



# Farm Newsletter - November 2017

## BVDFree England Scheme

### What is BVD?

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea or BVD is a highly contagious viral disease of cattle. It is one of the biggest disease issues facing the UK cattle industry. BVD has been estimated to cost between £13 and £31 per cow in Great Britain. The national cost could be as high as £61M per year. ([Bennett and Ijpelaar, 2005](#))



### What is the BVDFree Scheme?

BVDFree England is a voluntary industry-led scheme, working to eliminate Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) from all cattle in England by 2022. The key to success is to identify and remove all animals persistently infected (PI) with the BVD virus from the English cattle herd.

The scheme is built around a national database, [bvdfree.org.uk](http://bvdfree.org.uk), which is searchable for the BVD status of individual animals and herds tested under the scheme. Farmers must register with BVDFree to enable their herds' BVD test results to be uploaded to the database. Individual animal BVD status can be found by entering a UK tag number, or you can search the database for a herd's BVD status using the CPH number. This provides farmers with recognition, confidence and traceability when buying and selling BVDFree cattle.

If anyone is interested in joining the scheme or would like more information please speak to a member of the farm team.

## Skittles Night—Postponed

Unfortunately we have had to make the decision to postpone our skittles night. We will rearrange it for some time in the summer.



## Bluetongue Update

Many of you will have seen the coverage this week regarding the recent identification of BTV-8 in animals imported from France, together with the communication from DEFRA:

- APHA identified BTV-8 in cattle in Preston and Kendal and two locations in Scotland. There are 32 animals in total which have come from the same assembly centre in France, in an area where multiple cases of bluetongue have been confirmed since September this year.
- To ensure there is no spread of the disease, movement restrictions are in place at the affected premises, targeted surveillance being undertaken and culling of animals where necessary.
- The UK remains officially bluetongue-free and exports are not affected.
- Chief Veterinary Officer for the UK, Nigel Gibbens has said this highlights to farmers the risks from bringing animals from disease-affected areas into their herds, and that this is a timely reminder for farmers that the disease is still a threat, despite coming towards the end of the period when midges are most active. **He advises that farmers may want to talk to their vet to consider if vaccination would benefit their business.**
- Movement restrictions will be in place on the premises for several weeks until testing rules out spread via local midges.

Vaccines are available but will need to be ordered in. Please call the surgery to speak to a member of the team if you have any concerns.



## Farm Assurance Antibiotic Reviews

The Red Tractor Farm Assurance scheme has brought out some new standards for October 2017. These new standards (among others) includes a requirement for an annual review of your farms antibiotic usage. Your medicine records must now include an annual collation of the total antibiotic usage for the unit, broken down by product name. This can be collated from your medicine records or if you prefer we can do this for you from our records.

The scheme also now requires an annual review of antibiotics to be carried out by you vet. We will be adding this to our herd health plans and will therefore form part of the annual health plan review for those farms that have a veterinary written health plan. If you do not have one of our health plans we can still review you antibiotic usage and provide a report for your records. For more information, please speak to a member of the farm team.





## Antibiotic Usage in Sheep

October has been a busy month with regard to national antibiotic usage policy across all farm sectors, including sheep. RUMA has released its Antibiotic Targets Task Force Report 2017 which sets out a plan for reducing antibiotic usage within the sheep sector. Also, the Sheep Veterinary Society has released Responsible Use of Antimicrobials Good Practice Guidelines for 2017, giving advice on prescribing recommendations to ensure compliance with decreasing the use of critical antibiotics on farm.

The use of antibiotics on sheep farms is relatively low, however we need to concentrate on the way that antibiotics are prescribed in order to decrease use further. Three key areas have been identified- the use of antibiotics to control enzootic abortion, the use of antibiotics to control lameness and the use of antibiotics as a prophylactic treatment for neonatal lambs.

The full document is available to view on the RUMA website.

As a practice, we ran a sheep lameness meeting this summer, with an emphasis on using the 5-point plan to reduce lameness levels. Strategic management and vaccination can be used to reduce the incidence of lameness in the sheep flock over the longer term. Also, using appropriate treatment based on a diagnosis of the cause of the lameness and timely treatment of sheep that are lame leads to quicker resolution and less spread of disease within the flock.

Having assessed our dispensing protocols in light of these recent publications, it is clear that the routine use of antibiotic footbaths for the treatment of lameness in sheep is no longer appropriate or recommended by the sheep industry. We have licensed injectable products available that are a more effective treatment than foot bathing alone. So, to this end, we will no longer authorise the routine dispensing of antibiotic footbaths for sheep. There are times when this treatment may be appropriate but this should be assessed on an individual case basis following discussion with one of our veterinary surgeons.

I still have a few people to contact as a follow up to our August lameness meeting. However if anyone would like to review their sheep lameness treatment and control policy, please contact Rachel at our South Molton surgery.

For our Flock Club members, I have access to a calculator that helps assess individual farm antibiotic usage, and a calculation will be made as part of the flock annual review. If anyone else would like an antibiotic usage review, please let me know.

## **Autumn parasites**

The damp autumn has led to a medium to high liver fluke risk for the west of England this year. Store lambs may well require a liver fluke treatment if they have grazed wet pastures, as well as ewes. During this autumn period, a product that kills the larval stages of liver fluke is appropriate such as triclabendazole. Triclabendazole resistance is an increasing problem in the UK, contact us for details for how we can test for this in your flock.

We are still seeing very high worm egg count levels in lambs. The ongoing warm wet weather is worm heaven, and eggs will still be hatching on contaminated pastures. Please remember to continue monitoring worm egg counts throughout the winter until proper frosty weather is with us.