

September 2026 Newsletter

BLUETONGUE VACCINE

It is **NOT TOO LATE** to vaccinate. The season for transmission is long. As of writing (17/8) we have Bluetongue vaccine. It is the only defence against Bluetongue.

Bluetongue high-risk midge transmission season in the UK typically runs from April through November. Active vector transmission usually slows down significantly and enters a seasonally low period as temperatures drop below 12°C in late autumn, with midges becoming largely inactive once temperatures fall below 4°C into winter.

Place your order at Bridgwater Office **01278 663399**

Salmonella

Salmonellosis

Salmonellosis is a disease that affects all major farm animal species and is caused by *Salmonella* spp. bacteria. It is a major concern as it can cause significant disease in livestock and humans, so caution must be taken when handling salmonella infected animals.

Cattle

The most common serovars of salmonella seen in cattle are *Salmonella* Typhimurium and *Salmonella* Dublin. *Salmonella* Typhimurium is typically associated with inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract in calves < 2 months of age, and can be introduced by infected calves, or water and feed contaminated by rodents or wild birds, this results in explosive outbreaks with severe clinical signs. *Salmonella* Dublin is typically associated with disease in older cattle, although it can infect cattle of any age. Infection with *Salmonella* Dublin can cause both gastrointestinal symptoms, pneumonia and abortions, but may also present as chronically infected cattle, that don't show symptoms unless stressed.

Sheep

Sheep can also be infected with *Salmonella* Typhimurium which can cause gastrointestinal disease, septicaemia and abortions. However, in the UK, sheep infections are more commonly associated with *Salmonella* Diarizonae, typically presenting as asymptomatic ewes that develop sudden clinical signs when stressed, often due to high worm burdens, transport, or feed/water deprivation.

Identifying salmonella

Symptoms associated with acute salmonellosis include: lethargy, fever (40.5–41.5°C), pneumonia, severe watery diarrhoea (often containing mucous and blood), decreased milk production, severe abdominal pain, straining, abortion, and in some cases death.

Salmonella may also cause chronic asymptomatic infections especially in older cattle and sheep, which require multiple positive salmonella cultures to definitively confirm, due to the possibility of transient infection.

Control of salmonella

Early treatment of salmonellosis is essential, however use of antimicrobials needs to depend on the presentation of each case, and ideally culture and sensitivity results. Due to significant occurrence of anti-microbial resistance in many salmonella outbreaks, use of the wrong antibiotic can kill beneficial bacteria in the gut that would normally outcompete salmonella and slow its growth, while not effectively killing the salmonella.

Supportive therapy with NSAIDs and rehydration with fluids and electrolytes is important to minimize the impact of diarrhoea and improve case outcomes, so should be utilised immediately during outbreaks.

In herds with a known salmonella problem Bovilis Bovivac S, is available.

This vaccine can be used in the face of an outbreak to reduce bacterial shedding and contamination from chronically infected livestock, and to immunise naïve livestock.



Lung Scanning of cattle

Pneumonia typically appears in calves as young as 3 to 5 weeks of age, resulting in an immediate cost of £30 to £80 per case.

With severe pneumonia, calves are often left with permanent scarring of their lungs, resulting in decreased milk yield (up to 525kg) during their first lactation, and a significant decrease in daily-live-weight-gain (up to 200g/day).

Typical methods of early pneumonia detection rely on observation of clinical signs and increases in rectal temperature, but these may not be apparent until 3-5 days after the calf has developed pneumonia, at which point significant long-term changes to the lung may have already taken place.

Quick thoracic ultrasound (qTUS) is a rapid, non-invasive, examination performed on calves from one week of age. Changes to the lung can be detected with ultrasound 2 to 24 hours after the calf has developed pneumonia, 2-3 days before an increase in temperature or any symptoms would be expected.

Rapid detection of pneumonia allows targeted treatment, before calves develop permanent scarring, reducing the long-term impact of pneumonia.

Ram Fertility Testing

Now is the time to get your rams an MOT and fertility test before the breeding season.

This is even more **IMPORTANT** this year with circulating Bluetongue virus which can affect ram fertility.

Ring the office to book your test, finding out your ram(s) are infertile weeks/months later is no good and can be avoided.



September on the Farm: Preparing for Autumn

As summer draws to a close, September is an important month for getting livestock, buildings and grazing systems ready for the autumn and winter months. A little preparation now can help prevent problems later in the season.

Cattle: autumn checks

As cattle come back onto more autumnal grazing, keep a close eye on body condition, particularly in youngstock and cows approaching housing. Changes in grass quality can be surprisingly rapid at this time of year.

Now is a good opportunity to review:

- Body condition scores, particularly in suckler cows and cows approaching calving.
- Mineral supplementation, making sure diets and grazing are providing what stock require.
- Lameness, as wetter conditions can increase the risk of foot problems.
- Parasite control, using faecal egg counts and other appropriate monitoring rather than treating routinely where possible.
- Vaccination programmes, ensuring cattle are protected before periods of increased disease risk.

For autumn-calving herds, make sure calving facilities are clean, well bedded and ready for use, with essential equipment and medicines checked before they are needed.

Sheep: getting ready for tugging

For many sheep flocks, September marks the beginning of preparation for tugging.

Ram MOTs should be high on the list. Check feet, teeth, body condition and general health, and consider a breeding soundness examination where appropriate. Any problems identified now give you time to address them before the breeding season.

For ewes, assess body condition and consider whether groups need preferential feeding. Good ewe nutrition before and during tugging can have an important influence on scanning results and subsequent lambing performance. Don't forget to review your flock vaccination programme and ensure any necessary treatments are planned well in advance.