

In this issue:

- Bluetongue virus update in the UK
- Equine Clinic Days
- Ewe Mastitis
- Horse Fly Control
- In-house worm egg counts

Bluetongue Update

This summer vets and farmers need to be vigilant for the outbreak that will likely occur in the UK. Bluetongue is a virus transmitted by midges (*Culicoides* species) and primarily affects sheep, but can affect all ruminants including cattle, goats, deer and camelids. It is a Notifiable Disease and does not affect humans or food safety.

APHA have set out a disease control framework, which is under constant review. The aim is to minimise transmission through testing, movement restrictions and possible culling. The 2007 outbreak was eradicated through vaccination, but at the moment we do not have an effective vaccine for this new strain (BTV-3). The government is working hard with the drug manufacturers to create an appropriate vaccine, but will take time to ensure safety and efficacy. They are also working with the MetOffice for temperature and wind patterns from Northern Europe to help give a trajectory of possible outbreaks. The Southeast coast of England will likely be affected first due to the wind patterns from and temperatures for midges.

Clinical signs:

Sheep:

Clinician signs are **more severe** compared to cattle and include pyrexia/fever, depression, reddening/ulceration/swelling around eyes/nose/mouth, haemorrhage, lesions around feet/lameness/laminitis, reproduction losses and death.

Cattle:

Clinical signs are **less severe** and include pyrexia, salivation, reddening/ulceration/swelling around eye/mouth/nose. Lameness/laminitis, teat lesions, reproduction losses. It can be subclinical with no clinical signs.

Goats and Camelids:

Clinical signs are **mild** with pyrexia/fever, ocular/nasal discharge, mild ulceration/swelling of lips/mucous membranes. It can be subclinical with no clinical signs.

'Dutch Model' (Advice from the Netherlands):

Things we have learned from the Autumn 2023 investigation and European outbreaks (especially the Netherlands). There will be a lot of misinformation out there so please try to avoid spending a lot of money, time and effort on things that are not proven to work.

- BTV-3 can be spread by a single midge bite and trying to stop midges is futile and does not seem to work. Farmers should act to maximise natural ventilation, particularly by taking advantage of hills and higher grounds. Farmers in the Netherlands favoured housing animals with powerful fans, providing air flow of more than 3m/s, for example. This won't necessarily prevent transmission but will help slow it down.
- There are no licensed products for *Culicoides* midge control. There is no evidence that insecticides can prevent infection as they do not kill *Culicoides* midges fast enough to prevent the first bite.
- Similarly, there is no evidence that insecticides prevent onward transmission of bluetongue and there is also no evidence that insect repellents (which deter insects), have any effect on the transmission
- When it comes to tactics for midge control, air movement is key. It's also important to note that midges are most active during dusk and dawn.

Unfortunately, this article lacks uplifting news with the pending outbreaks this summer and no vaccination. The guidelines and actions we take will likely be changing with the outbreak and hopefully a vaccine in the near future. If you suspect any disease please phone the practice for further discussion. For more information please go to

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bluetongue>



Equine Clinics

We are now offering regular clinics @ **Dodderhill Equestrian Centre** for routine dentals, vaccinations, blood sampling, weighing and gastric scopes.

Next clinics:

30th July

27th August

24th September

Gastroscopy on clinic days at Dodderhill EC will be at a reduced price of £200 (including sedation)

Gastric ulcers can affect any horse of any size. Do you know the signs?

- Weight loss
- Change in behaviour
- Poor performance or reluctance to do their normal work
- Resistance to girthing

Not all horses show the same signs and many like to create unique symptoms!

The gold standard in diagnosing gastric ulcers is using gastroscopy. This allows us to identify the type of ulcer and create the best treatment plan for your horse.

Please phone the office
01905 773 262
for booking a space



Ewe Mastitis

Mastitis is inflammation of the mammary gland/udder that is normally caused by a bacterial infection. It can present as subclinical, acute or chronic in nature. Ewes with subclinical may be fine with no obvious signs other than an increased Somatic Cell Count (SCC) which measures inflammatory cells in the milk. Acute infections can come on suddenly with a hot swollen udder with watery or bloody secretions and the ewe might be unwell and not eating. Chronic infections may show as palpable intramammary masses (IMM) that may abscess and burst through the udder skin.

There have been over 30 bacteria that have been isolated from ewe milk and when one ewe has mastitis then you have an increased risk in the flock due to the contagious nature of some bacteria. The flock-level incidence in the UK of clinical mastitis ranges from 0 to 6.6% per year.

Increased Risk Factors:

- **Underfeeding protein and energy in pregnancy and lactation. Low body condition score (BCS) at lambing will result in an inadequate milk production and a depressed immune system. Hungry lambs are more likely to traumatise teats and udders**
- **Poor hygiene at lambing time and extended time indoors will allow environmental bacteria to easily multiply**
- **Ewes rearing two or more lambs, regardless of ewe age**
- **Age of ewe- Older ewes >4 years old (due to BCS, poor udder conformation), first timers (soft teats more prone to damage, mismothering)**
- **A possible link to Vitamin A and Selenium deficiency (more research is needed to confirm this)**
- **Presence of chronic lumps (IMM)- can be a source of infection and these ewes will produce less milk. Chronic cases are more likely to have mastitis again**



Although knowledge on this area has increased, there is still no effective control strategy to prevent mastitis. Vaccines are available but it is unlikely that any one vaccine will prevent mastitis. Fresh milk samples (BEFORE antibiotic treatment) will help diagnose the associated bacteria(s). Focus on hygiene, nutrition and prevention of spread will always be critical for control. Good udder conformation is associated with decreased risk of mastitis (teat position, teat angle and udder drop).

Horse Fly control

With a little bit of sunshine comes a whole lot of flies. Midges and biting flies can drive our horses crazy and whilst we can provide some medical relief to very itchy ponies, preventing the bites is the best possible way to keep your horse itch free.

Fly Barriers:

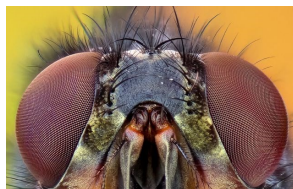
Using fly masks and rugs is one of the best ways to stop flies biting. It's still important to check under and around the rug at least once a day to ensure it hasn't become soaked in a downpour or ripped.

Fly repellents:

There are many fly repellents out there and some work better than others, but everyone will have a personal favourite. Topping up on fly sprays is needed after exercise or heavy rain. Ensuring your horses smelly or sweaty areas are clean will reduce how enticing your horse smells to flies.

Covering wounds:

Cleaning scratches and scrapes well and covering them with a dressing can prevent flies from being attracted to wounds and spreading infections or laying eggs.



National Geographic

Fly management:

The ideal field for fly control is on top of a breezy hill away from trees, unfortunately this isn't available to most of us but there are a few things we can do to make fields less attractive:

- Keep muck heaps as far away as possible from field shelters and stables
- Poo picking the field will reduce the numbers of flies in the middle of your fields as well as being an excellent way to reduce worms
- Remove any items that may collect stagnant water and fence off any still ponds to reduce numbers of midges living nearby
- Improve ventilation in stables with fans or use fly paper to catch flies
- We can supply parasitic wasps (for farm and equine clients) for muck heaps/around farm which will eat fly larvae and reduce your overall numbers of flies.

Please phone the practice if you would like more information on parasitic wasps.

WORM EGG COUNTS

We can now do Worm Egg Counts (WEC) in-house with our new Ovacyte machine. On this machine we can look for worms and liver fluke eggs on all species (equids, ruminants and camelids). If you'd like a worm egg count done please speak with a vet and drop in a FRESH sample in a labelled container with your name/farm and animals details.

See you at Hanbury Show July 6th!

Come visit us for a cuppa, delicious cakes and a change to win a some fun goodies!

MacArthur Barstow & Gibbs

V E T E R I N A R Y S U R G E O N S