a multitude of nationwide supply issues with various vaccines and most notably the clostridial vaccines. We anticipate these issues may impact the enzootic abortion and toxo vaccines as well for later in the year. Both vaccines can be given up to 4 months prior to tupping so it is worthwhile planning early to ensure supply! **If you could give Katie a call on 01477 571000 to inform us of numbers required and/or place your order as early as possible it would greatly help us and you with hopefully sourcing all the doses required.**

New worm and fluke egg counting machine

We have upgraded to some of the newest technology for worm and fluke egg counting allowing us to provide external lab level service from within our Holly Tree branch. We process the samples and the images are sent via the internet to specialist lab members who analyse them and return accurate results to us in a very short space of time. This should speed up our turnaround times for results, as members of our office team can be trained up to process the samples, meaning we don't have to wait for a vet to be in the building. Vets will still report results and provide up to date information on the best treatment plans.

Sampling requirements

- **10 grams minimum** muck for worm and fluke egg counts – please note this is higher than before so ensure to collect plenty of muck (the more the better)
- **Sample from the animal or fresh from the ground** – collecting animals into a small area and waiting for fresh droppings before collecting or directly collecting from the animals is the best method. We cannot accept samples that have been on the fleece or ground for extended periods of time as the eggs will hatch and give false readings.
- **Fresh** samples are required – if you can't get the samples to us within a couple of hours please refrigerate them but ensure they are no older than 24 hours when they arrive with us at Holly Tree (if dropping at Whaley Bridge please ensure they are very fresh as it takes us one working day to get them to Holly Tree for processing)
- **Pooled samples** – ideally we want pooled samples that are representative of the group, the more animals included in the sample the better.

Milksure Course

Janis recently ran a Milksure course for 6 of our clients at Holly Tree. Group sessions are a great way to learn from each other and get the most out of the session. We will be running another session in the very near future so give us a call if you need one. Several supermarket contracts require a milksure course to have been undertaken in the last 4 years so it is worth-while checking when someone last did one. New starters on farm will also benefit from re-freshers and understanding of medicines.

Attention ALL Clients – Changes to EU regulations

EU Animal Health Regulations require farms producing animals or products of animal origin for export to the EU to have regular veterinary visits. A temporary measure allowed farmers to self-declare, but from 13 December 2023 UK producers sending animals to market or to slaughter must be able to demonstrate that a veterinary visit has taken place in the past 12 months. At least some portion of most carcasses is exported which means most farm businesses will need to ensure compliance. The requirement can be certified if the farm is a member of

a recognised assurance scheme (currently Red Tractor, Welsh Beef and Lamb Producers, and Quality Meat Scotland) or when a visit has taken place as part of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway for England. Otherwise, the farm will need to arrange a visit so that the declaration can be provided. Over the next few months we will be bringing copies of these declarations with us to routine visits, TB tests, health planning

visits and Animal Health and Welfare Pathway visits to ensure you have the correct paperwork. If you are not due a regular visit prior to 13th December but do send animals to market or slaughter please let us know and we can arrange a specific visit to sign the required declaration. The declarations are strictly only valid for 12 months so will have to be re-done at specific intervals.

Poisonous plants – beware!

As the grazing season is in full swing livestock are more likely to encounter toxic plants.

If you suspect one of your animals may have consumed a poisonous plant (e.g. clinical signs, or found eaten plants, escaped animals!) separate the animals from the source, then contact us on 01477 571000 to discuss supportive treatment and specific antidotes.



Bracken

Bracken spores from July to August when the highest rate of growth is seen, and thrives in woodland and heathland. Ingestion of bracken over several weeks when pasture is sparse can lead to toxicity. Acute disease and death in cattle can result following ingestion of young bracken fronds causing bone marrow suppression, loss of blood cells and clotting factors.

Ingestion of bracken over many months (once used as bedding material for cattle) can lead to bladder tumours in older (beef) cows, and much less commonly tumours in the oesophagus and rumen.

Disease caused by bracken is a lack of blood cells and clotting factors; which may present as sudden death, but anorexia, marked temperature rise due to secondary bacterial infection, bleeds and blood from the nasal passages and vagina are more common signs. Affected cattle show weakness progressing to recumbency and death within several days.

Many hill farms have substantial areas of bracken where fencing, burning, herbicide treatments would prove uneconomic however adequate feeding should ensure cattle need not graze bracken especially the green fronds during early summer.



Ragwort

Ragwort blooms in the UK from July to October and tends to thrive on suboptimal ground. Ragwort contains alkaloids, which causes damage to the liver of ruminants. Large amounts usually need to be consumed to result in clinical

signs, which usually occur after a long time of eating ragwort. Signs in cattle may include chronic weight loss, diarrhoea, jaundice, and accumulation of fluid under the jaw and brisket caused by liver disease. Affected cattle are often dull and depressed. Some cattle may develop photosensitisation (like a severe sunburn!) where white areas of skin will burn easily in the sun. Sheep and goats have a relative resistance to alkaloids in ragwort and usually need to consume over 100% of their bodyweight before signs of weight loss and jaundice are seen. Ragwort when fresh is usually unappetising to ruminants but may be more palatable in preserved forage, where it is still poisonous.

There is no effective treatment once clinical signs appear. Remove contaminated feed and destroy or move animals away from affected pasture. Animals with photosensitisation should be removed from the source of ragwort and kept indoors in sunny weather until signs subside. Ragwort should be weeded from pasture from the root and burnt once pulled up.

Water dropwort

Dry and hot weather means that in many areas there is poor grass growth and cattle may encounter potentially toxic plants while grazing marginal areas. Water dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*) is also known as water hemlock and hemlock water dropwort.



Cattle are particularly at risk after ditches have been cleared out exposing the most poisonous roots (often referred to as "dead man's fingers").

The first signs after water dropwort ingestion are salivation and dilated pupils followed rapidly by difficulty breathing, collapse and convulsions. The convulsions are spasmodic, that is the whole body shakes violently, then relaxes and then, after a short period, starts convulsing again. The majority of affected cattle die; in the small percentage that survive, diarrhoea is a common clinical sign in the recovery phase.

Diagnosis is based upon evidence of plants having been grazed or roots exposed by ditching and confirmed by postmortem examination finding plant remains in the rumen.

There is no specific treatment. If poisoning is suspected remove all cows from areas where the plant grows.



Foxgloves

Foxgloves bloom from June to September in the UK, with all parts of the plant being poisonous, producing toxins that affect the heart, however other signs are seen following consumption. Acute diarrhoea and sudden death are the most common signs but lethargy, colic and rapid breathing may also be seen. Signs may persist for a few days after consuming foxgloves.

Rhododendron – including azaleas and pieris

Currently we are at the peak of Rhododendron blooming season (April – June). The genus 'Rhodo-dendron' contains a toxin called grayanotoxins; leaves only need to be consumed in very small amounts to result in clinical signs. The primary sign of rhododendron consumption is vomiting alongside lethargy and colic-like symptoms. If very large amounts are consumed, death may occur. Secondary pneumonia may occur if regurgitated stomach contents enter the trachea/lungs.



Blue-green algae

During warm weather, blue green algae will develop in stagnant bodies of water and bloom at the water surface, it may be enriched particularly if there is fertiliser run-off. Signs of consumption, usually caused by drinking from affected water bodies or consuming dried mats on the shore, are sudden death; muscle tremors/staggering, those that survive may sustain liver damage or colic. Prevention is fencing animals away from affected areas of water and providing safe drinking water sources.



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