

# April 2025 NEWSLETTER



## Bluetongue pre-movement testing: UPDATE

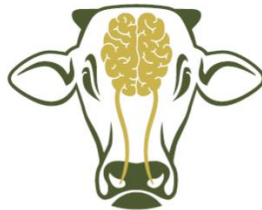
The rules surrounding Bluetongue testing can be confusing as they are rapidly evolving.

- As before, no testing is required if:
  - o You are moving animals **within** the Bluetongue restriction zone.
  - o You are moving animals from within the Bluetongue restriction zone to outside the restriction zone for **slaughter or to a red /slaughter only market**.
- **NEW! Until 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025:** You do not need to test non-breeding animals over the age of 60 days before being **moved out of the restricted zone**. This temporary change reflects the current low midge activity and risk associated with disease transmission.
- Pre-movement testing is still required for: entire males intended for breeding, females that are pregnant or have unknown pregnancy status, youngstock if they are under 60 days of age at the time of the movement, unless they are travelling at foot with the maternal dam - in this case, the maternal dam can be tested.
- **You must still apply for an APHA movement license.** This can take up to 10 days to be approved, so apply well in advance.

Testing is FREE to the farmer and can be arranged via the UK Farmcare website under the contact us section. Please ask if you have any questions or need assistance applying for free pre-movement bloods.

## FERAPPEASE

It may be April, but this is no joke! Have you heard about it? Ferapease is a new product on the market that may reduce stress in cattle, anecdotally leading to increased growth rates and higher welfare. FerAppease is a synthetic copy of maternal Bovine Appeasing Substance, the natural version of which is reportedly found around the udder of the lactating cow. It is thought that calves and adult cattle alike, find this pheromone reduces the perception of threat. Farmers report visibly more content cattle following application. Suggested uses would be around times of stress e.g. TB tests, castrating and dehorning, weaning and group changes. The substance is applied to the muzzle and behind the poll to achieve both short and long-acting effects. It lasts 2 weeks and there is no withdrawal period. Please let us know if you would like to order any and try it!



**FerAppease®**  
Maternal Bovine Appeasing Substance

### In this issue:

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- FerAppease
- Grass staggers
- Euthanasia rules

### FLOCK CLUB MEETING

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm for a 7:30pm start. We will be discussing appropriate quarantine of incoming sheep.

The meeting is kindly sponsored by Zoetis and a hot dinner will be provided.

This meeting is open to members and non-members of our Flock Club.

For details of the location and to book your place, please contact the office on 01455 710935.

### LAMBING PHOTO COMPETITION

Keep an eye on our Facebook page during April for information on entering our annual lambing photo competition. The winner will receive half price membership to our Flock Health Club.

The competition is usually fierce!

Why would the dog not listen to the farmer's joke?



# Preparation for Spring Turnout

## Grass Staggers

Grass Staggers, also known as grass tetany or hypomagnesaemia, is caused by low level magnesium in the blood. It usually occurs around calving and presents as a down cow, with ear twitching, noise sensitivity, muscle tremors, frequent urination, poor appetite and reduced milk yield. If not promptly treated death will rapidly occur. Cattle rely on absorption of magnesium from the rumen, which is linked to dietary intake, magnesium is not stored in the body and therefore the condition can develop very quickly. Staggers is often seen in lactating cows at grass (particularly fresh grass in the Spring or autumn) and it occurs when magnesium lost through milk cannot be replaced by sufficient dietary intake, or when interactions between magnesium and other minerals limit the availability of magnesium in the grass. For example, high levels of potassium from certain types of soil and high nitrogen from fertilisers can make plants low in magnesium.

**Prevention is better than cure!** Magnesium is not palatable to cows on its own and it can be hard to ensure uptake of supplements. Options such as magnesium oxide in concentrates, in licks with molasses, flakes in drinking water or oral boluses are often the best option.



## Are you ready for Turnout?

Spring is here, lambs and calves are arriving, and turnout is either upon us or round the corner! Ensure you have considered:

- Vaccinations
- Mineral boluses – assess body condition score and consider blood testing and/or analysing soil and silage
- Pre- and post- movement TB testing
- Fly control

## Change of Rules Regarding of Euthanasia of Lambs:

Blunt force trauma to the head for killing lambs up to 5kg is **no longer an acceptable means of on farm euthanasia** unless in an “emergency” and must only be used where no other method is available.

Methods of killing which are allowed under the “Protection of Animals at the Time of Killing” for lambs, include penetrative captive bolt, a firearm with free bullet or a lethal injection carried out by your vet. Captive bolts only provide lambs with a stun, so must be followed by bleeding or pithing. If you have any questions about this, please speak to one of the vets.



**Cross Counties Farm Vets** ☎ 01455 710935

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

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

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

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

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Because they herd them all!