



Practice News

The sun is shining and it feels as if spring is finally here with lots of calves and lambs being born!

We continue to run our Wormy Wednesday so make sure to get faecal samples to us Tuesdays or Wednesday before lunchtime for testing. Keep an eye on the nematodaris forecast for young lambs.

Bluetongue update ahead of spring

We have recorded 256 bluetongue cases this season (start July 25), with the vast majority caused by BTV-3, and new detections continuing through January 2026 across counties including Cheshire, Kent, Staffordshire and Devon. As last year, we're expecting midges to become active again in spring, with the risk of renewed spread remaining a concern. Warmer temperatures typically support midge movement, and government updates highlight ongoing circulation in several regions, signalling the likelihood of further cases as the 2026 vector season begins.

Fortunately, many herds and flocks vaccinated last year, and vaccination continues to be an important control tool. There may yet be underlying impacts to come out of last season as we head into lambing and calving, therefore the message is to remain vigilant. Please speak to your vet about vaccination availability and timing.

NSA liver fluke survey

The National Sheep Association is encouraging farmers to take part in a University of Liverpool study to assess liver fluke control and the impact of flukicide resistance. Increasing parasitic resistance has been of concern for a while and so your information and experiences can help form a picture for the future of fluke control. You can access the study here -

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/MAP-TCBZR-Survey>



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Colostrum supplements - know the IgG levels in your supplement

Using a good colostrum supplement could make a huge difference to your lamb survival rates and future productivity – after all, half of UK lamb mortality occurs within the first 24 hours of life. Getting this right is key, but there are lots of different options on the market.

It's suggested that when looking at effective colostrum supplementation for successful passive transfer in lambs, 3g of IgG should be absorbed shortly after birth. In an ideal scenario if maternal colostrum is of low quality or quantity, then maternal or ewe colostrum should be split across the lambs and supplemented. Maternal or ewe colostrum from

your flock will provide better antibodies. Therefore, it's best to have a high quality, supplement on hand.

We stock a super high quality lamb colostrum from SCCL (some of you may be familiar with their excellent calf colostrum replacer) we can supply this to you in bulk or in average lamb sized doses of 40g to make up with 150ml of water.

Another tip – if you haven't got the Alta Colostrum Calculator, or another type of colostrum calculator, it's very handy to work out how much supplement is required based on colostrum quality.

Any questions, please speak to your vet.



Animal Health and Welfare Review Update

As well as being able to apply for the Animal Health and Welfare Review for more than one species, rates for the review and follow up visits are increasing as of the 22nd January 2026.

Additionally, if it's been over a year since your first review, you can apply for your second. There's up to 3 reviews and 3 follow-ups per species available for the duration of the scheme (ending June 2027).

New funding rates:

- £648 for a pig review
- £574 for a sheep review
- £647 for a beef cattle review
- £447 for a dairy cattle review

In addition to this, for the optional follow-up:

- £258 for cattle with no BVD
- £954 for beef cattle where BVD is present in the herd
- £1844 for dairy cattle where BVD is present in the herd
- £658 for sheep
- £1087 for pigs

For more information please contact the practice.

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Kingshay antimicrobial report

The annual antimicrobial report from Kingshay was released in January and it's good news again for dairy herds in the UK. There's continued decline in the use of antimicrobials meaning new industry targets were met just months after they were set.

The report is based on data from 967 dairy herds from 136 vet practices across the UK using the Kingshay Antimicrobial Monitoring Service, between 2024 and early 2025.

It shows that average total antimicrobial usage for the year has fallen to 12.2 mg/kg PCU from 12.7 mg/kg PCU in 2024 and 15.7 mg/kg PCU in 2020. Farm efforts to reduce antimicrobial use are paying off.

The new RUMA targets cover 2025-2029 and include annual reductions of three-year rolling averages in lactating and dry cow tube usage, plus a new 10% reduction on the previous year for calf oral antibiotics.

All targets have been achieved for this dataset. Lactating cow tube usage has fallen by 41% since 2019 to 0.352 DCDVet, while dry cow tubes are down on the three-year rolling average, despite a small increase this year.

The calf oral antibiotics target was also met, with usage down 24% between 2024 and 2025 to 1.05 mg/kg PCU. We've also seen a 28% reduction in injectable highest priority critically important antimicrobials to 0.005 mg/kg PCU, which is a 98.3% reduction in seven years.

However, usage varies between regions and individual herds.

The south and south east of England recorded the lowest average usage at 10.4 mg/kg PCU, while the north of England had the highest at 14.9 mg/kg PCU.

The difference is even more pronounced between individual herds. The top-performing 25% averaged just 4.1mg/kg PCU, compared to 24.3 mg/kg PCU for the highest-using quartile.

That top quartile really pulls the overall average up – the median across all herds was only 9.8mg/kg PCU.

These quartiles aren't static though. A disease outbreak can affect figures rapidly, which is why it is important to keep attention to detail high when it comes to adhering to health protocols, even when usage seems low.

Overall it's a great benchmark to see that the industry has already met those RUMA targets. Equally, things can change quickly, so health planning to build strong, disease resilient herds will remain key in keeping antimicrobial usage low. Speak to us if you haven't had an antibiotic benchmark report recently.

The 2025 annual Dairy Antimicrobial Focus Report can be accessed via the Kingshay website, www.kingshay.com.



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Chorioptic Mange in Camelids

Chorioptic mange is a common skin problem in alpacas and llamas, especially in cooler, wetter months, and it can be a real headache for llama and alpaca owners. It's caused by tiny mites (*Chorioptes* species) that live on the surface of the skin and feed on skin debris. While it's rarely life-threatening, it can cause significant discomfort and, if left untreated, can lead to secondary infections and loss of condition.

The first signs are usually itching and irritation of the lower limbs. Animals may stamp their feet, bite or rub at their legs, or seem unusually restless. Over time you might notice hair loss around the pasterns, fetlocks and hocks, with scurf, crusting or thickened skin. In some cases the mites can spread higher up the legs or onto the body, particularly in heavily fleeced animals. White or light-coloured animals often show the scurf more clearly, but all camelids can be affected.

You should call us if you see persistent itching, broken skin, lameness, swelling of the legs, or if several animals in the group are affected. A vet can confirm the diagnosis by taking skin scrapings and can help rule out other causes such as *Sarcoptic* mange, bacterial dermatitis, fungal infection, or zinc deficiency. Vet advice is especially important if animals are in poor condition, pregnant, or if previous treatments haven't worked.

Treatment usually involves a combination of clipping, topical therapy and, in some cases, injectable medications. Clipping the affected areas helps treatments reach the skin and removes crusts where mites hide – if you're able to soothe with warm water then that also helps. Ivermectin based products and injectables will not work for Chorioptic mange mites as they are not blood sucking mites. Following a wash, topical anti-mite spray should be used, rubbing it in down to skin level. Lime sulphur dip can be used for feet, but it's worth noting this will stain the fleece.

Treating all in-contact animals at the same time is crucial, even if some aren't showing signs. Completely mucking out and disinfecting housing is also crucial.

Prevention focuses on good management. Regularly check legs and feet, especially in winter. Keep bedding clean and dry, and avoid muddy, overcrowded conditions. Quarantine and examine new arrivals before mixing them with the herd. Prompt treatment of early cases reduces spread and makes control much easier. With vigilance and a clear plan, chorioptic mange can be managed effectively and kept from becoming a recurring headache on farm.



If you would like more information on what we've discussed in this month's newsletter, please speak to any of our farm veterinary team.

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