FarmNews

Modern approach, traditional values

March 2026 Newsletter

GET YOUR TB TESTS BOOKED IN!

We are now at the busiest time of the year for TB tests. During this time we test **thousands** of cattle per **week.**

Don't leave it too late to get your test booked in— we cannot squeeze you in when the diary is full.

Please also double check you are able to do the dates agreed as we cannot re-arrange tests last minute due to the volume of tests in close proximity.

We really appreciate your help with this!

New Forest Eye

New Forest Eye (caused by the bacterium Moraxella bovis) is a painful ocular condition in cattle, characterised by ulceration of the corneal surface. Each summer season, we treat and inject a significant number of affected animals, and in severe cases the damage can be so extensive that enucleation (surgical removal of the eye) is unfortunately required.

A vaccine is now available for this condition: Maxiguard.
As this vaccine is imported, advance planning is essential. We are therefore encouraging clients to consider vaccination well ahead of the high-risk period.
The vaccine is administered as a subcutaneous injection at least 30 days prior to the anticipated onset of the New Forest Eye season. It is intended to provide protection for the duration of the season but will require annual boosting.

Maxiguard is available in 10-dose and 50-dose vials.

Although this is the first season we will be using this vaccine within our practice, there is encouraging anecdotal evidence regarding its efficacy from other veterinary practices across the country, and we are hopeful it will significantly reduce the incidence and severity of cases this year.

If you would like further information about New Forest Eye, or wish to discuss ordering the vaccine, please contact any of our branches and a member of our team will be happy to help.

NoBACZ

Healthy lambs that grow well have a good start in life. We can influence this by ensuring the ewe has good nutritional status during pregnancy, and then good quality colostrum is drunk by the lamb soon after birth. The next most important factor is managing infection pressure, through prompt navel dipping and environmental hygiene. The navel is an opening to the bloodstream and organs, so as long as the navel is wet, there is effectively an open doorway to infection. Dipping, when compared with spraying navels, has been shown to yield better results in terms of mortality and incidence of joint ill. A recent new product called NoBACZ navel has been launched as an alternative to 10% iodine. This solution contains 4 components geared towards the rapid drying and closure of the navel;

· A hydrophobic polymer that coats the navel, forming a seal to prevent the entry of bacteria

· Ethanol to dry out the navel quickly

· Metal salts to provide a disinfection element

· Bitter agents to prevent the ewes over-licking

This product has been created with Cambridge University scientists and a large study followed 6840 lambs over 11 flocks. There were no interventions other than using NoBACZ instead of iodine on every other lamb born. The mortality rate for the lambs dipped with NoBACZ was lower than those dipped with iodine, equating to an extra 18 lambs alive for every 1000 born. The NoBACZ lambs also weighed 0.5kg heavier at 8 weeks than their iodine-dipped twins.

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.

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.