

Farm news

We have said goodbye to Vet Lucie this month. We wish her the best of luck in her new job at home in Scotland and thank her for her hard work and dedication to Calweton!

Many of you will know Monique as our out of hours, emergency vet. Monique is now occasionally working days and is looking forward to seeing you all on farm. We are excited to have her around in daylight hours!

Calweton farm team



Late-Season Parasite Risks & Housing-Time Treatment Planning

With the recent spell of wet weather and the approach of the housing period, it's important to review parasite risks in your cattle and plan any treatments carefully. Conditions this year mean that both gut worms, lungworm and liver fluke could pose challenges on many farms.

Cattle

Roundworms (PGE) & Lungworm

Youngstock grazing pastures used intensively by cattle earlier in the season may be at increased risk of picking up heavy roundworm burdens at this time; the majority of eggs and larvae shed early in the season will have developed into infective stages by this point and recent rainfall will have assisted their dispersal onto pasture - this is particularly true for lungworm. Keep a close eye out for coughing, scouring, ill-thrift or reduced growth rates. Regular monitoring or dung testing can help pick up problems early.

Liver Fluke

Cattle grazing wet, boggy ground or areas near streams, ponds or other permanent water bodies are at a higher risk of liver fluke. These areas often support the mud snail needed for the fluke life cycle.

Where possible, consider moving stock to drier, lower-risk fields to avoid further infection during the last weeks of the grazing season.

Planning Worming and Fluke Treatments at Housing

Housing is a good opportunity to tidy up parasite burdens but it's important to choose the right products and the right timing.

When considering such treatments, it is important to consider the particular issue(s) you are wanting to address and their urgency. For example, several group 3-ML products are effective against both roundworms and lice, with several also licenced and effective against the arrested forms of roundworms responsible for type 2 ostertagiosis. Rather than administering multiple doses over the winter period to deal with each problem separately, where there is no immediate health concern from PGE it may be possible to time the administration of a single treatment later into the housing period to deal with all three simultaneously. Reducing the amount of wormer used in this way can reduce costs and selection for resistance.

Similarly, in animals that are likely to have acquired fluke infections towards the end of the grazing season, where there are no immediate health issues, delay of treatment until 7-10 weeks post housing and using a flukicide product other than triclabendazole will help preserve the efficacy of this critically important product for when it is most needed in the face of acute disease risk. For more information and advice please speak with your vet.

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Test your Flock for Fluke

As autumn progresses to winter it is worth considering your testing and treatment options for liver fluke infection:

Testing - Antibody testing is particularly useful for monitoring first season lambs to identify the early stages of infection and risk from acute fasciolosis. Later into the winter and spring faecal testing through either coproantigen ELISA or fluke egg sedimentations are useful for identifying adult stage infections and risk from chronic disease in lambs, rams and ewes.

Treatment

There are a limited range of treatments available for liver fluke, of which triclabendazole is the only product with efficacy against the early stages responsible for acute disease. Importantly, there are reports of treatment failures to triclabendazole from across the UK. To preserve its efficacy, it should therefore be reserved for when it is most needed,

namely control of acute fluke risk. To achieve this a "test don't guess" approach is now recommended.

Other flukicide products are effective against the more mature and adult stages of infection and consequently, can be used in conjunction with faecal testing later into the winter, particularly post housing.

It is important to note that no flukicide products have residual activity, meaning that following treatment animals put back on to high-risk pastures are immediate risk of re-infection.



Are your camelids getting enough vitamin D?

Why Vitamin D Matters

Camelids (alpacas & llamas) are naturally poor at making Vitamin D from sunlight. In the UK, sunlight levels from October to March are too low for them to produce enough on their own. Vitamin D is essential for growth, strong bones and joints, healthy muscle and nerve function and immune system.

Who Is Most at Risk?

All camelids benefit from winter supplementation, but risk is highest in:

- Crias (rapid growth increases demand)
- Dark-fibred animals (less UV light reaches the skin)
- Animals on shaded or low-lying fields
- Thin animals or those recovering from illness

Why Use Vitamin D Injections?

Although oral products exist, injections are the most reliable method because they:

- Provide consistent, predictable dosing
- Are not affected by weather or feed intake
- Give longer-lasting protection
- Ensure all animals receive the correct amount

When to Supplement

Most herds need their first injection in early autumn

(September/October), followed by repeat doses during winter. Always follow veterinary guidance, incorrect dosing can be harmful, as Vitamin D is potent.

Signs of Vitamin D Deficiency

Contact your vet if you notice:

- Stiffness, lameness, or reluctance to move
- Swollen joints (particularly in crias)
- Poor growth or weight gain
- Dull coat or poor body condition
- General unthriftiness or repeated illness

Contact the practice for more information.



Notifiable Disease Bulletin: Bluetongue & Bird Flu in the South West

Bluetongue Virus (BTV)

- The Bluetongue restricted zone has now been extended to cover all of England as of 1 July 2025.
- Since July 2025, there have been ~91 confirmed cases of BTV-3 in Great Britain, with 87 in England, including several in Cornwall and Devon.
- New concern: A case of BTV-8 has recently been confirmed in a sheep in Cornwall, the first BTV-8 case in the UK since 2008.
- Clinical signs in animals have generally been mild, but all keepers are urged to remain vigilant.

Action for farmers:

- Speak to your vet about BTV-3 vaccination.
- Continue to monitor animals closely for signs (e.g., fever, swelling, lameness) and report any suspicion to APHA immediately: 03000 200 301



Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

- There has been a confirmed HPAI H5N1 outbreak in poultry near Crediton, Mid-Devon, declared on 3 November 2025.
 - A 3 km protection zone and 10 km surveillance zone have been put in place.
- A previous outbreak occurred near Exminster, Teignbridge (Devon), reported on 31 August 2025.
 - The protection zone has since ended, and the surveillance zone was revoked as of 2 October 2025.
- All of England remains in an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ), with mandatory housing in place.

Biosecurity measures to follow:

- Disinfect clothing, footwear, vehicles, and equipment when entering or leaving bird areas.
- Minimise contact between poultry and wild birds. Make sure feed and water are not accessible to wild birds.
- Inspect and clean housing regularly; use disinfectant at correct concentration.
- Report any sick or dead wild birds: do not handle them yourself. (Contact DEFRA/APHA as per guidance.)
- Risk to humans remains very low, but vigilance is still essential.



In this edition...

Page 4: Safe cattle handling and behaviour awareness

Safe Cattle Handling and Behaviour Awareness

Information supplied by Kingshay.

Cattle-related accidents injure around 100 farm workers each year in the UK, making safe handling and an understanding of cattle behaviour essential. Calm, confident stockmanship reduces stress for both animals and handlers, improves welfare, and creates a safer working environment.

Key Behaviour Principles

- **Flight Zone:** A cow's personal space. When handlers invade this invisible bubble, it applies pressure to the cow, causing the cow to move away. Calm, frequently handled animals (e.g., dairy cows) have small flight zones; stressed or less-handled animals (e.g., beef cattle) have larger ones. Entering the flight zone causes movement; staying on its edge keeps the animal aware but calm.
- **Pressure Zone & Point of Balance:**
 - The point of balance is usually at the shoulder.
 - Standing behind it moves the animal forward; standing in front moves it backward.
 - Effective movement relies on applying gentle pressure at the correct angle while avoiding the blind spot directly behind the cow.
- **Movement Patterns:** Cattle prefer curved races, which feel safer and limit distractions. They move best at a slow, natural pace without shouting or rushing.



Cow Senses & Stress Triggers

- Cattle have 330° panoramic vision but poor depth perception and blind spots in front and behind. Shadows, sudden movements, and changes from light to dark can make them balk or panic.
- Loud noise, cluttered yards, slippery flooring, or distractions increase stress.
- Solid walls, good lighting, and non-slip flooring help animals stay calm.

Positive Handling & Memory

Cattle learn from experience and have long memories. Positive early interactions with handling systems—such as quiet movement through a crush or rewarding first experiences—make future handling much easier and safer.

Quick Tips

1. Always wear protective clothing and stay alert.
2. Never isolate yourself with cattle in confined spaces.
3. Use tools like sticks, flags or paddles to extend reach without causing harm, not for hitting them.
4. Monitor animal body language for signs of agitation, such as tail flicking or head tossing. If concerned about a change in behaviour retreat and rethink your plan of action.
5. Give cattle time to make a decision, avoid rushing them, as animals which are rushed can panic. The same is true if an animal becomes separated from the group.
6. Make sure gates are attached properly and have pins at hinges.

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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