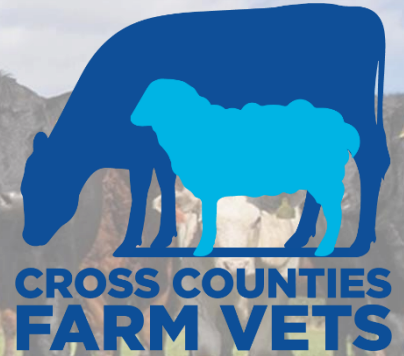


# FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

## Welcome



### DISEASE UPDATE

#### BLUETONGUE:

Bluetongue affects ruminants including sheep, cattle, deer and goats as well as camelids such as Alpacas and Llamas. Currently there have been 84 cases confirmed in England over 46 different premises situated along the east coast (Norwich and Canterbury). Bluetongue is mostly spread by midges, with recent colder temperatures, midge activity has reduced and they aren't actively feeding. Due to reduced midge activity the current risk of disease spread has reduced, and disease positive animals will not be culled, movement restrictions will be applied to infected premises. It is important we all remain vigilant for clinical signs or suspicion of disease and report these to the APHA. Bluetongue is a notifiable disease, which means that you are legally obliged to report suspicion of the disease.

#### Clinical signs to watch out for:

**Sheep:** ulcers/sores in the mouth and nose; discharge from the eyes/nose; drooling; swelling of the lips, tongue, head, neck and coronary band; lambs born small, weak, deformed or blind and stillbirths.

**Cattle:** lethargy; crusty erosions around the nostrils/muzzle; redness of the mouth, eyes, nose or skin above the hoof; reddening and erosions of the teats; fever; reduced milk production; not eating; abortion, foetal deformities and stillbirths.

#### SCHMALLENBERG

As with bluetongue, Schmallenberg is also transmitted by midges and affects ruminants and camelids. Schmallenberg virus was first identified in the UK in 2012, with peaks of disease every 3-4 years since, this is thought to be linked to the waning of immunity in animals.

We typically associate the virus with abortion and birth deformities including fused joints, however, this is not always the case. Acute disease can also be noticed in cattle which results in reduced milk production, fever, and scour. It is important to sample suspect cases to establish disease status. We have already identified some cases in early lambing flocks and flocks with poor scanning percentages. If you have any concerns or suspicious cases, please get in touch!

#### Welcome back Sophie and Alba!

We are all very excited for the return of Sophie and Alba this month.

Sophie will return from her sabbatical to New Zealand on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February. We have already seen some incredible photos of her travels but can't wait to hear all about it!

Alba will be returning from maternity leave on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February.

We know you will be looking forward to seeing them both back on farm soon!

#### A sad goodbye

We are sadly saying a goodbye to Catherine at the end of February.

Catherine has been a very valued member of our farm support team for eight years and more recently providing on farm ATT services.

We wish Catherine all the best with her next adventures and will be keeping in touch!

# Calf Scour

Diarrhoea remains one of the most common causes of death in calves under one month of age. There are many causes of diarrhoea including viruses, bacteria and protozoa, as well as nutritional factors. Presentation varies from loose faeces in an otherwise normal calf to watery faeces, dehydration, recumbency and death.

## Main causes:

- Bacteria: E.coli, Salmonella or Clostridium species
- Viral: Rotavirus and Coronavirus
- Protozoal: Crypto and Coccidiosis
- Nutritional

**Diagnosis:** There are some differences in clinical signs between the varying causes of scours, but also a lot of overlap! The best way to get a diagnosis of the cause of scours in your calves is to take fresh faecal samples from the group. Depending on the age and presentation of the calves we will then either run a test at the practice or send it off to a laboratory. In the unfortunate case of a recent death of a calf, a postmortem can be performed and can be invaluable in aiding with a diagnosis.

**Treatment:** Specific treatment varies depending on the cause of scour and therefore performing further investigations helps to guide the treatment plan. However, there are some key treatments that will help with all cases.

- Electrolytes and fluid therapy – dehydration is usually the ultimate cause of death in diarrhoea cases and therefore rehydration is essential in all cases.
- NSAIDs such as Metacam help to lower the calf's temperature, reduce pain and inflammation, and counter toxins.

It is important to continue providing milk to calves with scour in addition to rehydration feeds. The rehydration feeds do not provide energy or nutrients which are essential for the body to function and recover from disease. We would normally recommend providing at least two milk feeds and two additional electrolyte feeds per day. Calves should always have access to fresh clean water. There are some cases where fluids administered into the vein are required to help correct the dehydration, as a rule of thumb calves that cannot stand by themselves will require this, but we would urge you to call us to discuss cases or request a visit for further assessment.

**Prevention and control:** We would always prefer to prevent disease from occurring rather than treating sick animals and therefore prevention should be a key area of focus. Important areas to reduce scour cases include:

- Colostrum, ensuring sufficient uptake of good quality colostrum quickly.
- Hygiene, particularly in calving pens and areas young calves are housed.
- Avoid mixing calves from different age groups to reduce pathogen spread.
- Vaccinations are available against some causes of calf scour.

Every farm is different, please speak to one of our vets about the best prevention, monitoring and control strategy for your farm and disease profile.



## Cross Counties Farm Vets

**Lutterworth Branch:** Elizabethan House, Lutterworth, Leicestershire, LE17 4NJ. ☎ 01455 552117

**Welford Branch:** Elkington Lodge, Elkington Road, Welford, Northampton, NN6 6HE. ☎ 01455 710935

**Broughton Astley Branch:** 12 Swannington Road, Broughton Astley, Leicestershire, LE9 6TU. ☎ 01455 282512

**Email:** office@ccfarmvets.co.uk

**Website:** [www.ccfarmvets.co.uk](http://www.ccfarmvets.co.uk) **Facebook:** Cross Counties Farm Vets

Broughton Vet Group Ltd trading as Cross Counties Farm Vets. Company number 9243007 registered in England & Wales.

Registered office: Spitfire House, Aviator Court, York, YO30 4UZ