

May 2026 NEWSLETTER

Welcome

BARREN EWE CHECKS:

With lambing season nearly finished for another year it is a good time to reflect on any issues faced and consider how to prevent them going forwards. Key areas to consider are:

- Ewe mortality
- Barren Ewes
- Lamb mortality

There can be numerous causes for all these problems but testing barren ewes alongside data analysis can help to identify key areas to focus on.

Barren or aborted ewes can provide useful information about disease status on farm. If you are not vaccinating for Enzootic abortion or toxoplasma there is subsidised testing available so, please contact the practice if you have had an increased number of barren or aborted ewes this year.



Trace elements can have an impact on fertility, growth rates, thriftiness of ewes and lambs and their level of resilience to parasite burdens! Testing can be done on a group of 6 or more ewes and gives you information on the levels of Copper, Cobalt, Iodine and Selenium. This allows you to make decisions about supplementation needs going forwards and ensures any copper supplementation will not push ewes towards toxic levels. Soil sampling is an important addition to establish trace element availability on your farm. If you would like any more information, please contact the practice.



In this issue:

- Barren ewe checks
- Bactoscan explored
- Smallholder meeting
- Beef club meeting

SMALLHOLDERS CLUB MEETING

Comparative anatomy of the upper gastro-intestinal tract of Ruminants, Camelids and Pigs

21st May 2026
7.00 arrival,
7:30pm start



Held at the Welford office,
Elkington Lodge, NN6 6HE
Tea and biscuits provided.



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BEEF CLUB MEETING

Beef Cow Genomics.
Discussions with AHDB and Zoetis followed by a farm walk.

Wednesday 10th June 2026
5:30pm start



Kindly hosted by John Vickers.
Sponsored by Zoetis.
A hot dinner will be provided.
Open to all.



Please contact us to book your place.

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Milk Bactoscan Levels

Bactoscan is a measure of the number of bacteria in a milk sample, both dead and alive. Testing is routinely performed on bulk milk samples and impacts milk quality payments. It is important that milk is produced cleanly and hygienically. Bacterial contamination of milk can quickly lead to high bacterial counts, milk acts as a great food source for bacteria allowing rapid multiplication, particularly at warmer temperatures. Monitoring and reducing bactoscan levels are important to avoid penalties, improve shelf life, manufacturing properties and ensure milk quality. Bacteria are found everywhere (cows, dirt, water, air), we are not aiming to eliminate the bacteria but minimise the number as much as possible, aiming for a bactoscan below 30,000/mL.



Causes of a high bactoscan:

- From the cows' teats- contamination of the teats from the environment and can be linked to poor teat cleanliness, teat preparation or parlour hygiene.
- Cows with mastitis- If not detected the bacteria causing mastitis can increase the bactoscan, particularly with Streptococcus bacteria.
- Contaminated milking equipment- poor milking plant cleaning and disinfection.
- Problems with milk cooling and storage.
- Environmental contamination from water borne bacteria- including water used to wash clusters.

Investigating Bactoscan problems:

- Check the milk plant and review the cleaning process- are the pipes clean, are any residues visible, is the water clear at the end of the wash, are the correct chemicals quantities being used during the wash process, are liners ok, are any rubber/pipes cracked or perished?
- Sending a bulk milk sample to a specialist lab for more detailed testing and culture can help to identify the problem area. This testing looks at the type of bacteria present in more detail which can indicate the likely source of the bacterial contamination.
- Review cow cleanliness- cleanliness scoring can be used or performed by our VetTech.
- Test water used in the parlour for bacterial levels. This should be done regularly and is particularly important if borehole water is used.
- Review mastitis detection with everyone who milks and ensure prompt identification and treatment.

If you are experiencing problems with bactoscan levels, please discuss this further with one of our vets.

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