

Holly Tree Festive Opening Hours

Believe it or not, Christmas and New year are only round the corner. Of course, as usual we will be available 24/7 over the festive period, however the office will only be open some of the time. See below for the office opening times. If you require a vet just ring the usual numbers (01477 571000 or 01663 732564)

23rd December	Open 8am – 5.30pm
24th December	Open 8am – 3pm
Christmas Day	Closed
Boxing Day	Closed
Sunday 27th	Closed
Monday 28th – Bank Holiday	Closed
Tuesday 29th	Open 8am – 5.30pm
Wednesday 30th	Open 8am – 5.30pm
Thursday 31st	Open 8am – 3pm
New Year's Day	Closed
Saturday 2nd January	Open 9am – 12 noon
Sunday 3rd	Closed
Monday 4th	Normal opening resumes 8am – 5.30pm

Whaley Bridge Opening Times

Whaley Bridge will be open up to and including 24th December, remaining closed until 4th January.

We hope you all have a lovely Christmas & New Year.



Red Tractor Medicines Courses

Red Tractor requirements for beef and lamb producers are set to change, with attendance at a medicines course becoming a compulsory requirement as it is for the dairy sector.

The courses cover a wide range of topics including appropriate drug choice, usage and applying withdrawals correctly. We can offer these courses as required and even run them for individual farms if there are a number of staff who would benefit from the training. Courses are currently being run over Zoom due to social distancing rules. If you have questions about how to use Zoom, we can help get you prepared ahead of the course.

We advise that the person responsible for most of the medicine administration is the one who attends, and then feeds this back to anyone else who may work on farm.

If you would like more information or to register your interest for future courses, please get in touch with Vicky at Holly Tree on 01477 571000.



TB Testing Over Christmas and New Year

The bank holidays over the festive period this year mean that we have a quite a long period where we cannot do any TB testing. The last day we can test is the 21st December (reading on Christmas Eve) and restarting on the 4th January.

If you have whole herd tests due, please get in touch as soon as you can as we are rapidly getting booked up. We should be able to fit pre-movement tests in however, please ring as early as you can to be sure we can get to you.

Product Updates

- Betamox 150mg/ml (the daily formulation) is currently unavailable and there are no equivalents on the market. Please chat to one of the vets about a suitable alternative. Betamox LA is still available.
- IBR marker live vaccines – there appears to be an issue with IBR live vaccines across all manufacturers. We are working to secure supply from elsewhere but at the moment it is proving very difficult to find. We are hoping supply will resume soon.
- Lactating cow tubes – there is still limited availability on the tube front, however we do have a couple more options. Please speak to one of the vets for advice on tube choice and mastitis treatment.

Betamox LA – IMPORTANT WITHDRAWAL CHANGES

There have been changes to withdrawal period of Betamox LA, which applies immediately, over-riding the dates on bottles you already have. Please take extra care to ensure you adhere to the new withdrawal periods.

Species	Current Withhold	New Withhold
Cattle	28 days	39 days
Sheep	19 days	29 days
Pigs	19 days	42 days
Cattle - Milk	84 hours	108 hours (4.5 days)

The maximum injection site volumes have also changed to the below.

Species	Previous Maximum Volume	New Maximum Volume
Cattle	20ml	15ml
Sheep	20ml	4ml
Pigs	20ml	4ml

Thin Ewe Post-mortems

APHA are offering free post-mortem and testing on up to three thin ewes provided they are submitted to the local APHA office (Shrewsbury) before the end of December. The ewes will be screened for the 'Iceberg Diseases' OPA, Johnes and Maedi Visna and Border Disease.

They will also be checked for other causes of poor condition. Ewes should be thin with no obvious reasons – such as parasites, nutrition etc. - and should be submitted as fresh as possible – this means not found dead. Please speak to one of the vets about arranging this, as APHA ideally need prior notice and some information about the flock and farm before doing the post-mortems.

Ewes should be euthanased by captive bolt or injection and promptly transported to the centre – carcasses can be collected free of charge from some post-codes (this can be checked with APHA when booking the ewes in). If you would like to know more, please get in touch with any of the vets.

Heat Detection in Dairy Cattle

Winter is a time when many herds find detecting cows in bulling more challenging- dark nights and winter housing certainly play a role but what can you do to make oestrus detection easier?



Influences on Oestrus Activity

Bulling behaviour can be influenced by a number of factors including nutrition, disease, environment and management factors. Cows in oestrus will typically form a sexually active group- the higher the number of cows in the group the greater the expression of oestrus behaviour. This means that heat detection can be particularly challenging in small herds or for block calving herds towards the end of the service period. Oestrus behaviour will also vary between cows depending on their age and status within the herd. Other factors to consider include lameness, feeding and energy balance and trace element status.

Finally, it is important to remember that mounting activity is reduced when cows are housed on concrete rather than soft flooring. Slippery, coarse and slatted floors all reduce heat expression. Cows favour standing on rubber matting over concrete and use of a rubber matted area has been shown to increase mounting activity due to a reduced risk of falling. Cows also need sufficient space to display oestrus behaviour making the presence of a loafing area essential.

Maximising Heat Detection

The importance of good consistent heat detection is often underrated meaning that opportunities get missed. A standard operating procedure should be agreed that is specific to your farm. It will need to take into consideration the issues listed below:

- Prolonged periods of observation are essential. Observing cows for less than 30 minutes will be unlikely to achieve high rates of heat oestrus detection due to the need to identify a range of intermittent behaviours
- Timing of observation. Make sure that you are watching cows when they are quiet with nothing else to distract them. Over 90% of oestrus activity occurs at times other than milking and feeding.
- The number of observation periods. A quarter of cows will bull for less than six hours. This means that a minimum of three observation periods a day is required.
- Use of action lists. Previous heats and service and lists of cows eligible for service help to focus attention on target cows.
- Accurate recording and good communication. The use of a noticeboard can help with this.
- Good clear cow identification, preferably with freeze brand numbers.
- Staff involvement- involve all staff in heat detection to maximise resources.
- Use of oestrus detection aids.

Oestrus Detection Aids

The farms achieving the best heat detection use a combination of skilled staff, good recording and a heat detection aid. It is important to remember that heat detection aids are designed to be used as an aid and not as a replacement for consistent observation of cows. Options include:

- Automated activity systems- either pedometers or neck collars such as Heatime. These require significant initial investment however they can be a great aid to heat detection. It is important to remember that environmental, management and nutritional factors still need to be satisfactory for cows to adequately express bulling behaviour.
- Tailhead markers such as kamars or tailpaint. For these to be used efficiently there is a need for planned application, frequent checking and careful observation. There is also a risk of false results when devices aren't checked or are rubbed in cubicles.
- Keeping a bull can be a cheap way of easily observing cows in oestrus however the health and safety issues around keeping a bull must be considered as must the risk of venereal disease.
- External technician services such as those run by Genus. These involve a daily visit by a trained technician who both assesses cows for oestrus and then carries out artificial insemination. Remember that the average duration of standing heat is 8 hours meaning that one visit a day will miss a lot of cows!

Summary

Heat detection is one of the biggest challenges facing modern dairy herds, however good levels of efficiency can be achieved by investing in staff skills, observation time and detection aids. If you would like help to assess your herd's performance and build an action plan for your farm then please speak to any of our farm animal vets.



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