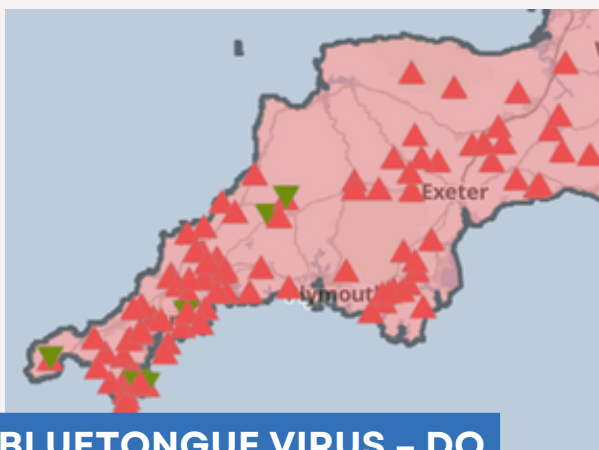


NEWSLETTER

The latest from the South Moor Farm team



BLUETONGUE VIRUS – DO WE STILL NEED TO WORRY?

Blue tongue was seen across the South West last Summer and as a practice we saw a fair number of clinical cases in both cattle and sheep in the local area. Ranging from minor to severely affected animals. All in unvaccinated herds and flocks. Government winter surveillance has yielded a large number of positive results in addition to reported clinical cases. Reports are also now starting to come in of BTV-3 positive dummy calves being born, as was seen over in the East last Spring. These calves are born infectious and are a disease source for any circulating midges as the weather starts to warm. The disease is weather dependent, but the virus remains a very real risk this Summer and into Autumn. Now we know that the disease has reached the South West, it is also possible that outbreaks may be seen earlier than last year.

Please do get in touch with us if you'd like to discuss your flock or herd risk and vaccination. For those that vaccinated last year, current advice is to boost animals with a single dose within 12 months of giving the first dose. If this advice changes based on new information we will of course let you know.

NEMATODIRUS

Nematodirus battus is a roundworm that can cause severe disease in young lambs, particularly affecting those from 6-12 weeks old. Infection can result in high mortality rates when a 'mass hatch' of larvae occurs and may also stunt growth in survivors.

Problems are most commonly seen from March – May (and again in autumn), but can be seen as early as January in warm weather. Outbreaks often occur when a period of cold weather is followed by warmer temperatures, which can trigger a mass hatch.

Signs

- Disease occurs in lambs only, ewes don't show signs
- Profuse, watery diarrhea
- Weightloss
- Dehydration (sunken eyes, dry gums, lethargy, tight skin)
- Death in severe cases

Prevention

- Where possible graze lambs on pasture that was NOT grazed by lambs last spring
- Regularly check the SCOPS Nematodirus forecast, which uses local weather data to predict when a mass hatch is likely to occur.

<https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/>

- Be aware that worm egg counts are not always reliable for diagnosing *Nematodirus* outbreaks as disease is caused by immature larvae which don't show up on this test.

Treatment

- Move lambs off of affected pasture
- Treat with an appropriate wormer, following advice from your Vet



STRONG FARMS START WITH HEALTHY FARMERS

Mental health is a critical yet often unfortunately overlooked issue among farmers.

You face unique pressures such as financial uncertainty, long working hours, isolation, and the unpredictability of weather and markets. The strong culture of self-reliance in farming communities can make it difficult to talk about stress, anxiety, or depression, leading many to struggle in silence. Recognizing these realities and encouraging open conversations, community support, and accessible care are essential steps toward protecting the wellbeing of farmers and the sustainability of agriculture itself.

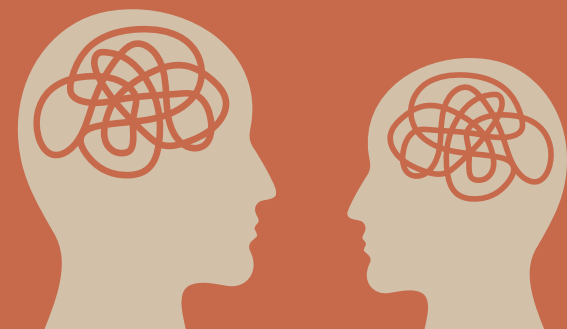
Strong farms start with **healthy** farmers

We are lucky that there are some really good support services to help farmers and people from rural families. Please reach out to any of the following, they may be able to help you more than you even realise.

<https://fcn.org.uk/>

<https://rabi.org.uk/>

<https://www.samaritans.org/>



DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Lambing Meeting

- Wednesday 18th February @ Ivybridge branch
- 10am-12pm
- Cake and refreshments provided
- Complimentary lambing starter kit
- Advice presentation and practical session with 2 of our vets
- £55, discount for YFC members and FREE for Flock health club members

Please let us know if you would like to attend!



NUTRITION IN LATE PREGNANCY: SMALL MARGINS MATTER

In the final six weeks of pregnancy, around 70% of foetal growth occurs. At the same time, the ewe's rumen capacity is reduced, meaning she must meet rising energy and protein demands from a smaller feed intake. This makes late pregnancy a high-risk period for metabolic disease, particularly twin lamb disease (pregnancy toxemia).

Grouping ewes by scanning results and body condition score remains one of the most effective tools for managing nutrition. Thin ewes and those carrying multiples will require extra support, while over-feeding single-bearing ewes should be avoided to reduce lambing difficulties.

Pre-Lambing Blood Sampling: A Valuable Management Tool

Pre-lambing blood sampling is one of the most useful ways to check whether your feeding plan is working before problems appear. Bloods are typically taken around 3 weeks before lambing and provide insight into the ewe's energy and protein balance. Mineral levels can also be checked. Mineral imbalances can quietly undermine lamb vigour and ewe performance. Iodine, selenium, and vitamin E are particularly important for lamb viability and immunity.

The most commonly measured parameters include:

Beta-hydroxybutyrate (BHB): Indicates energy status and risk of twin lamb disease

Urea: Reflects protein intake and utilisation

If issues are identified, small dietary changes made in time can have a big impact on lambing outcomes.

Vaccination and Disease Prevention

Ensure clostridial and pasteurella vaccinations are up to date, with boosters given 4-6 weeks before lambing to maximise antibody transfer in colostrum. We now have Heptavac P in stock if you need some as we know it's been tricky to get hold of.

If you'd like to arrange pre-lambing bloods or discuss lambing preparations for your flock, give us a ring!

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**South Moor
Farm Vets**

**FEB
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