



## PREPARE FOR LAMBING: SHEEP HEALTH CHECKS

We are currently observing high **worm egg counts** in sheep. Ensuring that your ewes are in top condition is crucial as we approach lambing season. If you have ewes or lambs that aren't thriving, conducting an accurate worm egg count is a great place to start.

**Liver fluke** should also be considered as a potential cause of thin ewes. Many of the tests we have conducted this year have returned negative results which suggests that some sheep may have been treated too early in the year or treated unnecessarily when they have no fluke burden at all. Therefore, we strongly recommend testing before administering treatment.

**Ewe metabolic profiles** are another excellent tool to ensure your ewes are receiving the right nutrition ahead of lambing. The blood sample should be taken from ewes with a range of body condition scores 3-4 weeks before lambing. The results assess the ewes' health and nutritional status and allow you to make any necessary dietary adjustments to help your ewes reach lambing in optimal condition. This can help prevent Twin Lamb Disease and improve colostrum quality.

Finally, don't forget to administer **Heptavac-P** boosters to your ewes 4-6 weeks before lambing to ensure the health and wellbeing of your ewes and their lambs.



## NEW CALF SCOUR AND PNEUMONIA PRODUCTS

### BOVILIS CRYPTIUM

Bovilis Cryptium is a new vaccine and the first and only vaccine designed to protect calves from cryptosporidiosis, a very common cause of calf scour in our area. Two doses of the vaccine are given to cows 4-5 weeks apart in the last 12 weeks of pregnancy, completed at least 3 weeks before calving. The calf gets immunity from antibodies in the colostrum. Dairy calves should have colostrum on days 1 and 2, and then milk with 500 ml colostrum added on days 3, 4 and 5. Beef calves need to suck their dam for 5 days to get protection. The cow then requires a single annual booster each year before calving.



### PROTIVITY CALF PNEUMONIA VACCINE

Protivity is the first modified live vaccine for *Mycoplasma bovis* (*M. Bovis*) which demonstrates effective protection against respiratory disease. Despite different tools available to manage disease challenges, respiratory disease caused by *M. bovis* continues to be a problem and we are diagnosing it more than ever before in cases of calf pneumonia on our farms.

**If you have had calf scour or pneumonia diagnosed on your farm, or would like to know more about how to prevent them, please call the office and speak to one of the vets.**

### FARMING CONNECT FUNDING

There is just a short time left to carry out any work that has been approved under the current Farming Connect scheme and to process new claims if they are put in very promptly. If you farm in Wales and haven't used both of your allocations of funding, please get in touch as soon as possible if you would like to carry out some investigatory work as this must be completed by 31st January 2025.



## BVD CYMRU SCHEME AND LOCAL CASE STUDY

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) can be easily introduced into a herd, even under seemingly secure conditions. A new BVD Cymru scheme started in July, requiring blood sampling of herds across the region. While most herds have tested negative, we have encountered more BVD cases than expected. Over the next few months, we will be sharing recent case studies to highlight the risks and preventive measures.

Our first case involves a 100-suckler-cow herd that keeps homebred replacement heifers and occasionally buys in foster calves to rear. The farm maintains a secure boundary fence, reinforced with an electric fence where needed. Despite these precautions, BVD was introduced into the herd in May 2010 through a single foster calf. The calf was on the farm for just five weeks before it died.



*Cattle grazing open commons are at risk of catching BVD*

In January 2011, a vet conducting a post-mortem examination on an aborted calf suspected BVD. This led to a PI (Persistently Infected) hunt at the next TB test in February 2011 and further testing of newborn calves throughout the spring. Ultimately, 13 PI animals were identified - all calves under 5 months of age - and were immediately culled from the herd.

The consequences were significant. By the end of 2011 calving season, only 56 live calves were born from the 103 cows put to bull - due to the removal of PI animals and loss of stillborn and sickly calves. The financial impact included being short of 40 store cattle to sell, with losses estimated at approximately £25,000. Additional costs were incurred for veterinary testing and treatment of sick calves. 22 older cows were sold as barren, and younger cows were retained for future breeding. The herd required more replacement heifers than usual in subsequent years, reducing store cattle sales for several years as the herd rebuilt.

Following this outbreak, the farm implemented a vaccination program. Initially, the Bovilis BVD vaccine - requiring a primary course of two doses, followed by a six-month booster and then annual vaccination. The farm has recently switched to the more convenient Bovela vaccine, requiring a single annual dose. The annual cost of vaccination is £770 + VAT, a small price to pay compared to the previous losses. Since starting vaccination, the farmer has observed a generally healthier calf crop, with fewer cases of scours and pneumonia.

This case highlights the importance of testing all introduced animals before mixing them with the main herd. An ear-notch test is a simple and effective way to check for BVD. Additionally, vaccinating the breeding herd against BVD can significantly reduce the impact of an incursion by preventing the birth of PI calves and protecting cows from poor fertility, abortions, and deformed calves.

We hope this case study serves as a reminder of the serious consequences BVD can have and the importance of proactive prevention measures. If you have any questions or would like further advice, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

### Joke of the Month

Why do cows have hooves instead of feet?  
Because they lactose!

*If you know a good joke, please send it to us -  
you might see it in our next newsletter!*



**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**



### CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

**Monday 23rd December 8.15am - 5.30pm**

**Christmas Eve 8.15am - 1pm**

**Christmas Day and Boxing Day CLOSED**

**Friday 27th December 8.15am - 5.30pm**

**Monday 30th December 8.15am - 5.30pm**

**New Year's Eve 8.15am-1pm**

**New Year's Day CLOSED**

There will be a vet on call 24/7 over the festive period.

**24 hour Emergency Number: 01873 840167**