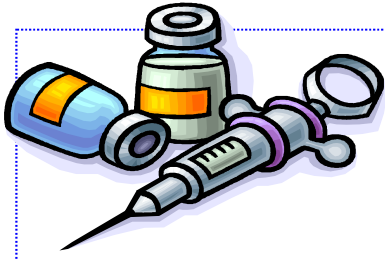


# NEWSLETTER

## April 2008 No 22.



NORFOLK FARM VETS



### BLUETONGUE UPDATE

We hosted a meeting on Bluetongue on 19th March 2008 when Jules Dare from WestPoint Veterinary Group came to talk to us about the latest information on the spread of Bluetongue in Europe and DEFRA's proposed plans for the implementation of the vaccination programme here.

Below are a few of the salient points from the meeting:

- Bluetongue is likely to be significantly more of a problem this year in the UK than in 2007, with both more cases and greater severity of clinical signs in all species.
- Problems likely to be encountered are:
- Poor fertility with resorptions, abortions and infertility in bulls & rams
- Swollen heads leading to poor feeding & reduced FCR in all species
- Infected joints and swollen feet leading to lameness, welfare issues and poor FCRs
- Milk drop
- Crusty noses with nasal and ocular discharge.
- **Death!!!** (In the region of 41% of sheep infected in Europe last year died!! The percentage was lower in cattle but still significant and costly)

*According to the experts the only hope of avoiding the problems seen on mainland Europe last year is to vaccinate.*

Due to the pattern of disease spread and the vectors involved (midges) it is essential that **everyone** vaccinates (cattle, sheep, deer and goat owners) as, to reduce the risk and prevent clinical disease, we need 80% of all susceptible stock including wildlife to be vaccinated. As vaccinating wildlife is nigh on impossible, 100% of domesticated stock needs to be vaccinated to ensure the reservoir of disease remains small.

**So please make sure you have ordered your vaccine for the good of your stock and the whole farming community—call Rachel at the office if you haven't yet placed your order.**

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### BLUETONGUE UPDATE contd.

Presently you are only legally allowed to vaccinate if your stock are inside the PZ, see DEFRA website for latest boundaries.

The vaccine will only be available through vets. Therefore, as with most of our vaccines, we will be selling these on to farmers at list price.

The vaccine should be given through a special stermatic gun so that only a sterilised needle enters each animal. This is essential as otherwise you may act as if the midge and move infection from one animal to another. These guns will be available from the practice @ £9 for 300 animals with additional refills at £7 for 500 animals.

#### **Dosage:**

Sheep and lambs (from 1 month) 1ml single dose  
Cattle, Goats & Deer (and all youngstock from 1 month) 1ml initially then 1 ml in 4 weeks.  
All animals need to be boosted annually before the midge season.

If you are **not** planning to move live animals out of the PZ then you are allowed by DEFRA to vaccinate animals yourselves, however if planning to move live animals out of the zone, presently you are required to have the vaccine administration certified by a vet or have the animal tested by PCR before moving it.

The vaccine will be available initially in 50ml vials. Therefore, due to the limited stock available and the necessity to ensure there is no wastage, we will only be selling whole vials to farms who will use at least 45 doses out of every vial. Once opened the vaccine is only effective for 8 hours!

For those with less than 45 animals or using less than 45 doses from any vial we will be offering a vaccination service at a more than 50% discount on normal rates for both time and visit fee, approx £2 per animal + local visit fee. We are also offering this facility at the same cost for all those who need their vaccine certificated, i.e. moving live animals for sale or showing out of the PZ. Animals can also come to the practice on designated morning/afternoons to remove the cost of the visit fee.

There are a plethora of requirements from DEFRA on moving animals which may well alter before the vaccine becomes available so check the DEFRA website [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk) and watch this space.



## Farm Focus

As you are aware we head up the Central England Herd Health Planning Project and over the next few months we will be giving you some information on the projects that

have been undertaken and the perceived benefits from the farmers point of view.

### F.S. Dann & Son—North Tuddenham

Holstein Friesian Dairy Herd with approx 100 animals contributing to the tank at any one time. In addition to the dairy the farm has a beef fattening unit, arable land, an egg production unit and last year they branched into ice cream as Norfolk Farmhouse Ice Cream (which makes excellent ice cream, speaking from personal experience!)

After discussions we decided that we would use some of the funding available for Herd Health Planning to improve the recording systems on farm. Ash is a very keen young stockman who has been working with the Dann's for some years now and was keen to improve the herds performance figures, however, with Simon increasingly busy and Ash both struggling for time and access to the computer and Simon's records information on cows fertility status, cell counts etc. was not always available. The knock on impact of this is that cows would sometimes slip through the system not being served or not being pregnancy tested. The mind also plays deceptive tricks on us all with a cow that you think has calved last month actually having calved 3 months ago.

We started a system where Ash and/or Simon would send me data weekly on the cows that have calved, been served and with who, had mastitis, been dried off etc, been treated as lame etc. We input this data alongside the data from our fertility visits into Interherd and produce a list for Simon and Ash stating which cows are due for service, which are due for PD, who should be dried off, and with what according to cell count etc.

#### Progress so far:

	03/2007	03/2008
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(rolling 12 month)

Calving interval days	499	472
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With a project calving interval of 409 days

Calving to 1st service	103	81
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Culling rate %	24	15
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Bulk Tank SCC	298	136
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These improvements, and there is further to go, is down to Ash & the team's hard work, however it is made significantly easier by everyone on and off farm working as a team; vet, dairyman, feeding staff, nutritionist in order to make things run as efficiently as possible.

If you are interested to find out more about Herd Health Planning in its many forms then contact us at the practice.

## WANTED:

**12 Sim X Dairy** (Holstein/Friesian) bulling heifers. Must be 'disease free'

Contact James Ashworth on: 07715 464832

**6-10 Hereford type heifers** at 22-24 months

Contact the Newells on: 01366 500357

## Disease Focus—Clostridial Disease

Clostridial disease is a common cause of sudden death in cattle, sheep and goats. The bugs responsible produce spores which survive in the soil for years so are impossible to avoid or eradicate. To make things more complicated, there isn't just one type there are many: Tetanus, Blackleg, Pulpy kidney, Braxy, Black's disease, Struck, Lamb dysentery and Bacillary haemaglobinuria. But here's the good news— there are vaccines available which can even be used on organic farms! So why don't more people protect their stock against such a disastrous disease? Is it cost? Well, with vaccines ranging from 26—83p per dose per animal its cheap as chips! The cost per head is incredibly cheap when compared to the expense of losing an individual. So, with turn out on the horizon, the question shouldn't be why vaccinate but why not vaccinate?

A much larger proportion of sheep and goats are vaccinated when compared to cattle. Sheep and goats can be vaccinated against a combination of clostridial diseases using either Heptavac, Heptavac P- Plus, Lambivac, Ovi-vac P Plus or Covexin 8. A vaccine solely for Blackleg is also available. Cattle can be vaccinated against a combination of clostridial disease (Covexin 8) or solely Blackleg, which is the common clostridial disease causing death in youngstock grazing pasture. An initial course of 2 injections is needed which can then be boosted annually.

Any cases of sudden death in stock legally have to be reported to us as Anthrax is another differential. We will do an Anthrax test (which DEFRA pay for) and if negative then while we are there we can do a post-mortem to try and establish the cause of death.

## Runners Corner

Just a short one this month (no not Molly!). Training is progressing well, although the last 5 mile run at Gavin's had to be cancelled due to the wintery blast we experienced over Easter. It has been re-scheduled for this Sunday (6th April) at North Lynn at 10am. There is also a 5Km run at Gavin's on Thursday 17th April at 6:30pm for a &pm start.

We wish the very best of luck to all the marathon runners at this year's Flora London Marathon on 13th April. The brave few are Ross, James and Emma Haddow and Gary Zoller. For anyone who has yet to show their support, please consider sponsoring 'Team Haddow' on [www.justgiving.com/teamhaddow](http://www.justgiving.com/teamhaddow).

As ever, anyone else wanting to offer help for the Round Norfolk Relay, we're still short of a few cyclists, please get in touch. Otherwise, keep on runnin!

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