



XLVet BVD Free Campaign

This summer, XLVets are running a BVD Free campaign across the UK to raise awareness and help eradicate this costly disease. Many countries across Europe have already implemented compulsory eradication schemes including Ireland and Scotland, with England currently in the process of developing their programme (and Wales are likely to follow suit soon).

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) causes poor reproductive performance, weak/stillborn calves and immune-suppression of the herd, leading to increased prevalence of other diseases such as pneumonia and scours, and it can be fatal. The source of disease is often persistently infected animals (PI's- those who shed the virus throughout their life) which are commonly brought on to the holding i.e. bought in stock.

The XLVet BVD Free campaign aims to identify and remove these animals before they are introduced to the main herd – this can be achieved by using the new “Tag & Test” scheme. This test can be carried out by the farmer by inserting an ear tag which removes a notch of ear tissue, which can then be sent to the laboratory (pre-paid envelope and all paperwork supplied). If the animal is BVD free then a certificate will be sent out. When purchasing stock from then market it is advisable to buy cattle that are already tagged, and also to ensure that they have a certificate as proof.

The BVD tags are available from us at a cost £4.60/tag (including postage and testing)

Please visit the website www.bvdfree.co.uk for further information

Ferenc's Report of his TB Vaccination Experience

When the figure of £ 692 was announced as the cost to vaccinate one badger against bovine TB almost everybody was shocked when it was announced, including me. This project had started in east Carmarthenshire in 2012 and thanks to Christiane Glossop and Thomas McCabe I went to see how is this money was spent on Wednesday on 4th June, 2014.

It was 3.45 am when I met Andrew and Isaac, one of the ten vaccinator teams in Carmarthen, and the weather was a typical of West Wales - pouring rain with strong, gusty wind; but the traps had been set the previous afternoon, so we had to go to see them.

After half an hour's drive we arrived at the operations area and started to check the traps. In the first three traps we found 3 badgers, two in one trap and one empty. We got the BCG vaccine out of the cool box and donned gloves and masks, we then returned to the trap to inject the animal (which took one or two seconds) through the cage. The most tricky part of the process was to clip the hair from the animals' back to spray-mark it to show that it had been vaccinated. They really did everything to avoid their new hair style, and in some cases it took 5-6 minutes, but finally when it was done they were released. We set off to the next farm for the next set of cages. Before entering the new farmland we sprayed the vehicle wheels and our wellingtons with disinfectant to avoid carrying any possibly infection from farm to farm. We had 29 cages to see in different locations, including in ditches with heavy bushes or on the very edge of the cliffs where the wind and salty rain really made it miserable. We vaccinated 6 badgers and released 3 because they had already been vaccinated. but were keen on the peanut bites in the traps, Around 7.30 am we went back to the operations yard to return the rest of the vaccine back to the fridge and at this point I left the team.

For the team the second part of the operation just started. They picked up their trailers and went back to collect all the cages we visited before. The cages were to be pressure-washed and disinfected and then up with fresh peanuts for the next morning. All the ten teams do the same procedure 4 days a week from 1st June to late October/mid November, and after 3 weeks in one area they move to the next designated farmland. The ten teams will hopefully vaccinate most of the badgers in the whole IAA (Intensive Action Area) which covers close to 300 sqkm. In the first year of the badger vaccination programme they injected 1400 badgers with 14000 doses of BCG (yes, these little animals need ten doses each due to their different immune response) and the project will go on for the next 2 years.

£ 692 I still do not know whether is well spent or not, but this is a huge operation and it is going on every day regardless of the circumstances. After the 5 years of the trial the project management team will be able to gather evidence and draw some conclusions.

And finally a polite request: Please animal lovers if you find a badger in a marked trap in Carmarthenshire please do not open the cage and let it go because they need to be vaccinated first!

Pain Relief

The use of pain relief in farm animals is often overlooked due to the fact that cattle, pigs and sheep tend to be very stoic animals that will often hide the symptoms of pain and discomfort. I'm sure most of us will reach for the paracetamol or ibuprofen when we feel pain or have a fever, and we are very glad of the relief provided after taking them. So why not afford the same benefit to sick animals or those in pain? The most common painkillers that are licensed for use in cattle and pigs are a group called the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or NSAIDs for short. There are now quite a number of this type of painkiller and the licensed uses, length of action, and withdrawal times all vary. Please speak to us for advice on which NSAID would be best to use. **Fever:** All NSAIDs are anti-pyrexic (reduce increased temperature) so make the animal feel better. **Pneumonia:** an NSAID will help in several ways: reducing the fever, reducing inflammation in the lungs, and the associated pain, which is proven to be much more successful than using an antibiotic alone. **Calf diarrhoea:** Again the drug helps by reducing fever, pain and inflammation associated with the condition, and can work better than using oral fluids alone. **After difficult calving/lambing:** I think most women and certainly my wife will confirm that giving birth is a painful process! Use of some NSAIDs after a difficult birth will aid recovery by reducing pain and inflammation. **Lameness:** a painful condition and a recent study has shown that using an NSAID as well as a block for solar ulcers significantly improves the treatment success. **Disbudding/dehorning:** the local anaesthetic will only last a few hours, but add in an NSAID and the pain relief will last for 48-72hours, allowing the calf better recovery and increased growth rates. **Mastitis** An NSAID will reduce the fever, inflammation and pain and also counteract the toxins released into the bloodstream with toxic mastitis.

Just as a word of caution, none of these drugs have been licensed for use in sheep, although we regularly prescribe them under something called the 'cascade system', and inappropriate use of NSAIDs can cause kidney failure and stomach ulcers.

Bacs Payments

Please note that we are able to take payment by BACS. If you want to take advantage of this quick and easy process, and save yourself the postage, our bank account details are on the payment slip part of your invoice.

Meetings

Is your flock ready for Topping? - top tips for keeping your sheep in tiptop condition

We are holding a meeting for sheep farmers on 21st August from 2-5 at Pen y Parc Farm Raglan, by kind permission of Mr. And Mrs N. Turner. The meeting is sponsored by MSD and the speaker will be Kate Hovers, the well known sheep vet and sheep farmer. **Monmouthshire and Usk Shows** – as usual we will be attending both of these shows and look forwards to welcoming you to our stand on August 28th for Monmouth and September 13th for Usk.

Staff News

We are pleased to congratulate Gabriel on his recent engagement to Kristina. Last of the great romantics – it is reported that he popped the question whilst waiting at some traffic lights in Cardiff. We wish them both well for the future.

Joke of the Month

"Johnnie."

"Yes, teacher."

"If there are twenty sheep in a field, and one gets out through a hole in the fence, how many sheep are left in the field?"

"None, teacher."

"Johnnie, there are still nineteen sheep left in the field. Obviously you don't know arithmetic."

"Sorry, teacher, but I do know arithmetic. Obviously you don't know sheep."